UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES WRITING IN SPANISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS EXPLORATION

by

GABRIELA HAIDÉE DEL VILLAR JUÁREZ

(Under the Direction of SILVIA NOGUERÓN-LIU)

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, the extent of research and educational praxes in the teaching and learning of L2 composing has increased enormously following the publication of some reports (CED, 2006; MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007; O’Connell & Norwood, 2007) describing the unsatisfactory outcomes being achieved in L2 language education. In this scenario, the task of teaching writing to specifically L2 language learners is all the more challenging considering that it is not only an ability related to the acquisition of lexicogrammatical patterns —as is conventionally assumed—but L2 writing is also a means and basis for learning both language and writing, and more specifically culturally appropriate ways of writing.

The objectives of this qualitative study were twofold: first, to provide an insight into the context in which foreign language (FL) writing is produced, and within this context identify some of the FL students’ experiences writing in their L2 and the types of L1 writing knowledge these learners used in their L2 writing practices, and second, to explore the potential of systemic functional linguistics pedagogies (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) to make FL students cognizant of how people use language differently and communicate distinct meanings in
different ways across cultures and academic and social contexts, and the need to explicitly teach these emergent writers how to employ these linguistic resources in different writing contexts in the target language.

To identify the context of the writing pedagogy used in U.S. higher education institutions, the archival data (e.g., field notes, interviews, textbooks, writing prompts) collected from four upper level Spanish FL composition and conversation courses were analyzed following Halliday’s (1999) primary notions of Context and Text, considered critical concepts in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday & Mathiessen, 1999; Ghadessy, 1999). Then, the analysis of three students’ essays using the Appraisal Theory (Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005; White, 2003) revealed FL students’ experiences constructing interpersonal meaning with a reading-to-write-task in the target language, and the impact these experiences have in their written production. Finally, to identify the kind of L1 knowledge they bring into their L2 writing the narrative texts of two students were analyzed through the textual metafunction (Halliday, 1004) reflected in Theme markedness and Theme progression from SFL.

The implications of this study for L2 language educators demonstrate the potential of SFL informed pedagogies as a powerful resource to teach writing to FL learners in its capability to make explicit connections between linguistic form and function.

INDEX WORDS: Spanish, Composition, University, Systemic Functional Linguistics Analysis, genre, instruction.
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES COMPOSING IN SPANISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS EXPLORATION

by

GABRIELA HAIDÉE DEL VILLAR JUÁREZ

B.A., Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca 2001
M.H.S., Auburn University 2007
M.Ed., Auburn University, 2010

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2015
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES COMPOSING IN SPANISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS EXPLORATION

by

GABRIELA HAIDÉE DEL VILLAR JUÁREZ

Major Professor:       Silvia Noguerón-Liu
Committee:            Ruth Harman
                        Sara Blackwell

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2015
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Dr. Gisela Buschle-Diller and Dr. Julian Allagan. Without your economic and moral support the completion of this degree would not have been possible. Words could never properly acknowledge the extent of my debt to both of you.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply thankful to a number of people who had faith in me and gave me the support I needed. I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Noguerón-Liu for taking the risk of advising someone out of her area of expertise; To Dr. Harman for SFL and Discourse analysis; to Dr. Blackwell for Spanish pragmatics and Discourse; to the UGA librarians for their invaluable help, especially to Ms. McMurry for requesting all the books I needed; but most of all I would like to thank all the students and instructors who voluntarily participated in this study, without your help it would have been impossible to conduct it. You made fieldwork the high point of the research process, and I have a very great debt to all of you. I hope I can be forgiven for using pseudonyms when referring to all of you. And last but not least, I would like to thank my husband Julian and daughter Sophie for their unconditional love and support throughout these years.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Foundational Approaches in FL Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemic Functional Linguistics</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Chapters</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 THE INFLUENCE OF TEXTBOOKS ON TEXTS PRODUCED IN COLLEGE SPANISH COMPOSITION COURSES</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Context in Systemic Functional Linguistics</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2/FL Textbooks</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 USING APPRAISAL THEORY TO TRACK STUDENTS’ CONSTRUCTION OF INTERPERSONAL MEANING IN SPANISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Introduction ............................................................................................................72
The Construction of Interpersonal Meaning in L2 Languages .......................74
Methods..................................................................................................................79
Findings..................................................................................................................87
Conclusions and Implications ..............................................................................101
References ............................................................................................................104

4 THEME ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES PRODUCED BY COLLEGE STUDENTS LEARNING SPANISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE .........................112
Introduction..........................................................................................................112
Theme Analysis ...................................................................................................115
Narratives.............................................................................................................117
Methods................................................................................................................122
Findings................................................................................................................126
Conclusions ..........................................................................................................139
Implications..........................................................................................................141
References ............................................................................................................144

5 CONCLUSION ...................................................................................................149
APPENDICES

A  PÍO BAROJA TEXT ÁGUEDA ..................................................................................110

B  ÁGUEDA COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS ..........111
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Focal Classrooms..........................................................................................................26
Table 2.2: Description of compositions required in Mrs. Early Morning’s Class .................31
Table 2.3: Classroom activities preceding 1st composition in Mrs. Early Morning’s Class ....31
Table 2.4: Description of compositions required in Mr. Noon’s Class ..................................39
Table 2.5: Classroom activities preceding in-class composition in Mr. Noon’s Class ..........41
Table 2.6: Description of Compositions required in Mr. Morning’s Class ............................45
Table 2.7: Classroom activities preceding in-class composition in Mr. Morning’s Class .......50
Table 2.8: Description of compositions required in Mrs. Evening’s Class ..........................53
Table 2.9: Classroom activities preceding in-class composition in Mrs. Evening’s Class ......60
Table 4.1: Theme Analysis of Texts ..........................................................................................127
Table 4.2: Sheyla’s Theme Markedness Analysis .....................................................................127
Table 4.3: Maggie’s Theme Markedness Analysis ..................................................................129
Table 4.4: Summary of Theme Progression in the Texts.........................................................135
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Levels of Language (Strata)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.1</td>
<td>Language and Context; System and Instance</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.2</td>
<td>Composición and Tertulia sections in <em>Revista: Conversación sin Barreras</em></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.3</td>
<td>Plan de redacción in Composición section in <em>Revista: Conversación sin Barreras</em></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.4</td>
<td>Situaciones section in <em>Revista: Conversación sin Barreras</em></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.5</td>
<td>Escritura section in <em>Intrigas: Advanced Spanish through Literature and Film</em></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.6</td>
<td>Un poco más lejos section in <em>épocas y Avances: Lengua en su contexto cultural</em></td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>Model of Appraisal system as in Martin &amp; White (2005)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.2</td>
<td>Nadia’s Essay</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.3</td>
<td>Aliyah’s Essay</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.4</td>
<td>Johnny’s Essay</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>Maggie’s Theme Progression Analysis</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2</td>
<td>Sheyla’s Theme Progression Analysis</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Over the past decade, the extent of research and educational praxes in the teaching and learning of L2 composing has increased enormously following the publication of some reports (CED, 2006; MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007; O’Connell & Norwood, 2007) describing the unsatisfactory outcomes being achieved in L2 language education. In this scenario, the task of teaching writing to specifically L2 language learners is all the more challenging considering that it is not only an ability related to the acquisition of lexicogrammatical patterns—as is conventionally assumed—but L2 writing is also a means and basis for learning both language and writing, and more specifically culturally appropriate ways of writing.

The lack of attention to the role of writing in foreign language (FL) classrooms (Byrnes, 2011; Harklau, 2002; Leki, 2000; Olivares- Cuhat, 1998; Reichelt, 1999, 2001; Schultz & Kern, 2005; Scott 1996) has resulted not only in deficiencies in student translingual and transcultural competence (CED, 2006; MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007; O’Connell & Norwood, 2007) but also in the lack of understanding of how college FL learners go about making meaning in and with the target language. In order to address these issues, the objectives of this qualitative research were twofold: first, to provide an insight into the context in which FL writing is produced, and within this context identify some of the FL students’ experiences.
writing in their L2 and the types of L1 writing knowledge these learners used in their L2 writing practices, and second, to explore the potential of systemic functional linguistics pedagogies (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) to make FL students cognizant of how people use language differently and communicate distinct meanings in different ways across cultures and academic and social contexts, and the need to explicitly teach these emergent writers how to control and deploy some linguistic resources in different writing contexts in the target language.

Recent reports (CED, 2006; MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007; O’Connell & Norwood, 2007) describe the FL deficiency prevalent in the United States. According to these reports, deep cultural knowledge and linguistic competence were found to be equally necessary to understand foreign people and their communities. Based on this finding, these reports have called for a reconfiguration of programs and the structure of FL departments, and they have also urged professionals to implement integrative approaches to language and culture study in higher education.

The MLA report justifies its demand for the implementation of new approaches by arguing that “[F]our-year language majors often graduate with disappointingly low levels of linguistic ability” (p. 242). However, studies describing FL learners’ poor linguistic skills are not novel. Since the 1990s, scholars like Morocco and Soven (1990), Greenia (1992), Ruiz-Funes (1994) and Valdés, Haro and Echevarriarza (1992), and more recently, scholars like Byrnes (2009, 2011), and O’Donnell (2007) have described the marginal progress made by FL students in intermediate and advanced level courses, where writing generally occupies a subordinate position. However, all of these authors have agreed that FL learners’ deficiencies in the target language are due to two, contested issues in the field: the lack of a foundational approach in the teaching of writing and the emphasis on grammatical accuracy, issues I explore next.
Lack of Foundational Approaches in FL Education

As recently as 2010, researchers like Byrnes, Maxim and Norris (2010) have underscored the longstanding need for a foundational theory or approach to understanding the development of writing in an FL:

First, to date no comprehensive treatment of college-level FL writing development exists; second, there is, therefore, no adequate description of what instructed FL writing development by literate adults looks like; third, lacking as well is a differentiated understanding of the nature, possibilities, and limitations of writing development in the instructed setting of collegiate FL teaching and learning; finally, what reasonable levels of attainment for FL writers are, at different points of their program of study and, most especially, at the conclusion of a program, is therefore mostly a matter of conjecture. (p. 1)

Byrnes is by no means the first scholar to note the absence of a foundational approach to the teaching of FL writing. Since 1996, Scott has pointed out that the lack of specific approaches to FL writing has been mainly due to two factors: first, the fact that most theories about FL writing are largely based on research in L1 and ESL writing; and second, the lack of teachers’ experience in analyzing the processes involved in composing and communicating in writing (p. 41). Scott’s argument describing the nonexistence of clearly defined approaches to teaching FL writing was confirmed by the author of this dissertation, who, in her quest to investigate the most commonly used methods in teaching Spanish composition, noticed the inconsistency of practitioners and researchers in identifying a specific writing approach followed by U.S. universities. On one hand, Ruiz-Funes (1994), who states that “in American universities,
academic writing is primarily reading to write” (p. 3), a model based on the reading of source texts. On the other hand, other researchers like Strong (2009) observe that after the Writing-Across-the-Curriculum (WAC) educational movement was established in postsecondary institutions throughout North America in the mid 1970s, it became a popular approach adopted by many U.S. colleges and universities. Unfortunately, in the end, the only aspect most researchers in the field seem to agree on is that the approach of Spanish composition courses still is to focus on grammar and linguistic errors, an approach also known as the product model (Greenia, 1992; Morocco & Soven, 1990; O’Donnell, 2007; Ruiz-Funes, 1994; Valdés, Haro & Echevarriarza, 1992)

**Composition and the Teaching of Grammar: The Product Model**

The product model, as its name indicates, focuses on the writer’s finished product or on the idea of a text as an object. Hyland (2011) explained that within this model, writing is disembodied; that is, writing is devoid of context and the personal experiences of the writer and of the readers. From this perspective, “learners’ compositions are seen as langue, that is, a demonstration of the writer’s knowledge of forms and his or her awareness of the system of rules to create texts” (p. 9). Williams (1998) describes a product-oriented classroom as follows:

> Teaching writing is viewed primarily as teaching mechanics: punctuation, subject-verb agreement, spelling and correct usage. Class time designated for writing is typically devoted to drills and exercises on mechanics and grammar. The underlying rationale is that good writing is correct writing. (p. 47)
The teaching of grammar in the Spanish composition classroom has been one of the controversial issues that have engaged professionals in the field since the 1990s (Morocco & Soven, 1990; Greenia, 1992; Ruiz-Funes, 1994; Valdés et al., 1992). For instance, according to Valdés et al.:

[b]ecause most FL instructors have not expected that their students would be asked to use the written FL to a great degree in the course of their careers, they have emphasized grammatical accuracy rather than a high level of stylistic authenticity. (p. 333)

Similarly, Greenia (1992) argued that one of the two traditional assumptions that underlies the negligence of FL writing within a traditional curriculum is the idea that writing in a FL “is considered an adjunct to a more ‘worthy’ goal, mastering grammar…” (p. 30). Ruiz-Funes (1994) also argued that despite the fact that reading and writing demand more higher-order-cognitive skills from the students’ side, “instruction still tends to emphasize the teaching of grammar” (p. 1).

Although it has been more than a decade since the research described above called attention to the employment of a different approach toward FL writing, more contemporary studies have revealed that the focus on grammar in FL writing courses still remains. For instance, O’Donnell (2007) investigated the policies and procedures governing the foreign language writing courses of 66 colleges-level language programs in the United States, using an online survey that covered several categories. One of the categories concerned the mechanisms for providing feedback, within this category, respondents were asked if they believed that instructors were giving feedback in response to the following four linguistic features: a) grammar usage, b) appropriateness of language, c) organizational structure, and d) ability to fulfill assignment
criteria. O’Donnell reported that of the four linguistic categories, grammar usage received the most attention.

Although O’Donnell (2007) stated that the focus on grammar and linguistic errors in FL composition courses should come as no surprise to anyone who researches or teaches ESL or FL courses (p. 652), research in this area has repeatedly shown that grammar instruction has little if any impact on composition skills (Chandler, 2003; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1999; Frantzen, 1995; Kepner, 1991; Muncie 2002; O’Donnell, 2007; Truscott, 1996, 2007). Furthermore, researchers like Schultz (1991b) and Ruiz-Funes (1994) have continually stated that grammatical accuracy is not necessarily an indicator of a student’s ability to express personal meaning in the target language.

Because of the issues described above in the teaching of FL writing in U.S. colleges and universities—FL learners’ poor linguistic skills, the lack of a foundational approach, and the continued focus of composition classes on the practice of various syntactic structures—I propose that SFL informed theories, and genre-based approaches in particular that attend to both linguistic and cultural aspects of language learning to advance the teaching of FL writing in U.S. higher education institutions.

**Systemic Functional Linguistics**

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by British-Australian linguist Halliday (1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) and expanded in the last two decades through the work of the many theorists, researchers, and educational practitioners he has inspired (Byrnes, 2009, 2012, 2013; Colombi, 2002, 2009; Eggins, 2004; Derewianka, 1990). SFL is a theory of language that is built on four relevant theoretical principles regarding language and language
learning: language as meaning-making, language as a semiotic activity, and language as a social and cultural activity (Eggins, 2004).

SFL is said to be *functional* because it foregrounds a theory of language that understands language as being fundamentally about meaning-making in a particular context of use rather than a set of fixed rules and structures (Byrnes, 2006). Christie and Unsworth (2005) explained that unlike many other language learning theories, SFL does not make the distinction between form and content or form and function; “Instead, SFL has conceptualised such a relation as a dialectic, whereby content (i.e. meaning) activates form (i.e. lexicogrammar), while form construes meaning” (p. 5). This dialectic relationship is depicted in Figure 1.1, in which language is arranged as a hierarchically stratified system across three major strata: phonology, lexicogrammar, and semantics.

![Figure 1.1: Levels of Language (Strata)](image)
Closely related to the role of grammar within SFL is the idea that utterances are produced to learn about the world and to participate and interact in the world (Halliday, 1994). Halliday called these functions the *ideational* (the topic), *interpersonal* (speaker/listener-writer/reader relationship), and *textual* (organization and coherence) metafunctions. Further expanding on the concept of language as a semiotic activity, and among other semiotic systems that describe the human experience (e.g., gestures, arts), SFL prioritizes the sophisticated and complex semiotic system of language. As Eggins (2004) explained, as a complex semiotic system of meaning-making, language allows us to construe and organize our experience of the world in terms of both content and expression. In both cases, we generally use culturally established conventions encoded in our lexical and phonological systems to construe our experiences. However, the level of complexity in the use of these systems varies according to the setting.

SFL is a linguistic theory that foregrounds language as a social activity in which we all participate. In other words, SFL focuses not only on how people use language with each other to accomplish everyday social life but also on the analysis of authentic texts (written or spoken) as products of social interaction and in relation to the social and cultural context in which they are produced. Regarding the latter, SFL is a theory that validates different ways of using language across cultures and within particular situations in those cultures. Eggins (2004) adds, “meanings are influenced by both the social and cultural context in which they are exchanged” (p. 3). The latter idea is further expanded in the next section.

*Genre-based pedagogies*

SFL validates the idea that different cultures use language in different ways to express various meanings (García, 2008; Montaño-Harmon, 1991; Gibbons, 1999; Kaplan, 1966). In
fact, Halliday (1994) proposed that people speak and communicate in ways that are appropriate to cultural and situational contexts. This idea was further expanded by Halliday (1999) when he explained that a text always occurs in two contexts; the context of culture, and the context of situation (Malinowski, 1923), and the combination of the two results in the wide array of similar, yet different texts generated within a community. The production of different texts, Christie (1999) explained, has to do with the use of registers: choices involving field (what is to be talked or written about), tenor (the relationship between the speaker and hearer), and mode of activity (the kind of text that is being produced) (p. 5), which, in the end, will result in the creation of different genres. As Tardy (2012) pointed out, genres have great relevance to the study of L2 writing because “they represent the privileged forms of communication that writers must learn to use successfully” (p. 165).

Genre pedagogies are seen as highly effective in teaching L2 writing because they highlight the connections between the discourse features and communicative purpose of a text (Maxim, 2009; Tardy, 2005, 2006). Hyland (2004) and Byrnes (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012) consider the discourse features and communicative purpose of a text two key characteristics of genre-based writing. Therefore, they have not only encouraged writing instructors to explicitly teach genre features such as rhetorical structures or frames (Hyland, 2004) and formulaic sequences (Martin, 2009; Martin & Rose, 2003, 2007) to promote awareness of genre conventions as well as reflection on its purposes and uses, but they have also emphasized the teachers’ role in facilitating and assisting L2 students to express their own meanings in the target language (Byrnes, 2006).
Significance of the Present Study

The study is significant at two interrelated levels: cultural and pedagogical. It responds to narrowly-conceived notions of writing that fail to consider the ways meanings are socially constructed. Such ideas disregard the complex sociocultural factors that impact students’ translingual and transcultural competence in FL composition courses (Byrnes, 2006). The study rejects the idea that “language is speech not writing” and that writing serves only as a “support skill” for speaking activities (Musumeci, 1998; Scott, 1996; Smith, 1994). Instead, this study seeks to demonstrate that writing in an FL is more than an exercise in formal accuracy; it is a web of social and linguistic practices that vary with situational and cultural contexts and that are learned through apprenticeship. As recent reports (CED, 2006; MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007; O’Connell & Norwood, 2007; Manchón, 2008, 2011, 2012; Schultz & Kern, 2005) on FL language writing instruction have pointed out, there is a pressing need to find integrative language approaches that support emergent FL writers in expressing more complex ideas and explicitly instruct them in understanding and employing a wide variety of linguistic resources in different writing contexts.

Byrnes (2006, 2009, 2012, 2013), Byrnes, Maxim, and Norris, (2010) and García (2002), have strongly advocated for an ample exposure of language learners to phonological, lexicogrammatical and semantic elements of the target language from which they can choose, and for expanding their meaning making opportunities in texts. In particular, Byrnes (2013) has been very persistent about the urgent need to develop FL writing instruction that focuses on writing as “meaning-making”. The meaning-making orientation requires a focus on meaning that “informs and guides the development of students’ ability to become competent multilingual creators of written texts” (p. 95). Similarly, García has argued that in order to have advanced
biliteracy and reap the benefits of transferring skills across languages, writers must have a broad discourse range in the two languages; that is, they must have opportunities to use different written varieties or registers for different social purposes and different audiences. Specifically referring to English-Spanish bilingual speakers, researchers like Montaño-Harmon (1991) have warned us of the consequences of not making these students aware of the discourse patterns of the target language, stating that “students [as a result] will not be able to write compositions which will meet the expectations of their readers” (p. 424).

Reports like the CED (2006) and the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages (2007) as well as professionals in the field like Schultz and Kern (2005) have emphasized that the challenges of multiculturalism and multimodal forms of communication call for a revised definition of literacy, and more specifically “global literacies”. From this global perspective, as Schultz and Kern suggest, “literacy redefined must encompass complex interactions among language, cognition, society, and culture” (p. 382). The CED report (2006) stated that “America’s continued global leadership will depend on our students’ abilities to interact with the world community both inside and outside our borders” (p. 1). Thus, professionals in the second language acquisition field should ensure that L2 language learners possess the multicultural and linguistic flexibility needed to succeed in a globalized and interconnected world.

Consistent with the recommendations of the reports described in the previous section, the purpose of this qualitative study is twofold: first, to call on FL writing instructors to shift from product oriented to functional writing approaches that teach emergent writers how to “mean” (Byrnes, 2013) in more precise and effective ways in the target language; and second, to show the potential of SFL (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) to support FL learners in enhancing their translingual and transcultural competence.
Research Questions

The purpose of this investigation is clearly reflected in three research questions the study aims to answer.

1. How do the textbooks used in four composition courses influence the teaching of writing and the kind of texts that are produced?

2. How do college students minoring in Spanish construct interpersonal meaning based on reading-to-write texts in the target language, and how does their construction of interpersonal meaning of the text shape their written stance?

3. What types of L1 writing knowledge do students use in their L2 narrative writing practices in a college-level Spanish class?

Overview of Chapters

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter One has introduced the topic, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, and the research questions.

Chapter Two tries to answer the first research question through Halliday and Hasan (1989) and Halliday (1994, 1999) notions of Context and Text, considered critical concepts in SFL (Halliday, 1994, 1999; Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999; Ghadessy, 1999) to explore the classroom context where L2 writing is produced. The description of the language activities that were performed in each of the two different 3010 and two 3020 upper-level Spanish composition and conversation classes classrooms observed, as well as the analysis of the textbooks used in each of these classes revealed not only the context in which composition in the foreign language
occurs, but also how the textbooks shaped this context and the type of text that students produced.

In order to address the second research question, in Chapter Three, I use the *Appraisal System* to analyze three students’ narratives produced in an upper level Spanish composition and conversation honors class. Drawing on the three interrelated sub-systems the Appraisal system is comprised of (*Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement*) (Martin & White, 2005), I showed the challenges these students experience constructing interpersonal meaning with the assigned reading in Spanish and the impact this has in their written production.

Chapter Four addresses the third research question by focusing on the textual metafunction reflected in *Theme Markedness* and *Theme Progression* to analyze the narrative texts of four college students enrolled in an upper 3010 level Spanish Composition and Conversation class. These narratives were compared to investigate linguistic differences and similarities in the way students writing in Spanish as a FL realize the narrative genre in general and the Theme of clauses in particular.

Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the findings of the study and their implications, suggests the contributions of the study to research and theory on FL writing, and offers directions for future research.
References


Kaplan, R. B. (1966). *Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education*. *Language*


CHAPTER 2
THE INFLUENCE OF COMPOSITION TEXTBOOKS ON TEXTS PRODUCED IN COLLEGE SPANISH COMPOSITION COURSES

Introduction

Within the foreign language field very little is known about composition textbooks and how they shape the teaching and the kind of texts that are produced in foreign language (FL) composition courses. Although assessments on beginning FL college level textbooks have been conducted in the past (Byrnes, 1989; Walz, 1989, Lally, 1998), there are no studies that specifically examine FL composition textbooks and the role they play in composition pedagogy. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to investigate the influence of composition textbooks on the writing approaches and the kind of texts produced by students in four different upper level Spanish composition and conversation courses.

As several scholars have pointed out, the selection and use of composition textbooks have great implications not only in facilitating the teacher’s professional expertise on the subject, but also in establishing the L2 teaching setting (Angell, DuBravac & Glongleewski, 2008; Byrnes, 1989; Brown, 2014; Garton & Graves, 2013, 2014; Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013; Lally, 1998; Neary-Sundquist, 2015; Walz, 1989 ). In this regard, scholars like Byrnes (1989) have argued that textbooks not only often drive the individual course syllabus, but the overall curriculum. Also, Lally (1998) pointed out that languages teachers at all levels of instruction are “intimately involved with the textbook” (p. 308) they use in their classrooms. Thus, to investigate the close
relationship between the composition textbooks and the writing approaches and the kind of texts produced in each of the courses described in this study, the analytic concepts of text and context from Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1994, 1999; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999) are used as the theoretical framework for this study. In this article, Halliday’s analytic concepts are first reviewed. Next, the data collected for this study are presented and analyzed. Finally, classroom implications and directions for further research are suggested.

Theoretical Framework

Text and Context in Systemic Functional Linguistics

From a systemic functional linguistics (SFL) perspective, any “text”—spoken (e.g., teacher talk) or written (e.g., pupil’s notes, students’ essays)—produced in a “school” or educational context where language has a central place, has to be interpreted from both its context of situation and context of culture (Halliday & Hasan, 1989, Halliday, 1999). Halliday (1999) defined context of situation as the environment for language as text (p. 1). In other words, the context of situation refers to the immediate setting in which all instances of language in use or texts is functioning. Because this study focuses on the type of texts students produce in college level FL composition classrooms, this immediate environment includes (but it is not limited to); the lesson and everything related to it such as the goal(s), classroom materials such as textbooks, handouts, etc., the type of written texts or genre students are writing about, mode of teacher’s explanations (e.g., question-answer, lecturing), etc.. The broader background against which the text has to be interpreted is described as the context of culture defined by Halliday (1999) as the environment for language as a system. Because the notion of “school” or in this particular study,
“university/college educational system” is not only in itself a very large concept that includes a variety of components that could go from the concept of college education, knowledge students are being “educated” on, curriculum and college subjects to department of Romance languages, deans, etc.. However, because this study is concerned with the teaching of language as substance (Halliday, 1999), and more specifically the teaching of FL writing in a college setting, the context of culture comprises the “composition” or writing subject in the FL classroom, the FL curriculum, and the department’s program or approach on the subject. These two contexts—the context of situation and the context of culture—as Halliday (1999) added, constitute the non-verbal environment of a text, and that it is impossible to interpret one in isolation from the other. Halliday illustrated this close relationship in Figure 2.1

![Figure 2.1: Language and Context; System and Instance](image)

Textbooks or instructional materials, as previously described, were considered by Halliday (1999) as “instances” of the context of situation. As such, and especially regarding
written language, textbooks generally present standard or more formal registers of language use that differ from spoken or every day varieties. These differences related to changes in language use—and consequently variations in meaning making—were also highlighted by Halliday and Hasan (1989) through their definition of register. Register consists of three “situational configurations” (p. 39), field, tenor, and mode: field describes what is to be talked or written about, tenor expresses the relationship between the speaker and hearer, and mode the kind of text that is being produced. The combinations of field, tenor and mode as Christie (1999) explains results in the creation of different texts or genres.

**L2/ FL Textbooks**

As previously described, although very few studies evaluating FL college level textbooks have been conducted in the past (Byrnes, 1988; Walz, 1989, Lally, 1998), there are no studies that specifically examined composition textbooks and the role they play in composition pedagogy. One of the professionals in the FL field to first warn us about the impact of textbooks in the FL classrooms was Byrnes (1988). She said that “for better or for worse” (p. 29), the textbook, for a variety of reasons is both means and ends. She described that the textbook (or textbooks) used particularly in the L2 classroom not only often drives the course syllabus as well as the overall curriculum, but its use could also go beyond being that of a facilitator for the teacher's professional expertise to establishing a teaching framework “that can easily become normative” (p. 29) (Angell, DuBravac & Glonglewska, 2008; van Dijk, 2004). In her review of beginning college textbooks in the late 80s, Byrnes identified a transition in textbooks towards a more functional teaching of language, downgrading of grammar, and an emphasis on reading, listening and authentic communicative activities, however, she made some recommendations
regarding the type and amount of L2 writing activities. Some of these specific recommendations were the increase of writing activities and the need for grammar to be treated on a discourse level, rather than within isolated sentences.

Nine years later, Lally (1998) evaluated six beginning college level French textbooks published or reissued between 1995 and 1998 to determine if these recent books reflected the changes recommended By Byrnes (1988) and Walz (1989) a decade ago. Lally examined three major components of these textbooks: the treatment of writing skills, the number of communicative activities versus mechanical drills, and the existence of forced choice practice exercises. Regarding the treatment of writing skills, Lally reported that out of the six textbooks evaluated, two were devoid of any writing instruction, two included sporadic writing activities in some of the chapters of the textbook, and only two textbooks consistently integrated writing preparation and activities into each chapter. Based on her findings, the author concluded that Byrnes’ recommendations had not been fully implemented. The same was true for the other two categories included in her study. Although more recent studies on FL college level textbooks were not found, professionals in other related fields like ESL (Garton & Graves, 2013, 2014; Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013) have called for more research on the way materials like textbooks actually function in the L2 classroom.

Methodology

As explained in the introduction, the purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the influence of textbooks on the writing approaches employed and the kinds of texts produced in FL compositions courses. To accomplish this goal, four upper level college Spanish composition and conversation courses (two SPAN 3010 and two SPAN 3020 classes) were observed during the
Archival data were collected from these classrooms include; classroom observations recorded in field notes, syllabi, class handouts, writing prompts, transcripts of interviews with instructors, as well as analysis of the textbooks used in each class were key in achieving the goal of the study. Basic information about each class observed, the textbook used, and the compositions assigned in each of the classes is summarized in Table 2.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Level</th>
<th>Spanish 3010</th>
<th>Spanish 3010</th>
<th>Spanish 3020</th>
<th>Spanish 3020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Early-Morning class</td>
<td>Mrs. Noon class</td>
<td>Mrs. Morning class</td>
<td>Mrs. Afternoon class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Compositions Assigned</td>
<td>3 at home compositions</td>
<td>12 at home short compositions and 2 in-class compositions</td>
<td>4 compositions</td>
<td>One in class composition and four short test compositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Compositions Based on the Textbook</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>All four</td>
<td>All four</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants

In order to have access to the Spanish composition courses at the institution this study took place, the researcher contacted via email the instructors and professors that were assigned to teach the Spanish composition and conversation courses only on Tuesday and Thursdays during the fall of 2014. In the email, the researcher informed them of the purpose of the study and ask
their permission to observe their classes and gather some participants. The Spanish composition courses for the semester included five different sections of SPAN 3010, followed by seven sections of the next level SPAN 3020 Advanced Composition and Conversation, and two sections of SPAN 3010 for Honor students. Although most instructors replied to the researcher’s email allowing her to observe their classes, at the end, and due to schedule conflicts, only four classes were chosen (two SPAN 3010 and two SPAN 3020 courses) to be included in this study.

The four instructors, Mrs. Early-Morning, Mr. Noon, Mrs. Morning and Mrs. Afternoon (all names are pseudonyms), voluntarily agreed to participate in this study. Mrs. Early-Morning and Mr. Noon both were teaching the 3010 level courses, and Mrs. Morning and Mrs. Afternoon taught the 3020 Advanced Spanish conversation and composition courses. All four instructors had Spanish as their L1 or mother tongue, and they had more than 10 years of experience teaching Spanish as a foreign language to L2/FL learners at the college level. Classes took place twice a week, Tuesday and Thursday, and each session lasted 1 hour and 15 minutes. In each of these courses, there were approximately 15 to 17 students, and all of them were undergraduate students planning to minor or major in Spanish.

Data Collection

The specific data collection procedures extended over a 9-week period (around 94 hours) with around 17 to 18 sessions observed per class (21-22 hours per class). The researcher utilized the ethnographic methods of classroom observations recorded in field notes and two semi-structured interviews with each instructor, which were first transcribed and then coded. The average interview length was about 40 minutes. Archival data pertaining to the classes observed were also collected. Documents collected included syllabi, class handouts, writing prompts, and
the class textbooks required for each class. Three textbooks are analyzed for this study; the first one, *Revista*, was used in the two 3010 Spanish composition and conversation classes observed, *Intrigas* was used in Mrs. Morning SPAN 3020 class and *Épocas y Avances* was used in Mrs. Afternoon class. It is important to point out that although in a couple of courses all of the compositions were based on the textbook, emphasis is put only on the first composition written, because the methodology and activities preceding the writing of each composition were the same for all of them.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed based on Halliday and Hasan (1989) and Halliday’s (1999) concepts of *context of culture* and *context of situation* and *register*. As described in the theoretical framework of this study, the context of situation includes the immediate environment in which all instances of language in use or *texts* are functioning; these include the lesson and everything related to it such as the classroom activities, classroom materials such as textbooks, handouts, writing prompts, teacher’s explanations related to the different types of writing required in each class, etc.. The context of culture on the other hand, and within this study, comprises the instructor’s ideas or beliefs about the role of “composition” or writing subject in the FL classroom, the FL curriculum, and the department’s program or approach toward the subject. The concept of *Register* was used to identify the topics (*field*), as well as the instructor’s explanations regarding the relationship that needed to be establish between the writer and the reader (*tenor*) for each composition (*mode*) assigned to students in each of the classes observed.

Because Coding (Saldaña, 2009; Patton, 2010) is a typical categorizing strategy in qualitative research, archival data pertaining to each of the classes observed, such as interviews
with the instructors, syllabi, textbooks, class handouts, and writing prompts, were coded. For instance, and regarding the context of culture, instructors’ beliefs about the role of writing expressed during the interviews were coded under the code “instructor’s perspective” after the interviews had been transcribed as shown in the example below.

“Les doy estas composiciones porque creo que es importante que practiquen su español escrito” [“Instructor’s perspective”, Data from first interview with Mr. Noon, 9/30/2014]

The same coding procedure was followed for other documents such as syllabi, where the objective(s) of the course was coded under “class objective”:

**Objetivo del curso**: Entrenar a los alumnos en la **mejora de sus habilidades expresivas** mediante la práctica lo más intensiva posible, el **trabajo cooperativo** y el uso frecuente de las **nuevas tecnologías aplicadas a la enseñanza**. SE PONDRA ESPECIAL ÉNFASIS EN EL DESARROLLO DE LA EXPRESIÓN ORAL. [“Class objective”, Data from Mrs. Early-Morning’s class, 9/30/2014]

To identify the context of situation, classroom activities recorded in the field notes were categorized according to the language skills practiced in the classroom; these categories included grammar, vocabulary, listening, reading, writing and verbal activities.

After all these documents had been coded, I identified contiguity-base relations (Maxwell & Miller, 2008) between all the data previously described. As Maxwell and Miller explained, contiguity-based relations involve seeing the influence of one thing on another, or relations among parts of a text (p. 462). In this study, contiguity relationships regarding the objective of
each course, the writing, grammar, verbal, etc., activities conducted in the class and the type of
texts students were asked to produce, were juxtaposed to see the relations among them.

FINDINGS

Each of the courses observed in this study are first described by providing an account of
the objectives as well as the writing assignments required in each class. Secondly, I provide a
general overview of the textbook used in each of the four classrooms described in this study.
Special emphasis are put on the approach and the writing activities included in each textbook.
Thirdly, and because all language activities performed in each classroom are closely related to
the two main concepts presented here—the context of culture and the context of situation—a
weekly description of the activities preceding the first writing assignment required in each
classroom are presented in a Table form. Lastly, based on the SFL concepts described above, I
compare and contrast whether or not the writing context in each class are related to the type of
writing assignments students were required to complete in each class.

1. First Spanish 3010 course: Mrs. Early Morning Class

The first class observed in this study was Mrs. Early Morning’s class. This was a 3010
Spanish Composition and Conversation class. In the syllabus of this course it is written that the
goals for this class are not only to train students to improve their ‘expressive’ skills through both
group work and the frequent use of new teaching technologies, but also to develop the students’
verbal ability.

Out of the three composition assignments required in Mrs. Early-Morning’s class as
summarized in Table 2.2, only the first composition was based on a prompt from the textbook.
The second composition was based on a detective story the instructor provided to students in the class and for which students had to write a different ending. For the third composition, students had to write a comparison-contrast essay based on two movies watched during the semester. As observed in the Table 2.2, the first writing assignment was an at-home composition and it had to be around 500 words and doubled spaced.

### Table 2.2: Description of Compositions in Mrs. Early Morning’s Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Composition</th>
<th>Second Composition</th>
<th>Third Composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place of composition</td>
<td>At-home composition</td>
<td>At-home composition</td>
<td>At-home composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>A newspaper article or an opinion essay</td>
<td>A different ending to a detective story</td>
<td>Comparison-Contrast of two movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of words required</td>
<td>500 words</td>
<td>500 words</td>
<td>500 words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the first composition, in my first interview with the instructor (excerpt included below) and also in class, she indicated that the objective of the assignment was basic—to allow students a chance to practice their Spanish and write a medium-length text in Spanish.

Los objetivos no son muy profundos, hay un objetivo muy básico que es que practiquen. Básicamente en el nivel en que están, han llegado de 2002, y todavía no han escrito mucho en español, al menos, la mayoría, no ha escrito mucho en español, entonces bueno, hay un objetivo claro que es que sean capaces de crear un texto comprensible que comunique de un tamaño de unas quinientas palabras

[Data interview with Mrs. Early-Morning, 9/19/2014].

[The objectives are not very deep, there is a basic objective which is that they practice. Basically, at the level they are at; they have come from level 2002, and yet they have not practiced much their written Spanish, at least, most of them,
they have not written much in Spanish, then, there is a clear objective which is to be able to create a comprehensible text of around 500 words].

1.1. General Description of Revista

*Revista: Conversación sin Barreras 4th Edition* was used in the two 3000 level Spanish Composition and Conversation classes observed in this study. As expressed by both 3010 instructors using this textbook, the selection of this textbook was in accordance to the coordinator of the program’s wishes. *Revista* is produced in United States by Vista Higher Learning, and as clearly stated in the foreword section of the textbook, *Revista* is not designed to focus on developing students’ writing abilities but on developing students’ “interpersonal communication” (p. iii). Although *Revista* includes other language skills such as listening and writing and reading, they are seen as “supporting” skills for students’ development of conversational ability: “To improve your Spanish, you must also be exposed to other language skills. These include listening, writing, reading, and socio-cultural awareness. With *REVISTA*, you will practice these skills often as you improve your conversational Spanish” (p. iii).

*Revista* is divided into six chapters or lecciones (lessons), as they refer to them in the textbook. Every lesson opens with a **Cortometraje**, each by a different contemporary Hispanic filmmaker followed by an **Estructuras** section where they present the grammatical structures of the chapter. Then, several readings in different genres by renowned literary figures are included in the **Lecturas** section. After the readings, a **Tira Cómica** follows, and finally, every lesson ends with a written **Composición** and a **Tertulia** debate. Figure 2.2 displays a copy of the latter sections.
1.2 L2 writing Activities/Theories in Revista

As previously noted, in Mrs. Early-Morning’s class, only the first composition out of the three was based on a prompt from the textbook. As observed in the directions below, students could choose between two topics included in the Composition and Tertulia sections of the textbook: to write a newspaper article about a paranormal or supernatural activity or to provide an opinion about the use of videogames.

Tema 1a. composición: en páginas 32 y 33. Escoge:
[Topic 1st Composition: in pages 32 and 33 choose:]

a) escribir 500 PALABRAS APROXIMADAMENTE sobre ¿(PARA)NORMAL Y (SOBRE)NATURAL? Sigue para ello las instrucciones EL PLAN DE REDACCIÓN en página 32 de REVISTA o...

[To write approximately 500 words about (PARA)NORMAL and (SUPER)NATURAL? For this, follow the instructions of THE COMPOSITION PLAN in page 32 of REVISTA or...]

b) en página 33: lee las opiniones en los recuadros de color bajo el epígrafe CREADORES DE REALIDAD y elige la que te parece más acertada. Da razones de la que la eliges. Si tienes experiencia personal sobre el tema de los VIDEOJUEGOS, aporta tus historias para sustentar tu punto de vista.

[On page 33: read the opinions in the colored boxes under the title CREATORS OF REALITY and choose the one that you think is the most correct. Provide reasons for your selection. If you have personal experience on the topic of VIDEOGAMES, provide your stories to support your point of view]

However, because the events and activities that happened prior to this composition are closely connected to the development of this first composition, I will describe them here.

1.3 Classroom activities prior to first composition

Classroom activities preceding this first composition in Mrs. Early-Morning’s class ranged from vocabulary to verbal activities. Because many of these activities took place before
students turned in their first composition assignment, they have been categorized weekly in Table 2.3 below.
Table 2.3 Classroom Activities Preceding First Composition in Mrs. Early Morning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of activity</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Listening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Week</strong></td>
<td>ACT1: The whole class played a game where the purpose was to distinguish between correct and incorrect sentences. ACT2: Students had to individually correct 10 incorrect written sentences.</td>
<td>ACT3: Completion of vocabulary Act 1 &amp; 2 (pg. 25) from the textbook. It is a synonym and fill-in-the blank activity</td>
<td>Homework assignment: Writing of a joke in Spanish</td>
<td>ACT4: Each student takes turns telling his or her joke to the rest of the class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Week</strong></td>
<td>ACT3: Completion of Vocabulary Act 1 &amp; 2 (pg. 25) from the textbook. It is a synonym and fill-in-the blank activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ACT1: Tira Cómica from Textbook: ‘Viaje especial de Quino’ (p. 31). In pairs, students take turns describing and drawing what one student describes in a comic strip. ACT2: A student presents on self-selected topic (around 20-30 min.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fourth Week</strong></td>
<td>ACT4: Word game: This game is about students’ self-selected topics (e.g., food, American football). Students had to write 10 uncommon words related to the topic chosen.</td>
<td>ACT1: Reading ‘La poesía al alcance de los niños’ (p. 26-27) in the textbook ACT2: Completion of comprehension questions (1) in the Análisis section in the textbook</td>
<td></td>
<td>ACT3: A student presents a self-selected topic (20-30 min.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As observed in the chart above, during the second week of classes, lessons were mainly focused on correcting grammatically incorrect sentences. These sentences contained common mistakes made by English language learners of Spanish (e.g., Estudio inglés cuatro años/I study English for four years, el novio de María está italiano/Maria’s boyfriend is Italian, etc.). The only writing assignment during this second week was the writing of a joke students shared with the rest of the class in the second session. During the third week of classes, activities were focused on the development of students’ communicative ability: Some of these activities included the description of a comic strip found in the textbook and individual presentations on self-selected topics. In the fourth week, besides the reading and comprehension questions students did in class, there was a second individual presentation and a vocabulary game. It was in the second session of this fourth week that students had to turn in their first composition of the semester.

1.4. Analysis of Text and Context and how they are (or not) related.

In analyzing first the context of culture and then the context of situation in which this first 3000 level Spanish composition and conversation class developed, there are several remarks to be made. Regarding the context of culture, the main objective of the textbook is to develop students’ interpersonal communication (Harklau, 2002; Matsuda, 2001) and writing is only used as a “supporting” skill (Scott, 1996) to students’ development of conversational ability. The textbook’s objective clearly matched the general objective stated in the course syllabus which stated that “special emphasis will be placed in the development of students’ verbal ability”.

Regarding the context of situation, based on the classroom activities described in the previous Table 2.3, we can observe that there was no connection between the type of activities
practiced in each lesson and the type of writings students were required to produce in the course. This disconnection is closely related to the notion of register included in the notions of context of situation and culture. Based on the data gathered during the observations, neither the textbook nor the instructor provided students in the class with explanations or descriptions about the field (the topics)—a newspaper article about a paranormal or supernatural activity or an opinion essay about videogames—and mode (the relationship between the writer and hearer) for both writings in the target language. In Figure 2.3 (next), we observed that although the Composition section for the newspaper article included a ‘Plan de redacción’ (composition plan), this plan was very limited in the sense that it did not provide students with information about the characteristics of the field and tenor despite the fact that step number 5 asked students to make sure that their style corresponds to that of a newspaper article.

Figure 2.3 Plan de redacción in Composición section in Revista (Blanco, pg. 32)
Thus, regarding the influence of textbooks in the teaching of writing and the kind of texts produced in this first class observed, it is evident that for this first and only composition based on the textbook used in this course, there is a close connection between the context and type of text (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Halliday, 1999) students were required to produce in this class.

2. Second 3010 Spanish Course: Mr. Noon class.

In Mr. Noon’s class, the second 3010 level Spanish Composition and Conversation class observed in this study, the instructor used Revista as well. However, because the structure and goal of the textbook had been described in the previous section, I will describe the writing assignments required in his class. The syllabus for this class stated that the object of this course is to help students reach a higher level in both her verbal and written abilities. As displayed in Table 2.4, in Mr. Noon’s class, students were required to write two in-class compositions and twelve at-home short compositions during the semester. However, it is important to point out that none of these compositions were based on the textbook.

Table 2.4: Compositions Required in Mr. Noon’s Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of composition</th>
<th>12 short compositions</th>
<th>First composition</th>
<th>Second composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>At home</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>In class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Narrative/Argumentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My summer vacations,</td>
<td>My summer vacations,</td>
<td>The president of</td>
<td>Description of an imaginary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>favorite past time,</td>
<td>favorite past time,</td>
<td>the U.S.: Barack</td>
<td>capsule from 100 years ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drugs, war, music,</td>
<td>drugs, war, music,</td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my ideal house, my</td>
<td>my ideal house, my</td>
<td></td>
<td>2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>best friend, a dialog</td>
<td>best friend, a dialog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>among three people,</td>
<td>among three people, a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a poem, etc.</td>
<td>poem, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of words required</td>
<td>250 words</td>
<td>325 words</td>
<td>325 words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The two in-class compositions, the first took place during the first session the fifth week of classes, and the theme was the same for everybody; students had to write about “El presidente de los Estados Unidos: Barack Obama” (The president of the United States: Barack Obama). For the second in class-composition, student could pick between two topics: one about finding an imaginary time capsule from one hundred years ago and creating a new one to be opened in a hundred years, and the second one was about discussing the ways in which news coverage of public campaigns has developed the power to influence outcomes. Students had the whole class, an hour and fifteen minutes to write each of these compositions, and the number of words required was 325. Students were allowed to use their paper or electronic dictionaries. Besides these two requirements, no other instructions were given.

Regarding the at-home short compositions, they have to be around 250 words, and students had to turn them in every Tuesday in class. The themes of these compositions were selected by the instructor of the class and some of the topics were about students’ summer vacation, students’ favorite past time, drugs, war, etc. As described by the instructor of the class, the only requirement for these at-home compositions was that they had to be around 250 words. Furthermore, students were free to use any resources like a dictionary or their textbooks.

2.1 Activities Prior to the First Composition
Table 2.5: Activities Previous to In-class Composition in Mr. Noon’s Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Listening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT1: students practiced conjugation of regular verbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ACT2: Students watch first cortometraje: <em>Viaje a Marte</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT2: Students work on worksheet about verbs SER and ESTAR</td>
<td>ACT4: students read vocabulary section from textbook (p.18)</td>
<td>ACT8: Reading ‘El otro Círculo’ from textbook (p.19).</td>
<td>ACT1: Students turned in first home-essay: “Mis vacaciones de verano”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ACT3: Students do En Pantalla section from textbook (p.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT3: Students work on preposition activity from textbook (p.12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT5: Students do ‘Práctica’ section about SER/ESTAR verbs (p.11) in textbook.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT6: Students do ‘Práctica’ section on prepositions (p.13) in textbook.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT7: Students work on a POR/PARA worksheet.</td>
<td>ACT6: Started chapter 2 reading vocabulary (p.36).</td>
<td>ACT5: Students take turns reading their dialogs to the whole class.</td>
<td>ACT4: In pairs, students write short dialogs based on ‘Situaciones’ provided in the Análisis section of the textbook.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT9: students write phrases with preposition A, DE and EN.</td>
<td>ACT7: Vocabulary game.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Students turned in second at home-essay: “Mi pasatiempo favorito”.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT10: Students do act ‘en pantalla’ (p.39)</td>
<td>ACT8: Vocabulary review (p.36) in textbook and act 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT11: Students make a phrase with vocab (p. 36)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Week 3 | | | | | | |
| ACT1: Worksheet on prepositions. | ACT2: Worksheet on passive voice. | ACT12: Review of preterit and imperfect (p.43) in textbook. | | | | |
| ACT3: Started chapter 2 reading vocabulary (p.36). | ACT7: Vocabulary game. | ACT8: Vocabulary review (p.36) in textbook and act 1. | ACT3: As a whole they talked about the Tira Cómica (p.31) in the textbook. | | | |
| ACT5: Students take turns reading their dialogs to the whole class. | ACT4: In pairs, students write short dialogs based on ‘Situaciones’ provided in the Análisis section of the textbook. | Students turned in third at home-essay: “Las drogas”. | ACT9: Watch second cortometraje ‘10 minutos’ (p.39). | | | |
| ACT6: Started chapter 2 reading vocabulary (p.36). | | | | | | |
| ACT10: Students do act ‘en pantalla’ (p.39) | ACT11: Students make a phrase with vocab (p. 36) | | | | | |
| ACT12: Review of preterit and imperfect (p.43) in textbook. | | | | | | |

| Week 4 | | | | | | |
| ACT1: Worksheet on prepositions. | ACT2: Worksheet on passive voice. | ACT3: Started chapter 2 reading vocabulary (p.36). | ACT4: In pairs, students write short dialogs based on ‘Situaciones’ provided in the Análisis section of the textbook. | | | |
| ACT7: Vocabulary game. | ACT8: Vocabulary review (p.36) in textbook and act 1. | Students turned in second at home-essay: “Mi pasatiempo favorito”. | ACT3: As a whole they talked about the Tira Cómica (p.31) in the textbook. | | | |
| ACT9: Watch second cortometraje ‘10 minutos’ (p.39). | | | | | | |

41
As observed on the previous chart, most of the activities in the third week of classes were grammar related; the main grammatical structures were the verbs SER and ESTAR as well as prepositions. The fourth week of classes’ activities were varied. Nevertheless, and specifically regarding the teaching of writing, during this fourth week, one of the main written activities was the writing of short dialogs or ‘Situaciones’, described in Figure 2.4, as they are presented in the Análisis section of the textbook. This section mainly contains comprehension and interpretation questions, as well as other related activities to the ‘Cortometraje.’ Among those related activities there was ‘Situaciones,’ a dialog section to be completed in pairs. As observed, this section was not a writing section per se, but more of a verbal activity that Mr. Noon used first as a writing practice, then as a verbal activity since students had to read or present to the whole class after they had finished writing it.

**Figure 2.4: Situaciones, Revista** (Blanco, pag. 9)

Situaciones: En parejas, elijan una de las situaciones (A o B) e improvisen un diálogo. Utilicen al menos seis palabras de la lista. Cuando estén listos, represéntenlo delante de la clase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>acontecimiento</th>
<th>concebir</th>
<th>monstruo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>astronauta</td>
<td>decepción</td>
<td>nave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aterrizaje</td>
<td>despegue</td>
<td>platóilo volador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burlarse</td>
<td>entrenamiento</td>
<td>recuerdo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cohete</td>
<td>hito</td>
<td>velocidad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A**
Un niño le cuenta a un amiguito de la escuela que cuando era más pequeño su abuelo lo llevó a Marte

**B**
Dos amigos discuten acaloradamente *(heatedly)*. Uno está convencido de que existe vida en otros planetas. El otro
en una camioneta. Su amiguito se burla de él. El niño insiste en que es verdad; el otro insiste en que es mentira. está convencido de que eso es imposible. cada uno explica y expone sus teorías de manera persuasiva.

2.2 Analysis of Text and Context and how they are (or not) related

Regarding the context of culture in this second 3010 level Spanish composition and conversation class observed, and based on the number of writing assignments listed in Table 2.4 we observed that although writing in the FL was practiced more frequently, suggesting a more pronounced emphasis in the production of written material, in the end, the purpose of writing was to support students in their language development. This goal was reiterated by the instructor of the class who in his first interview indicated that the practice of written Spanish was very important for students, therefore the purpose in assigning them these compositions was to practice the target language: “Les doy estas composiciones porque creo que es importante que practiquen su español escrito” /I give them these compositions because I think it is important that they practice their written Spanish/ [Data from first interview with Mr. Noon, 9/30/2014]. Also, as stated in the syllabus for this class, the goal of this course was to help students reach a higher level in both students’ communicative and writing abilities in the target language. It is also important to point out that although Mr. Noon followed or worked more closely with the vocabulary and grammar activities presented in the textbook, the topics of the twelve at home and two in-class compositions none of them were based on the textbook, but they were selected by the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Thus, in this sense, the textbook did not influence the kind of texts students produced in this second class observed.
Regarding the context of situation and the type *register* students had to write in class, from the classroom activities described in the Table 2.5, we observed that there was no close connection between the two. For the first in-class composition, students had to write about whatever they knew about President Barack Obama (field), and for the second one students could choose between finding an imaginary time capsule from one hundred years ago and creating a new one to be opened in a hundred years, or discussing the ways in which news coverage of public campaigns has developed the power to influence outcomes. However, like in the previous SPAN 3010 class, explanations regarding the field and *mode* for these types of writings were never discussed in class.

3. Third Course: 3020 Advanced Spanish Composition and Conversation class: Mr. Morning class

Mr. Morning’s class was the continuation or next level of the two previous compositions courses described above. The class is titled “Conversación y Composición Avanzada” and the description of the objectives in the syllabus stated, that this class is both a composition and conversation class specifically designed for students needing to achieve advanced levels of linguistic competence. It also says that both abilities will have an important role in the development of the class. At the end, it says that it is expected that by the end of the course, students will be able to analyze, reflect, and give well-formed opinions on cinematographic and literary pieces from Spain and Latin-America presented during the course.

Regarding the latter, the course was entirely based on the literary and cinematographic pieces included in textbook by Courtad, Everly, and Gaspar (2010) *Intrigas: Advanced Spanish through Literature and Film*. Students in Mr. Morning’s class were required to write four
compositions throughout the semester; however, the researcher only observed classes after the third composition had taken place. As described by the instructor of the class, each composition was based in the textbook.

Table 2.6: Summary of Compositions Required in Mr. Morning’s Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of composition</th>
<th>First Composition</th>
<th>Second Composition</th>
<th>Third Composition</th>
<th>Fourth Composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-class composition</td>
<td>At-home composition</td>
<td>In-class composition</td>
<td>At home-Composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>An Interpretative literary essay</td>
<td>A Comparison/Contrast essay</td>
<td>Analysis of a character</td>
<td>An essay of cause and effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of words required</td>
<td>300 words</td>
<td>450 words</td>
<td>300 words</td>
<td>450 words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1 General Description of Intrigas

As mentioned in the introduction, Intrigas was not only designed for advanced or post-intermediate Spanish language learners, but for a literary reader. On the subject of literature, Intrigas is described as a textbook that “offers an unusual integration of literature, culture and film while also focusing students on critical thinking, interpretation, speaking and writing skills” (p. iv). Regarding the films and literary works included in each of the chapters (it is comprised of six chapters), the textbook includes a full-length or short subject films and three to four reading passages which, as described in the textbook, were “chosen for their notable importance in the field and relevance in the chapter theme” (iv). The literary formats of these reading passages include short stories, poems, plays, and novel excerpts from the established literary canon. So for instance, the first lesson or chapter comprises two stories, one poem and a novel. Then, the second lesson contains a story, a poem and a piece of theater, and so on. Furthermore, each film and literary work presented in the textbook is preceded and followed by a variety of activities: a section called Prepárate provides information about the director/author of the film or literary
piece as well as brief information on the historical context. This section also includes a small
discussion activity called Antesala with some questions to be discussed prior to the film/reading.
Then, a section titled Piénsalo follows. This section has five different activities: the first activity
may be a multiple choice, true/false activity, etc. The second activity is usually a comprehension
followed by an interpretation activity. Then, an activity to analyze and discuss the
literary/cinematographic technique used by each author is included. The penultimate activity is a
discussion activity, around five themes or five questions for discussion are included. A writing
activity called Taller de escritura ends this section.

Although this Taller de escritura section is not the main writing section in the textbook,
each film and reading included in each chapter includes this section that asks students to write
different types of genres. Some of these genres include a letter, a dialog, and brief essays
analyzing certain themes or characters in the reading. The main writing section per chapter in
Intrigas is Escritura described in further detail in the next section. Finally, the textbook itself
does not include any grammar sections or activities, grammar exercises are online activities
students have access to through a website called ‘Supersite’ they have to complete outside the
class.

3.2 L2 writing activities/Theories in Intrigas

Considered one of the key features of the Intrigas textbook, the main writing section of
the textbook titled Escritura shown in Figure 2.5. Intrigas is comprised of six chapters or
lecciones/lessons, as they refer to them in the textbook. Thus, each chapter contains a Escritura
section which requires the composing of six different types of genres: in chapter one, students
have to compose an Interpretative Literary essay; in chapter two, there is a comparison contrast
essay; for chapter three a critical review; for chapter four a literary report; chapter five requires
the analysis of a character, and finally for chapter six there is an essay of cause and effect. As
previously described, all four compositions required in Mr. Morning class and summarized in
Table 2.6 were based on one of the Escritura sections of some of the chapters in the textbook.
For instance, the first composition assignment in Mr. Morning class, an interpretative literary
essay was based on the Escritura section displayed in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Escritura section in Intrigas: Advanced Spanish Through Literature and Film
(Courtad., Everly, & Gaspar, pg. 44-45)

Each Escritura section included in each of the six chapters of the textbook looks exactly
like the one displayed in Figure 2.5. It consists of four steps: a “plan de escritura” or writing
plan, a planning and preparation section, the actual Escribir or writing section and the Revisar y
Leer/Review and Read section. The Escritura section is described as “process-based writing strand that requires students to synthesize what they have learned in the lesson” (p. iv). The focus in the process model approach as Williams (1998) described, is on writing activities, discussing drafts, and rewriting (p.53). In other words, at the heart of this model is the view that writing is a non-linear but a recursive process (Emig, 1983) in which writers not only plan extensively, but continuously review, evaluate and revise texts before its publication. This is what we observed in the Escritura section of Intrigas, described in the introduction of the textbook as a “process-based writing” (p. iv): Students were required to follow different steps or a writing plan. Some of these steps included the completion of a chart with the characteristics of each story read in the chapter, then, they had to choose a literary piece and write down the main theme, as well as some sentences or quotations which contained the main theme that the author was trying to convey. Other steps included the analysis of the literary/cinematographic technique used by the author, as well as pair/group revision/reading activities after the student had written down her essay. However, and based on the description of the classroom activities that follow next, this writing process was not followed at all by the instructor in class.

As previously mentioned, the ensayo literario interpretativo was the first essay students had to write down in Mr. Noon’s class. And as observed in the directions provided below, students were required to write a text of about 300 words about one of the text they had studied in chapter one. They had to write about the characters, their context and one of the main themes in the text. They also had to analyze the technique used by the author to tell his or her story, the message in the text, and provided their personal opinion about the text.
Instrucciones: Tú debes escribir 300 palabras sobre uno de los textos que hemos estudiado en el capítulo 1. Escribe sobre los personajes, sus contextos y los temas centrales del texto. Analiza la técnica que usa el autor para contar su historia. ¿tiene un mensaje?. Describe tu opinión personal sobre el texto.

[Instructions: You have to write 300 words about one of the texts we have studied in chapter 1. Write about the characters, their context and the main themes in the text. Analyze the technique used by the author to narrate his story. Does it have a message? Describe your personal opinion about the text.]

3.3 Classroom Activities prior to first composition

Table 2.7 describes the activities prior to the first and second composition in Mr. Morning’s class. The format or dynamics of the class was pretty much the same throughout the semester: students were required to do the readings or watch the movies included in the textbook at home. Then, in class, and with the instructor’s guidance they analyzed and discussed in small groups and/or as a class the topics addressed in each piece literary piece, as well as the characters and literary techniques. Then the students answered some comprehension and interpretative questions and together with the instructor, they also discussed some characteristics of the literary technique used by the author to tell the story.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.7: Activities Previous to in-class Composition in Mr. Morning’s Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Week</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Week</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fourth Week</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fifth Week</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First in-class Composition:</strong> Ensayo Literario Interpretativo. Students had 45 to 60 min. to complete writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **ACT 1:** Class began chapter 2. Students had to watch “El laberinto del Fauno” at home. In class in small group they analyzed each of the characters as well as the missions of the main protagonist. **ACT 2:** Each group report its findings to the rest of the class. |
| **ACT 1:** In small groups students discussed the topic of Chapter 2 on Censorship (p.61, act 5). **ACT 2:** As a class students expressed opinions on censorship, about internet and censorship, etc. **ACT 5:** Whole class discussed about “La casa de Bernarda Alba” by Lorca. They talked about the each of the characters, symbolism in the Lorca’s piece, etc. |
| **ACT 1:** The class continues discussing “La Casa de Bernarda Alba”. They discussed the different themes presented in it. **ACT 2:** Pag. 87 act 5 in textbook. In small group, then as a class students discussed the topics presented in this activity (e.g. religion, clases sociales) **ACT 3:** Class watched the short film “Tercero B”. |
Sixth Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Then, in groups students discussed about the characters and topics presented in the short film. Finally, the groups present their finding to the rest of the class.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3.3 Analysis of Text and Context and how they are (or not) related

Focusing on the analysis of context of culture in this third SPAN 3020 advanced composition and conversation class, as clearly stated in the syllabus, the class objective was to enhance both students’ writing and conversational skills. In the syllabus it was also stated that by the end of the course students were expected to be able to analyze, reflect, and give well-formed opinions on cinematographic and literary pieces from Spain and Latin-America presented throughout the course. These two objectives aligned with the ones included in the textbook—the use of literature, culture and film to develop students’ critical thinking, interpretation, speaking and writing skills. The activities described in Table 2.7, as well as the type of texts students completed for this course confirmed that the objectives were clearly achieved.

However, and regarding the context of situation and the different genres students had to write in class, it is important to highlight that although the instructor closely delivered the content and followed the discussion format for the cinematographic and literary pieces included in each chapter of the textbook, explanations regarding the field and tenor of the four compositions (interpretative, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and critical essays) required in this course—although partially included in the textbook—were not overtly discussed by the instructor in the class. The lack of explicit clarification concerning the type of register students had to produce in the class was an issue that became visible after the instructor graded
the first assigned composition—the literary interpretative essay. The day he returned this graded essay to students, and as observed in the field notes included below, he overtly stated that the essays many of them wrote did not meet the criteria of an interpretative essay.

El instructor les dice a los estudiantes que para la próxima composición no tienen que contarle la historia. Tienen que usar elementos del cuento, enfocarse en elementos y desarrollarlos. No tienen que contarle la historia o el cuento [Data from field notes 9/9/2014]

He told the students that what they did was to retell him the story, and that for the next composition they needed to focus and develop the elements or themes of the story.

Nevertheless, and as observed in the Escritura section of Intrigas displayed in Figure 2.5, this section follows a process-based writing approach that not only includes several steps to organize the information covered in each chapter (e.g., writing plan, preparation section), but it also includes several steps and strategies to identify the message or main topic, literary/cinematographic technique, type of language, etc., used by the author before actually writing the composition. However, the process-based writing approach was not followed by the instructor of the class, the focus of the class was on the delivery and discussion of the content covered in the textbook. Thus, based on the previous analysis, we observed that there was a large influence of the textbook in the teaching of writing and the kind of texts produced in this third class observed. In other words, there was a close connection between the context and type of text (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Halliday, 1999) students were required to produce in this class.

4. Fourth Course: 3020 Advanced Spanish Composition and Conversation Class: Mrs. Evening class.
The fourth and final class observed in this study was Mrs. Evening’s class. This was a 3020 Advanced Spanish Composition and Conversation class as well. The description and objectives of the course stated that both the verbal and written production in the target language would have the same importance in the development of the class. Furthermore, the description later reads that special emphasis will be placed in both written and spoken Spanish through 1) reading, 2) intensive oral practice, 3) pair and group work, and 4) written work. It is also mentioned that by the end of the course students were expected to reflect and provide well-formed opinions about cultural and social issues.

In Mrs. Evening class, there was only one major in-class composition during the semester which took place during the 10th week of classes and 4 shorter compositions included in the writing section of each prueba or exam the students took during the semester.

Table 2. 8: Summary of compositions required in Mrs. Evening’s class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Composition</th>
<th>One in-class Composition</th>
<th>Four short test Compositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In class</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>In class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) La representación de los indígenas americanos.</td>
<td>150 words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) El control de la información y la censura.</td>
<td>300 words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of words required</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike in Mr. Morning class, the textbook used in Mrs. Evening class was Épocas y Avances: Lengua en su contexto cultural (Gravina, Jaén-Portillo, Méndez & Schroeder, 2007)

During my interview with the instructor of this class, she said that that the selection of the
textbook was based on a personal decision, and it was the first time she was using it. She added that based on her experience teaching Spanish in this institution for several years, students needed to build or expand their vocabulary. For this reason, she looked for a book that would allow her to achieve this objective [Data from Interview 11/5/2014].

4.1 General Overview of Épocas y Avances

Épocas y Avances was published by Yale University, and in the preface section of the textbook, the features, philosophy and rationale and the objective and usage were described. About the objective and usage, the authors described that the textbook was aimed at the intermediate to advanced level students. They added that the textbook conformed to the current standards for FL learning (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities) (ACTFL, 1996). Also, the textbook was said to be based on “a novel based approach to second language acquisition by emphasizing a communicative-humanistic perspective on foreign language teaching and learning” (p. vii). In this regard, the authors described that the multidisciplinary approach reflected in the use of literature, art, sociology, anthropology, society and geography of Spain and Latin America, and especially on history as a teaching tool for language learning was to provide “every student with a better understanding of the cultures and events that have influenced the social and political landscapes of these regions” (p. vi).

The organization and chapter components in Épocas y Avances are divided in two sections: the first section covers temas or topics 1 to 11, and the second section includes temas 12 to 22. However, in this fall semester the instructor of this class covered topics from 12 to 20 included in the second section of the textbook. Themes in this section included: El Proyecto de
the target language. In fact, a total of seven sections including different activities were identified per topic.

The chapter opens with a pre-reading activity which consists of around five questions to be answered in pairs, followed by a section called “En el horizonte” including the main reading as well as some comprehension and vocabulary activities. Then, another vocabulary section titled “Compás” is included. More activities to stimulate the oral and written production of the FL are included in subsequent “Itinerarios” section. The major grammatical structures and exercises are presented in a section called “Brújula”. One important aspect to highlight about the vocabulary sections like “Compás” and “Brújula” is that, unlike the other Textbooks such as Intrigas, no English translation is provided. In other words, the vocabulary and grammatical structures were presented through clear and contextualized examples. In “Un poco más lejos” section, a series of communicative activities to encourage students’ more sophisticated oral and written production were included. The penultimate section in each chapter is termed “Extension” a review of complementary grammatical structures and socio-linguistic perspectives on linguistic variation is presented. The final activity section in each chapter is labeled “Escala literaria”, and it includes an extra literary selection, followed by a comprehension activity, as well as an oral and written exercises. An important characteristic to point out about Épocas y Avances is that although it claimed to provide students with the necessary tools to successfully develop their “linguistic proficiency in the four main skills” (p. vi), these skills only cover “oral/written
comprehension and oral/written production”; it did not mention the strong emphasis it put in the acquisition of vocabulary and Spanish grammatical structures.

4.2 L2 writing activities/Theories in Épocas y Avances

As previously described, Mr. Afternoon’s class compositions—one major in class and four short-exam compositions—were based on the content presented and covered during the semester from the textbook. About the short compositions, each prueba or exam students took during the semester had a writing section. Again, the number of words required was 150, and they were about a given topic related to one of the two chapters covered for each exam. As shown in Figure 2.6, the prompts for all the compositions required in this class were adapted by the instructor from the section “Un poco más lejos” which includes an oral and a written activity.

Figure 2.6: Un poco más lejos section in Épocas y Avances: Lengua en su contexto cultural
(Gravina, Jaén-Portillo, Méndez & Schroeder, 2007, pg. 219)
For the first exam, the composition was based on the “actividad oral” in the Un poco más lejos section of the first chapter—El proyecto de los reyes católicos—covered in class. As observed in the directions included below, the instructor asked students to argue or express their point of view on the given topic.
Composición: Escribe un mínimo de 150 palabras en forma de párrafo respondiendo al tema siguiente.

Write a minimum of 150 words in a paragraph form answering to the following topic:

Hay dos opiniones enfrentadas en referencia al encuentro entre las culturas indígenas y las europeas a finales del siglo XV. Unos opinan que supuso la destrucción del Nuevo Mundo y otros que fue una unión enriquecedora y positiva. Argumenta las dos posiciones con respecto al tema.

[There are two contradictory opinions regarding the encounter of the indigenous and European cultures at the end of the XV century. Some argued that it led to the destruction of the New World, while others think that it was a positive, enriching union. Argue about these two positions.]

Regarding the only in-class composition, this was about 300 words, and as observed in the next prompts, the teacher provided three different topics students could choose from. The topics were all topics included in the textbook and discussed in classroom. The first topic was about the representation of Native Americans throughout the time discussed in chapter 13. The second topic was about the control of information and censorship, and the third topic was about the debatable concept of racial purity.

**Temas de la Composición**

1. **La representación de los indígenas Americanos.** Los indígenas del continente americano se han representado de diversas formas a lo largo del tiempo. ¿Qué importancia tiene para cualquier grupo social (africano Americano, hispano, italiano, chino, irlandés, etc.) su representación por ejemplo en el cine? ¿Qué consecuencias sociales puede haber según esa representación?
2. **El control de la información y la censura.** En nuestras sociedades tan influenciadas por los medios de comunicación, ¿existen agencias u organismos que controlen información? ¿Qué tipo de información controlan? ¿En qué casos se justifica o debe realizarse ese control? ¿Cuándo se convierte en un abuso de poder? ¿Existen grupos que intentan luchar contra ese control? ¿Es bueno para la sociedad que existan páginas web como Wikileaks?

3. **El concepto de pureza racial es muy discutible.** ¿Cuál es la situación de la mezcla racial en Estados Unidos? ¿Cuál es la opinión de los estadounidenses sobre el mestizaje? En tu opinión, ¿cuáles son las consecuencias sociopolíticas que producen la mezcla de razas y culturas?

4.3. *Classroom activities and Students’ preparation*

During the fifth week of classes, when the researcher formal observations began, students were introduced to chapter 14 about the Spanish Renaissance. Prior to this chapter, students had completed a couple of chapters titled El proyecto de los Reyes Católicos and Fray Bartolomé de las Casas. However, the development and classroom activities prior to each test and composition were the same. Before starting the reading in each chapter, students would first look at the vocabulary or words included in the “Compás” section, then in order to remember the words, they would work on definition and synonym/antonym activities included in the textbook or provided by the teacher. Then, after finishing with the vocabulary activities students would work on the grammar section presented in the chapter. The instructor usually provided other sheets with additional grammar exercises. Because students covered a great extent of material before the in-class composition, I will now describe the topics, kinds of activities and grammatical structures they covered before the major in-class composition.
Table 2.9: Activities previous to in-class composition in Mr. Evening’s class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of activity</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fifth Week</strong></td>
<td>ACT5: Students correct activity on imperfect vs. preterit.</td>
<td>ACT1: Synonym act followed by antonym act 1 in textbook (p.250).</td>
<td>ACT1: Chapter 14 began: ‘El Renacimiento en España’. Students did reading (p.248-249) at home.</td>
<td>ACT8: Students do verbal activity about their “ideal university”. They have to create sentences with subjunctive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT6: Teacher introduces subjunctive in relative clausal sentences (Ex Quiero leer un libro que me haga reir.)</td>
<td>ACT2: Act 2 in textbook (p.251) definition of concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT7: Students do activity in page 254 in the textbook about subjunctive.</td>
<td>ACT3: Diagram with adjectives/nouns about the Reform and Contra reform provided by the teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT9: Students do a worksheet to fill in spaces with verb in the subjunctive tense.</td>
<td>ACT4: Students keep working on definitions on the same worksheet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sixth Week</strong></td>
<td>ACT4: Instructor introduced subjunctive with impersonal phrases. Then, students complete act 1 pg. 270 in textbook fill in the blank with verb in subjunctive.</td>
<td>ACT1: Class started chapter 15. Vocab act pg. 264 in textbook</td>
<td>ACT3: Instructor asked SS questions about reading in textbook pgs. 262-263.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT5: Based on a painting by Velazquez included in the textbook (pag.266) students had to use the subjunctive using impersonal phrases.</td>
<td>ACT2: Change and adjective into a noun and vice versa (Act1 &amp; 2) in textbook.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Students had a test in the second session of this week. The test had a writing section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seven Week</strong></td>
<td>ACT1:</td>
<td>ACT1:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eight Week</strong></td>
<td>ACT5: The class started looking at subjunctive in subordinated clauses. They looked at pages 284-287 in the textbook.</td>
<td>ACT1: Class started chapter 16: ‘La América Colonial’. They work on the vocab pg. 280 in textbook.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The second sesión of this week students had presentations on different topics (i.e., Perú, OEA en los Estados Americanos)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT6: Students work on grammar Act1 in the textbook (p.288).</td>
<td>ACT2: Students work on a worksheet providing definitions and synonyms of vocab from page 280.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT7: Student work on another activity with subjunctive on page 290 in the textbook.</td>
<td>ACT3: Students work on another vocab activity on same worksheet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT8: Instructor provided a worksheet with more activities using subjunctive.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth week</td>
<td>ACT3:</td>
<td>ACT:</td>
<td>ACT4: Students have to describe a painting of a baptism of an Indian included in the textbook (pg.304).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT1: Class started chapter 17 of textbook. Students work on vocabulary. (p.302).</td>
<td>ACT:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT2: Students work on Actividad 1: Definitions. Then on second vocab act pg. 303.</td>
<td>ACT:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT3: Students work on Act3: fill – in-the-blank in textbook pg. 305.</td>
<td>ACT:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT5: Instructor started explaining the use of the Passive voice and Pasiva refleja in Spanish. Then they work on Actividad 1 in textbook (p.308-309). Students have to convert the given sentences into passive voice.</td>
<td>ACT:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT6: Students work on sentences provided by instructor. They have to convert them into Pasiva Refleja.</td>
<td>ACT:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT7: Students work on Actividad 2 in textbook (p.310). They have to convert sentences into Pasiva Refleja.</td>
<td>ACT:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth Week</td>
<td>ACT8: Students work on activity on gestures from previous week.</td>
<td>ACT:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenth Week’s first session students had a test. The test has a writing section.</td>
<td>ACT:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the second session students have the only in-class composition of the semester.</td>
<td>ACT:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Analysis of Text and Context and how they are (or not) related.

On the context of culture in this second SPAN 3020 class, it was described on the syllabus that the course was designed for students that needed to reach an advanced linguistic competence level. In addition, it was stated that since the course was about composition and conversation, emphasis would be placed on both oral and written Spanish through reading, intensive verbal practice, pair and group work and writing. Finally, by the end of the course students were expected to reflect and provide well-informed opinions about cultural and social issues. These class objectives described in the syllabus partially differed from the several objectives stated in the textbook. As previously indicated, in the preface section of the textbook it was indicated that based on both a communicate-humanistic and multidisciplinary approach, Épocas y Avances would not only provide students with a better understanding of the cultures and events of Spain and Latin America through a series of original readings and content based activities included in it, but it would also develop and enhance students’ linguistic proficiency in the four main skills (oral/written comprehension and oral/written production). However, and closely related to the notion of context of situation, and from the description of activities included in Table 2.9, greater emphasis were put on the acquisition of vocabulary and grammatical structures; most of the activities performed in each session were dedicated to the completion of vocabulary and grammar activities. Regarding the genre or register of the four brief compositions included in each test students took during the semester, and the only in-class composition, the former could be considered argumentative essays, and the latter an opinion essay. Still, based on the observational data and analysis of the textbook, none of the sessions or
sections in the textbook included an explanation of the field and tenor of the characteristics of these different genres in the target language.

In the end, we can say that writing in this upper-level course was practiced as a support activity to learn both content and the lexicogrammatical patterns of the target language. The writing activities in the book clearly reflected this outcome, thus, we can say that the textbook indeed shaped not only the format of the class, but also the teaching of Spanish writing.

Conclusions

As stated in the introduction of this article, the aim of this study was to investigate the influence of composition textbooks on the writing approaches and the kind of texts produced in four different upper level Spanish composition and conversation courses. Halliday and Hasan (1989) and Halliday’s (1999) concepts of Context and Text, and more specifically, the notions of context of culture and context of situation were valuable to achieve the goal of this study.

In the first Spanish composition 3010 level class, the context of culture in which the compositions developed was a culture in which students’ communicative abilities and the learning of correct grammatical structures in the target language were prioritized. The textbook REVISTA used in this class reflected these two objectives as well. As previously mentioned, REVISTA is NOT a textbook designed to focus on developing students’ writing abilities but on developing students’ “interpersonal communication” (p. iii). The context of culture in this class confirmed the claim scholars in the field have been making a quarter of a century ago, the notion that language is speech, not writing (Scott, 1996; Matsuda, 2001; Harklau, 2002), and also the idea that writing in a FL is considered an adjunct to a more “worthy” goal, that is mastering

In Mrs. Early-Morning’s composition class, the first and only composition the students wrote and which was based on a prompt from the textbook, students had two choices: to write a newspaper article based on the headlines given in the textbook about a paranormal or supernatural activity or to provide an opinion about the use of videogames (field). However, based on the description of activities included in this chapter, neither the instructor nor the textbook provided students with explanations or descriptions about the register or discourse characteristics of a newspaper article or an opinion essay in the target language. Halliday (1999) considered register and genre features to be key elements in determining the type of language that will be used in the production of different texts. However, and again, based on the description of activities in Table 2.3, students did not study vocabulary related to supernatural activities or videogames.

With respect to the influence of the textbook on the type of compositions the students wrote, since there was only one composition based on the textbook, it was clear that the writing in the FL was not completely influenced by Revista, the textbook used in the classroom. Instead, the writing was mainly determined by the context of culture of the course, which again, was on developing students’ communicative abilities.

Likewise, the context of culture in which the texts produced in the second SPAN 3010 level class was not different from the first SPAN 3010 level class previously mentioned. The description of activities (context of situation) performed by students in this second class suggested that the objectives of this course included the development of their communicative skills. Although the number of writings required for this class—twelve brief at-home and two in-
class compositions might imply that writing was the focus of this class, and was practiced as a support skill to learn the language and yet, none of these compositions were based on the Revista textbook. The brief at-home compositions covered topics such as war, summer vacations, etc. While for the first in-class composition was about “El presidente de los Estados Unidos: Barack Obama” (The president of the United States: Barack Obama), for the second in-class composition, students were allowed to choose either of these two topics: finding an imaginary time capsule from one hundred years ago and creating a new one to be opened in a hundred years, or discussing the ways in which news coverage of public campaigns has developed the power to influence outcomes. Just as in the first SPAN 3010, neither the instructor nor the composition textbook provided students with explanations on the register characteristics of each type of text they had to complete for this course. Moreover, we pointed out although the instructor followed more closely the content and activities in the textbook, none of the compositions were based on the textbook clearly indicating that the texts were overall influenced by the context of culture of the class.

Contrary to the two previous SPAN 3010 level courses, the context of the third class discussed in this study—an advanced 3020 Spanish composition and conversation class—was neither a context in which the development of students’ communicative abilities nor the mastery of grammatical accuracy were the goals of the course. Instead, as stated in the course outline, the context involved analysis, reflections and expressions of well-formed opinions on cinematographic and literary pieces from Spain and Latin-America that were presented or read throughout the course. Still, the content, as well as the four compositions students had to write in this class were based on the textbook. Though comparable to the other two textbooks analyzed in this study, Intrigas—the textbook used in this class—not only includes a process-based approach
to writing, but it also emphasized on students’ providing their own interpretation of the literary/cinematographic pieces. However, this approach or information was not followed by the instructor of the course which suggest that the purpose of writing was to learn the content included in the textbook.

Finally, like in the previous class, the fourth class observed in this study was SPAN 3020, an advanced Spanish composition and conversation class. As stated in the objectives for this course both verbal and written production in the target language would have the same importance in the development of the class. Based on the description of classroom activities summarized in Table 2.9 of this class, it is evident that emphasis were placed on both written and spoken Spanish through reading, intensive oral practice, and written work as stated in the syllabus, contrary to the goal of the compositions, which were to learn both the content and lexicogrammatical structures presented in each session. The topics of the compositions were based on the readings included in the textbook used in this class, suggesting that it is partially true that the practice of writing in the classroom was to learn content. As observed in the description of activities conducted in this class, most of the activities were focused on the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar. Particularly about the acquisition of vocabulary, as the instructor described in his interview, he strongly believed that what students needed was to build or expand their vocabulary in the target language. As a result, just as in the previous three classes, neither the instructor nor the textbook provided students with explicit explanations nor descriptions about the register characteristics and discourse features of the type of genre students were required to write in this class.

At the end, and based on the observational data collected in each of the four courses included in this study, it was clear that learning to write in the target language was NOT the main
focus of these classes; writing in most of the cases was used as a support activity (Scott, 1996) to learn both the lexicogrammatical pattern of the target language—this was more evident in the two 3010 level courses—or content like in the 3020 level class focused on the literary and cinematographic pieces, or both content and lexicogrammatical patterns as in the last 3020 class observed. These were the contexts in which the texts produced in these classes were generated.

**Implications**

The findings in this study have implications at three different interrelated levels: first, the need not only to give writing a more prominent role in the FL classroom, and particularly in composition courses (Byrnes, 2009, 2010; Harklau, 2002), but also the need to clearly define the objective(s) in the teaching of writing in FL classrooms as scholars like Manchón (2009; 2011) and Ortega (2011) have suggested. It has been specifically Ortega who has invited L2 professionals in the field to define whether writing is a means to supporting learning in other areas or the end goal of learning. Thus, in order to have a more defined purpose in the teaching of writing, she and Manchón have proposed three alternative perspectives that can be applied to L2 writing practice and scholarship: learning to write (LW) and writing to learn content (WLC) or language (WLL). This distinction could be useful to FL instructors as well as L2 language learners to both have a well-defined idea of the purpose of writing in the FL classroom and to direct their efforts toward the achievement of that goal. Closely related to the idea of having a well-defined purpose in the teaching of writing, is the selection of pedagogical materials like textbooks to teach writing. A well-defined purpose of writing in the FL classroom could not only make instructor’s selection of a composition textbook easier, but also look for writing materials
that reflect a closer relationship between the context and texts students are required to produce in
the classroom.

References


Byrnes, H. (2011). Beyond writing as language learning or content learning: Construing foreign

Byrnes, H. (2009). Instructed foreign language acquisition as meaning-making: A systemic-


Courtad, J.C., Everly, K., & Gaspar, M. (2012). *Intrigas: Advanced Spanish through literature*


CHAPTER 3
USING APPRAISAL THEORY TO TRACK STUDENTS’ CONSTRUCTION OF INTERPERSONAL MEANING IN SPANISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING

Introduction
The use of literary texts to develop students’ analytical skills is at the core of foreign language writing, especially in upper foreign language (FL) composition courses. As language professionals in the field describe (Ruiz-Funes, 1999a, 1999b; Schultz, 1991a, 1991b; Chaves-Tesser & Reseigh Long, 2000), the ability of students to read articles and literary selections and to respond to them in an insightful and critical manner is central to the goal and practices of university FL education. Critical thinking, as Paul (1990) explained, involves an active process of examination and evaluation of information to decide its reliability or worth. However, as it has been documented in few studies (Esplugas & Landwehr, 1996; Henning, 1992; Ruiz-Funes, 2001) conducted on this subject, college FL learners struggle to analyze an issue and support an opinion on that issue by providing cohesive reasoning. Furthermore, scholars in the FL field, like Ruiz-Funes (2001), have concluded that “the ability to write with grammatical accuracy is not an indicator of the students’ ability to express elaborated ideas” (p. 226).

Although the ways that writers and speakers express their opinions have long been recognized as important features in first and English as a second language studies (Gray & Biber, 2012; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Matsuda, 2001; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007), very little is known about this process within a FL context. Furthermore, because the ways emergent writers and
speakers express their opinions has received scant attention in instructed FL acquisition, we do not know to what extent FL students’ abilities to express their opinions has an impact on their written production in the target language. The few studies existing within the FL field have conceptualized the semiotic author’s stance and views in the text mainly in two ways: Ruiz-Funes (2001) used the term *task representation* (Flower, 1990; Kantz, 1990) to refer to the manner in which students interpret a reading-to-write task, and therefore, the type of paper they produce, and Henning (1992) and Esplugas and Lundwehr (1996) referred to it as *critical* or *literary interpretative skills*. However, in this study, the author’s opinion is described in systemic functional linguistics (SFL) terms as the construction of interpersonal meaning, more specifically as “appraisal” (Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005; White, 2003).

As described by Gray and Biber (2012), the construction of interpersonal meaning in language is concerned with the linguistic mechanisms speakers and writers use to convey personal attitudes and assessments in the language they produce. Several researchers have pointed out (Coffin, 2002; Hyland, 2005; Hyland & Milton, 1997; Schleppegrell, 2004; Swain, 2007; Tardy & Matsuda, 2009) that the construction of interpersonal meaning is arguably highly important in the context of working with second/foreign language (L2) writers, because these writers not only require a command of lexicogrammatical choices to construe their meanings (Coffin, 2000; Thompson, 2004), but they also need to have control over interpersonal meanings to build author/audience relationships and develop a personal voice or stance.

Because SFL and Appraisal theory have proven to be helpful in supporting emergent language learners in developing critical perspectives on texts and expressing these in an expanding use and control of academic language registers when writing in L1 and L2 contexts, an *appraisal* analysis of three texts FL students were required to produce in an upper level
Spanish composition and conversation class was utilized to answer the following research questions:

1. How do college students minoring in Spanish construct interpersonal meaning based on reading-to-write texts in the target language, and how does their construction of interpersonal meaning of the text shape their written stance?

Following the presentation of my analysis, I consider implications of this line of investigation for faculty development in Spanish composition programs.

**Theoretical Framework**

In the discussion that follows, I draw from SFL and its Appraisal theory (Hood, 2010; Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005; White, 2000, 2003, 2012) to analyze the linguistic resources FL learners of Spanish use to realize interpersonal and evaluative meanings. This system articulates how various linguistic resources included in the system’s three interrelated sub-systems—attitude, graduation and engagement—are used by writers/speakers to negotiate social relations.

**The Construction of Interpersonal Meaning in Second/Foreign Languages**

As described by Martin and White (2005), the construction of interpersonal meaning in language is concerned with not only how writers/speakers in texts adopt stances toward the material they present but also how they construct a particular authorial voice or persona, the linguistic mechanisms they use for the sharing of emotions, feelings and values, and how they align or disalign themselves with actual or potential readers/listeners (p. 1). Moreover,
researchers, such as Fløtum (2012), have demonstrated that stance and voice in academic writing vary across cultures.

Although many interpretations of voice exist (Tardy, 2012), Matsuda (2001) offered a broad social constructivist definition of voice. He defined it as the “amalgative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available yet ever-changing repertoires” (p. 40). Matsuda’s social constructivist definition of voice also emphasized the fact that the ways in which voice is constructed are not universal; different languages provide different possibilities for the construction of voice according to the linguistic features of each language. Studies in this line of research include Hyland and Sancho Guinda’s (2012) ample examination of stance and voice in written academic genres and Coffin’s (2002) investigation of key rhetorical strategies used by historians in history discourse to persuade and position the consumer. Similarly, Swain (2007), in his work, disclosed the resources involved in persuasive writing in academic discussion. Chang and Schleppegrell (2011), as well, drawing on the Engagement framework in SFL, demonstrated the need for explicitly making available to L2 language writers the use of patterns of expanding and contracting options to create a texture that coherently presents an authorial perspective. In a similar study, Lancaster (2011) demonstrated that the successful realization of stance is "controlled" through the frequent use of coordinated patterns (via concede/counter and deny/counter pairs) to engage with reader expectations—patterns that were not frequently found in the papers written by L2 writers. Other studies include the work of Derewianka (2007) on adolescents’ interpersonal writing for school subjects, such as history, as they progress through secondary schooling, and Wu (2007), whose work explored the differentiated patterns of use of evaluative expressions in high- and low-rated geography undergraduate essays.
Appraisal

Martin and White (2005, 2007) defined Appraisal as a system of interpersonal meanings. More specifically, “[Appraisal] is concerned with evaluation: the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned” (p. 22). These attitudes could be the writer’s, or they may be attributed to some other source. Attitudes, as Martin and Rose (2005) explained, are gradable. This means that they vary in their degrees of intensity or amplification. Therefore, and based on the authors’ description, Appraisal analysis makes use of three interrelated sub-systems to track choices in interpersonal meaning: Attitude, Graduation or amplification, and Engagement or source, which Martin and Rose represent in Figure 3.1

Figure 3.1: Model of an Appraisal system as in Martin and White (2005)
Kinds of attitudes

As observed in Fig. 3.1, Martin and Rose (2005) further divided attitudes into three groups: affect or expression of people’s feelings, judgment, which, as the word suggest, refers to a judgment of people’s characters and appreciation. This latter involves our appreciation of things like TV shows, books, all forms of artistic expressions, such as music, dance, theater, architecture, etc., as well as our feelings about nature.

About the amplification of attitudes, in the English language, the volume of these can be turned up or down by making use of adverbs like very, really, and extremely, in the first case, or in the second case, by using adverbs like fairly, somewhat, less, etc. Like English, in Spanish, there are adverbs like muy, mucho, más, tan, extremadamente, demasiado (e.g., Era tan/muy/demasiado-a pesado-a/ He was very/so heavy) or the suffix –ísimo/a (e.g., feísima-o, guapísimo-a) to signal an increase in people’s attitudes (Portolés, 2004). As Portolés described, the use of scalar or quantity implicatures (Horn, 1984, 1989; Levinson, 2000), like the ones listed above, could not only belong to all or some speakers of a given language, but they could vary from one linguistic community to another (p. 255). Martin and Rose also described lexical items that include degrees of intensity, such as happy, delighted, ecstatic, etc. They referred to the use of this kind of amplifying as force. The second kind of amplification includes words, such as about, exactly, or real, sort of, kind of and other similar words, that Martin and Rose said are used to ‘sharpen’ or ‘soften’ categories or people and things. This kind of amplifying is referred to as focus. In Spanish, there are adverbs like más o menos, menos, un poco, verdadero-a, realmente, and the suffix –ito, -ita (e.g., feito, bajita), as well, to denote a decrease in people’s attitudes toward other people or things.
Finally, about the engagement system, Martin and White (2005) described that his social perspective on the engagement system is based on Bakhtin’s and Voloshinov’s notions of dialogism and heteroglossia. Bakhtin’s (1981) notion of *heteroglossia* has been defined as the diversity of social speeches or voices within a text and *monoglossia*, the single voice of an author. From this ‘dialogic’ perspective, Martin and White explained, the engagement system is concerned with the linguistic resources speakers and writers utilize to position themselves (e.g., against, alongside, as undecided, or as neutral) in texts and in relation to other voices referenced in these texts. Like the three participants in this study, they were required to take a stance towards the passive role of Spanish women in the 19th century presented in the literary text on which the students based their compositions. As observed in Fig. 3.1, the speaker/writer can use monoglossic utterances, also referred to as ‘bare assertions,’ to engage with alternative points of view, or they can be heteroglossic (multi-voiced), where different positions are acknowledged.

**Methods**

In this study, the researcher, following Martin and White (2005, 2007) *appraisal* system described above, analyzed three writing samples produced in an undergraduate Spanish composition and conversation honors class. In this upper level 3010 Spanish Composition and Conversation Honors course, students had two in-class compositions throughout the semester. However, for this study, only writing samples from the students’ first composition were analyzed. The topics of both compositions were taken from the textbook students used in class: *Repase y escriba: Curso avanzado de gramática y Composición* (Canteli- Dominicis & Reynolds, 2011).
Situational Context of Focal Composition

As previously mentioned, only participants’ writing samples from the first composition were analyzed in this study. Students in this 3010 Spanish composition and conversation honors class were required to write two in-class compositions throughout the semester. The first composition was based on a short story included in the textbook titled Águeda (see Appendix A), written by the Spanish writer Pío Baroja in the first half of the twentieth century. For the second composition, students had to write an argumentative essay based on another literary piece included in the textbook.

The selection of this first composition as the basis for this analysis was based on the fact that all three participants in this study not only exhibited different proficiency levels that varied from advanced high to intermediate low (ACTFL proficiency guidelines, 2012), but also on the fact that each of them expressed difficulty understanding the reading on which the writing assignment was based. They all concurred that their poor understanding of the reading inhibited their abilities to write “better” papers in the target language.

The composition took place the third week of classes during the 2014 fall semester. However, a week previous to the writing of this composition, students took turns reading the text. After finishing reading the story, the teacher asked the students a series of questions included in the textbook about the story (included in Appendix B). The first set of questions included 10 comprehensive questions about the reading. Some of these questions were: ¿Qué hacía Águeda en el balcón?/What was Águeda doing on the balcony?, ¿Cómo era Águeda físicamente?/How did Águeda look physically?, ¿Cómo era el solar que ella veía desde el balcón?/How was the plot Águeda used to see from her balcony?, ¿Qué sentía Águeda por el abogado?/What were Águeda’s feelings toward the lawyer?, etc. The second section consisted of
8 questions requiring students’ personal opinions about the text. Examples of these questions are:

the author introduces us to the main character, a woman, weaving some lace and doing some embroidery. What is the immediate image that the reader has of her?, Do you think that the lawyer realized Águeda loved him? Why (not)? All students took turns answering these questions, and none of them seemed to have trouble answering them.

In the instructions for this first composition provided above, students were expected to write 350 words, and they were also required to use preterit and imperfect verb forms, as well as to pay special attention to common errors made by English speakers. Concerning the latter, the instructor provided students a sheet with a list of 20 common errors usually found in Spanish essays written by English speakers. The list included mistakes, such as the use of certain prepositions after verbs, like *to look for* and *to wait for*, that students translate into Spanish as *buscar por* or *esperar for*, as well as the use of lexical phrases that they literally translate from English to Spanish. Examples of these literal translations are *tener un buen tiempo*, which they translate as ‘to have a good time,’ *al primero* for ‘at first,’ *el resultado* or *la resulta* instead of ‘el resultado,’ among many others. The instructor also provided students with an English/Spanish list of discourse markers and expressions to introduce, develop and conclude an argument. In class, the instructor told the students that these discourse markers and expressions “make written Spanish more sophisticated”: “Son expresiones de secuencia que dan más sofisticación al español.” Some of these markers or expressions included: *Lo primero que hace falta (es necesario) decir es que...*/ *The first things that need to be said are that...*, *en primer lugar, consideremos...*/ *First of all, let us consider..., comencemos por...*/ *Let us begin with, etc.*
Escribe una redacción de 350 palabras sobre el siguiente tema. Fíjate en el uso del pretérito y el imperfecto, y trata de utilizar también las indicaciones sobre la estructura de una redacción. Presta también atención a los errores comunes.

[Write a composition of 350 words about the following topic. Pay attention to the use of preterit and imperfect, and also try to use the directions about the structure of a composition. Pay attention as well to some common errors]

Tema:

Las confesiones de Águeda. Escribe un relato en primera persona en el que la protagonista nos cuente lo mismo que Pío Baroja en el cuento, pero desde su punto de vista. ¿Qué sentía ella hacia los otros personajes? ¿Cómo veía ella la situación que había en su casa? ¿Tenía ella complejo por su falta de atractivo físico? ¿Cómo fue la decepción que sufrió con el abogado? ¿Por qué aceptó al final la situación sin rebelarse? ¿Cómo veía ella su futuro? ¿Tenía, a pesar de todo, algunos planes y esperanzas?

[Write an account/short story in first person in which the main character tell us the same as Pio Baroja in the story, but from her own point of view. What did she feel toward the other characters in the story? How did she perceive the situation in her house? Did she have a complex due to her lack of physical attraction? How was the disappointment that she had with the lawyer? Why did she accept the situation at the end without opposing to it? How did she look at her future? Did she have, after all, some plans and hopes?]
Águeda: the reading

Águeda is the story of a young girl with a couple of physical defects. Baroja described her in a couple of excerpts in the text as follows:

Era una muchacha rubia, angulosa. Tenía uno de los hombros más alto que el otro; sus cabellos eran de un tono Bermejo; las facciones desdibujadas y sin forma. {…}. Águeda tenía esa timidez que dan los defectos físicos, cuando el alma no está llena de rebeldías. (Canteli- Dominicis & Reynolds, 2011, p.2)

[She was a young blonde girl with angular features. One of her shoulders was taller than the other; her hair had a red tone; her features blurred and without shape. {…}. Águeda had that timidity caused by physical defects, when the soul is not full of rebelliousness.]

Because of her physical defects, Águeda is forced to live a secluded life. However, she still dreams about finding a husband and becoming a mother. For a short period of time, she believes that a young lawyer who frequents the family is interested in her. However, she found out that he is in love with her older sister, Luisa, after he told her that he had asked Luisa’s hand in marriage (For further reference the story has been included in Appendix A).

Pío Baroja’s literary pieces are part of the Spanish literature canon. Baroja, as well as Unamuno and Azorín were key novelist known as the Generation of ‘98. Águeda is a short novel included in Baroja’s first publication Vidas Sombrías; a compilation of short stories first published in 1900. As Arregui-Zamorano (1998) and Crippa (2011) described, through these short novels Baroja soughted to reflect the life and reality of the Spanish people living in both the city and the countryside during his time. Thus, Baroja’s male and female characters represent in
different ways the Spanish society of this époque. Baroja’s negative conception of the world and human beings are reflected on some of the themes presented in his writing. Some of these topics are human pain, sadness, man’s helplessness, marginalization, frustration, emptiness, monotony, etc. Particularly regarding Baroja’s female characters, Arregui-Zamorano argued that Águeda represents the group of women marked with an extreme sensitivity and innate kindness; qualities, the author added, that prevent these types of women from rebelling and instead lead them to accept the adverse circumstances of their lives (p. 167). Although providing more of the above background information would have been very helpful for students in the class that was not the case.

Participants

There were three participants in this study; Nadia, Aliyah and Johnny (all students’ names are pseudonyms), all of them undergraduate students enrolled in a Spanish composition and conversation honors class. Students’ involvement in this study was based on their voluntary participation. Nadia was in one of the two sections of the class, and Aliyah and Johnny were in the second section of this class. Both Aliyah and Johnny were sophomores, and Nadia was a freshman at the time of the study. In each class, there were approximately 15 students, and they met twice a week for 75 minutes each time. The professor of the class was a Spanish born female, a senior lecturer of Spanish at the time of study.

About the language proficiency level of each student participating in this study, all three students reported having studied Spanish for four or more years. However, specifically referring to the participants’ experience writing in Spanish, Nadia had not only the most exposure to the written characteristics of the Spanish language, but the most practice at higher levels. Nadia
described her experience in Advance Placement classes during her high school years where she had to write critical and insightful papers, but also her experience as a student in a Governors Honors program during the summer of 2012 where she had to speak and write in Spanish for four hours every day. Thus, at this point she said, the ability to write in Spanish came easily to her. Aliyah on the other hand, recalled her experience writing in Spanish during her sophomore and senior year in high school, and later on in a couple of Spanish courses during her freshman year in college. Aliyah described her experience writing in Spanish during these years as one in which writing was not only to practice the vocabulary and grammar learnt in class, but it was also focused on the writing of ‘correct sentences’. As for Johnny, he recalled his experience writing in Spanish since middle school all the way through college where he took a couple of two thousand level courses before taking this three thousand level Spanish composition and conversation class. He said that the type of writing he practiced during these years were mainly narratives (e.g. write your vacations, your childhood) to practice the vocabulary and grammar he has been learning in class.

Data Collection

This inquiry draws from data collected over a 9-week period (around 94 hours) of a larger qualitative study of non-Spanish major experiences writing in Spanish as a foreign language (FL). Ethnographic techniques were used in the data collection process, in order to determine patterns in the practices of the classroom studied. These included classroom observations, individual interviews with the instructor of the class as well as with each participant, and the collection of the archival data pertaining to each of the classes observed. For the purposes of this analysis, there were three main sources of data: 1) participants’ writing
samples of the first composition they were require to write in class, as well as other archival data such as class handouts, and the class textbook required for this class; 2) detailed notes taken during classroom observations of each of the two Honor sections of the class; and 3) Audio-taped interviews with the instructor of the class (2 interviews), as well as each student participating in this study (2 with each). This resulted in a corpus of 8 interviews, all of which were transcribed; the average interview length was about 40 minutes. Interviews with students took place in English and the interviews with the instructor were in Spanish.

Data Analysis

Classroom field notes were coded thematically (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in order to log observed FL writing classroom practices prior the first composition had taken place. Interview data analysis with each of the participants consisted of constructing a chronology of events related to their past and present experience writing in Spanish. Thus, case study approaches (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995) were employed to build case study narratives. Such narratives described aspects of participants’ past and current experience writing in the FL since they initially started learning it. In analyzing the participants’ writing samples I adopted Martin and White’s (2005, 2007) Appraisal system comprised of the three interrelated sub-systems—attitude, graduation and engagement—to analyze the linguistic resources these FL learners of Spanish use to adopt an interpersonal stancetaking. For instance, the first participants’ feelings and emotions, as well as her judgement towards Águeda’s passive role (attitude) were identified in the introductory paragraph of her essay, when she said she was not the kind of person her family thought she was. Later in the text, the participant uses words like ‘stupidity’ and ‘suffering’ that clearly revealed again her attitude towards the main character in the story.
In identifying the three interrelated sub-systems in each of the participants writing samples, the same process was followed as displayed in the findings section.

## Findings

*First case of interpersonal meaning: Nadia and Águeda*

The following text displayed in Fig. 3.2 belongs to Nadia, the first participant in this study. Data from the interview with each of the participants in this study revealed that Nadia not only had had the most exposure to the written characteristics of the Spanish language, but she had experienced more complex writing. In this first composition, Nadia obtained one of the highest grades in the class as later described by the instructor in our interview.

**Figure 3.2. Nadia’s essay**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nadia’s Text</th>
<th>Appraisal Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Attitude:</strong> in Nadia’s essay, her negative feelings and emotions towards Baroja’s main character are established mainly through her use of verbs that deny or reject her role in the text (lines 2,5):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lo primero que hace falta decir es que no era yo como mi familia pensaba. Aunque viviera en un cuarto horrible con todo roto y antiguo, esto no me definaba <em>en absoluto</em>. Probablemente debí empezar del principio.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No sería exagerado decir que bordaba la mitad de cada día por un mes para la aduaja de mi hermana pero yo aceptaba esta consecuencia de mi estupidez. Nunca había entendido cómo pensaba mi familia y por eso sufría muchísimo. Por ejemplo mi mamá era la dueña de la casa pero no comprendía cómo ser cariñosa tampoco comprendía cómo relajarnos cuando estábamos anciosos o preocupados. Mi hermana Luisa me molestaba mucho porque era exactamente como mi mamá y no sabía hablar ni pensar por sí mismo. Sin embargo, Matilde tenía el problema completamente opuesto porque nunca cerraba su boca. A veces pensaba que ella necesitaba dejar más tiempo para el esparcimiento. Una vez cuando estábamos tomando el sol en la playa, Matilde fue a otra familia allí y protestó sobre su paraguas demasiado alto. Una no sé lo que quería sin pensar en nosotros. Sé que no era perfecta tampoco pero por lo general la situación en nuestra casa era deprimida sin razón buena.

Ahora seguimos contando la historia del abogado. Nunca había conocido alguien tan guapo y amable pensaba yo antes de la decepción. Obviamente no era yo guapísima de causa de mi situación física pero cada día el me dijo «Eres la mujer más bonita del mundo». Cuando él habló conmigo toda la noche sobre Luisa ese día tan...

...no era yo como mi familia pensaba. I wasn’t as my family used to think.

...esto no me definaba en absoluto. /...this didn’t define me at all.

Although in some cases she does not use specific adjectives, she describes the members of her family like her mother and father as ‘incapable’ (line 16, 38)

Nadia’s appreciation and judgement towards Agueda’s behavior and role are also expressed in the text when she said (line 11)

...yo aceptaba esta consecuencia de mi estupidez/...but I did accept this as a result of my stupidity.

Graduation: Force is either achieved through the use of modifying intensifiers like en absoluto/at all (line 5).

Or by adding the suffix –ísimo/a or mucho to boost the level of intensity (lines 14, 20, 49)

...y por eso sufría muchísimo. ...and because of that I used to suffer a lot.

Mi Hermana Luisa me molestaba mucho... My sister Luisa bothered me a lot...

Obviamente no era yo guapísima... Obviously I was not very beautiful...

Or through the use of pre-modifying intensifiers like completely or never (lines 24, 25).

...Matilde tenía el problema completamente opuesto porque nunca
horrible después de disfrutarse conmigo por algunos meses, casi le maté. Nunca había conocido alguien tan mentiroso y grosero. Esperaba que no fuera con Luisa cómo era conmigo. Ésto nos lleva a la consideración si debía rebelar contra la boda de causa del hombre terrible o ayudar a mi hermana que todavía amaba con su boda perfecta. Es claro que elegí la segunda opción.

Para mí el futuro es brillante aunque mi familia no lo entienda. Tengo ganas de sacar trabajo bueno para construir la vida mía sin ayuda de mi familia y sin ayuda de algún hombre. Quizás seré abogada que luchará por los derechos de mujeres. Si tuviera suficiente tiempo, querría viajar a muchas lugares especiales del mundo. Ojalá que conoceré un hombre perfecto para mí porque todavía no he perdido toda la esperanza. Todo lo cual sirve para demostrar que es posible aprender del pasado para crear un futuro magnífico.

And there are a couple of instances in which **Focus** is sharpen through the use of adverbs like *exactamente* and *completamente* (lines 21, 24)

Mi hermana Luisa me molestaba mucho porque era exactamente como mi mamá…

*My sister Luisa bothered me a lot because she was exactly like my mom…*

**Engagement**: In Nadia’s essay utterances are ‘heteroglossic’, in her first sentence she is denying ‘her’ passive role when she used phrases like

…*no* era yo como mi familia pensaba./*I was not as my family used to think.*

or… esto *no* me definaba en absoluto/*this did not define me at all.*

Through this sentences, and especially in her conclusion Nadia categorically chose not to align with Baroja’s voice or passive past history of women—particularly of Spanish women—during the early 19th century. Nadia’s voice specifically reflects the view of a woman of the 21st century and which is further discussed below.

Nadia’s construction of interpersonal meaning with Baroja’s text analyzed through the appraisal system allowed us see very interesting elements: First regarding her *attitude* towards Baroja’s text, she overtly expressed her negative feelings and personal criticism to the ‘passive’ role of the main character in the story in her introductory paragraph as displayed in Figure 3.2. Her first line, “Lo primero que hace falta decir es que no era yo como mi familia pensaba/The
first thing that is necessary to say is that I was not as my family used to think” clearly displays Nadia’s rejection towards the main character’s lack of agency or passivity. Furthermore, a sense or feeling of “anger” towards the main character’s submissiveness is reflected in the sentence “… pero yo aceptaba esta consecuencia de mi estupidez/ …but I did accept this as a result of my stupidity. In fact, throughout her essay Nadia tried to portray Águeda differently; a character with more agency, a woman very aware of her situation, and one who believes can change it as we observed in Nadia’s final paragraph.

Second, Nadia’s advanced and more sophisticated knowledge of written Spanish is reflected in her system of graduation or amplification. She resourcefully used a variety of adverbs or lexical items such as en absoluto/at all or demasiado/too much, the suffix –ísimo/a or mucho to enhance the force her sentences. And in other instances she used adverbs like completamente/completely or exactamente/exactly to sharpen the focus of her statements.

Finally, regarding the Engagement system and as described by Derewianka (2007), this “deals with the extent to which the authorial voice engages with alternative points of view, opinions and value judgements (p. 144). Based on the instructions students received for the completion of this task, they were required to use the character of Águeda “to project” (Hood, 2010; White, 2003) emotions, evaluations and opinions that were experienced by Spanish women’s during the late 19th century: “Escribe un relato en primera persona en el que la protagonista nos cuente lo mismo que Pío Baroja en el cuento, pero desde su punto de vista”/Write a story in the first person in which the protagonist narrate us the same as Pío Baroja in the story, but from her own point of view. Thus, in this sense, the writing assignment opened a space for a woman of a different century and culture to have “a voice” and express her point of view. According to Derewianka in an empathetic task like this, it is necessary to
distinguish between the writer of the text and the character created by the writer. Thus, when Nadia used phrases in her composition as in “…no era yo como mi familia pensaba”/ *I was not as my family used to think* or “… esto no me definaba en absoluto”/*this did not defined me at all* or “… yo aceptaba esta consecuencia de mi estupidez”/*I accepted this as a consequence of my stupidity* Nadia is displaying her ‘heteroglossic’ voice by rejecting (disclaim) her alignment with the value position presented by Baroja in the text. Martin and White (2005) explained that in expressing our aligned/disaligned value position with do it with respect to both “attitudinal assessments and to beliefs or assumptions about the nature of the world, its past history and the way it ought to be (p.95). Thus, in Nadia’s case, she categorically chose not to align with the passive past history of Spanish women during the early 19th century, and instead adopted a position of women of the 21st century.

Regarding this latter, although Nadia fulfilled the requirements for this composition (e.g., the use of imperfect and subjunctive, the use of discourse markers and expressions), her construction of interpersonal meaning with the text was considered unsuccessful by the instructor of the class. The instructor referred to Nadia’s conclusive paragraph as ‘disconnected’ or a ‘deviation’ from the story. Furthermore, the instructor of the class interpreted this ‘deviation’ as Nadia’s lack of knowledge as to how to conclude the story, leading her to a disjointed paragraph. However, in her second interview, Nadia acknowledged not only that her incomplete understanding of the story not only made her ‘make things up’, but she also said that her inability to fully understand this exact ‘value position’ Baroja tried to reflect on his piece—the role of Spanish women during the 19th century—affected the structure of her text, specifically as to how to conclude it.
Second case of interpersonal meaning: Aliyah and Águeda

The text displayed in Figure 3.3 belongs to Aliyah, the second participant in this study. As described by the instructor of the class, Aliyah’s composition reflected most of the students’ level in the class.

Figure 3.3. Aliyah’s Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aliyah’s text</th>
<th>Appraisal Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Hola, me llamo Águeda. No soy bella pero soy muy inteligente y simpática. Tengo pelo rubio y uno de los hombros es más alto que el otro. Tengo dos hermanas, Luisa y Matilde, y una madre y un padre. Nadie en mi familia me comprende. Yo soy tímida porque los defectos físicas todavía. Por eso ojalá que mi familia no actuen diferente cerca de mí. Puedo ver la calle y la plaza de mi cuarto. Me gusta mirar los personajes con sus amigos y familias. No soy contenta como les. No tengo un novio. Era enamorada con un abogado. Él era guapo y inteligente. Era un amigo de la familia. Todos los veces él iba a mi casa, estaba muy allegre. Me gustaba mucha hablar con él, porque era menos superficial que los otros hombres. Era amable y siempre tenía una sonrisa. Me lo gustaba mucho pero él no supo. Una noche él me preguntó un cuestión. Preguntó si yo quería que él formase parte de mi familia. En ese momento está muy emocionada y nerviosa. Tengo una sonrisa grande por la allegría. Sin embargo, la allegría era breva. Lo terminó cuando el abogado me dicho eso. ¡He preguntado a mi padre para la mano de mi hermana, Luisa! No quería casarme. Yo no le decí, pero estaba muy triste. Pasé la noche llorando. Estaba contenta para mi hermana pero también tenía vergüenza. No debió</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude: In her essay Aliyah expressed her affect, appreciation and judgement for the main character (lines 1-2) through her use of adjectives in sentences like: No soy bella pero soy muy inteligente y simpática. [I am not beautiful but I am very intelligent and likeable].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(line 9) Yo soy tímida porque los defectos físicas todavía. [I am shy because of the physical defects.]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(line 14) No soy contenta come les. [I am not happy like them].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(line 47) Tenía miedo que yo nunca encontraría el hombre perfecto para mí. [I was afraid I would never find the perfect man for me.]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation: Aliyah not only used fewer, but more common pre-modifying intensifiers like muy/very (lines 2, 18, 31): Todos los veces él iba a mi casa, estaba muy allegre. [Every time he would come to my house, I was very happy.]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yo no le decí, pero estaba muy triste. [I did not say it but I was very sad].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She also heightened and weakened the force of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
haber pensado que el abogado le gusta a mí.

¿Por qué estar enamorado con una persona fea cuando puedas estar enamorado con una mujer bella? Mi familia actuan como soy una princesa pero yo sé que no soy especial.

Después de eso desillusión, regresé a mi cuarto. Comencé hacer las ajueras para la boda. Tenía que ayudarle a mi hermana porque lo sería una día especial para Luisa. En lo mismo tiempo, veía a la plaza, donde había muchos hombres. Pero nadie era tan perfecto como el abogado. Los otros hombres eran aburridos y aparecían animales domesticados. Tenía miedo que yo nunca encontraría el hombre perfecto para mí. Soñaba de encontrado mi amor. En mis sueños él era guapo y inteligente. Tenía la sonrisa más bella. Pero en realidad nunca lo conocí. Por eso creo que el amor es solo un sueño.

Adjectives in Spanish by adding other adverbs like mucho or menos (lines 19, 22):

Me lo gustaba mucho pero él no supo. [I like him a lot but he didn’t know it]

…porque era menos superficial que los otros hombres. [Because he was less superficial than the other men.]

And there is an instance in which Aliya sharpened the focus of her sentence by adding the adverb solo (line 52).

Por eso creo que el amor es solo un sueño. [That’s why I believe that love is just a dream]

**Engagement:** Although Aliyah’s essay could be considered more of a summary of Pío Baroja’s story, there are a couple of instances in which Aliyah’s engagement with the text ‘represents’ other voices or points of view (heteroglossic). However, this is further discussed below

No soy bella pero soy muy inteligente y simpática/ *I am not beautiful, but I am very intelligent and likeable.*

The description of Aliyah’s composition as an example of most students’ level in the class not only has several important implications regarding FL students’ difficulty constructing interpersonal meaning with literary text in the target language, but also it demonstrates the importance and usefulness of theories like the Appraisal system to make both students’ and teachers aware of these problems.

First, regarding the sub-system of attitude, and unlike in Nadia’s text, in Aliyah’s essay it was difficult to identify more personal or stronger emotions, evaluation, and assessment of Baroja’s main character, Águeda. This difficulty is related to the fact that her essay could be
considered more a summary of Baroja’s story. Aliyah’s sporadic inclusion of sentences displaying some sort of feelings towards the main character were no further supported in the text. An example of the former is Aliyah’s second introductory sentence; “No soy bella pero soy muy inteligente y simpatico”/I am not beautiful, but I am very intelligent and likeable. In the original text (included in Appendix A) there is nowhere mentioned that Águeda was neither intelligent nor likeable. Then, we can assume that Aliyah’s sentence reflects how she “saw” or felt towards Águeda. A second instance of Aliyah’s feelings is displayed in the following sentence which specifically refers to her fear of not finding love: “Tenía miedo que yo nunca encontraría el hombre perfecto para mí”/I was afraid I would never find the perfect man for me.

Now, briefly commenting on the system of graduation, Aliyah not only uses fewer, but repetitive and less sophisticated pre-modifying intensifier like muy/very, más/most as shown in Figure 3.3 to express the intensive quality of her feelings (e.g. …estaba muy triste/I was very sad). Regarding the system of engagement, and like in the previous case, Aliyah used the resource of projection (Hood, 2010; White, 2003) from the system of engagement to represent a value position through the use of clauses like “No soy bella pero soy muy inteligente y simpatico” which represent a voice or point of view among many others. Another instance in which we clearly observed a different voice than that of the author of the text is in Aliyah’s concluding sentence when ‘she’ said she believes that love is just a dream: “Por eso creo que el amor es soló un sueño”. This perspective that Aliyah projected through Águeda’s character is not included in Baroja’s story. In fact, in the text, Baroja mentions that Águeda kept the ‘crazy’ hope that among those men in the plaza, she will find the man she was waiting for: “A veces una esperanza loca le hacía creer que allá, en aquella plaza triste, estaba el hombre a quien esperaba…”(Canteli- Dominicis & Reynolds, 2011, p. 4).
To conclude the analysis of the second participant in this study, I would like to say that in Aliyah’s case it is difficult to infer if her lack of strong feelings or emotions as well as clear engagement this reading-to-write task are the result of her difficulty writing in the target language or her struggle understanding the text. Concerning the former, Aliyas’s essay let us see the writing of a FL student that not only still has some difficulties managing certain grammatical structures in the target language, but it also reflects her struggles making meaning or communicating certain ideas clearly (e.g., mi familia sienten para mí/My family feels sorry for me). Aliya’s problems writing in the target language were one of the first observations the instructor of the class made in our first interview. She said that Aliyah showed not only problems using certain structures like indirect object pronouns, verbs like ‘gustar’ and verb conjugations, but she also had trouble differentiating written from spoken language—and she pointed at Aliya’s introductory paragraph as an example of the latter. Among other comments that the instructor made were the absence of discourse markers; the absence of discourse markers resulted not only in lack of cohesion but also in the creation of a “choppy” text.

Finally, regarding Aliyah’s struggle understanding the text, in her interview, she overtly expressed her difficulty understanding Baroja’s story when she said that it was not only a text “that no one really understood” [Data from interview, 03/09/2014], but it was also “hard to catch”. In another instance, she added that the task “was kind of hard too” because it had to be written in the first person requiring the use of verbs of affect like I think, I felt, etc., so at the end she said, she felt that she had overused the same structure.

*Third case of interpersonal meaning: Johnny and Águeda*
This final text was writing by Johnny. Johnny obtained one of the lowest notes in the class. Johnny’s writing was not only described by the instructor as very informal and repetitive, but somehow difficult to understand.

**Figure 3.4. Johnny’s Text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Johnny’s Text</th>
<th>Appraisal Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Me llamo Águeda. Estoy en mi balcón de mi sala. Yo tengo una relato sobre yo, mi familia, mi vida, mi hermana y el abogado. Fue *muchos* años pasados. No tenía relaciones buenos con mi familia y no tenía *muchos* amigos. Era *muy* tímido y triste y no me gustaba hablar *mucho*. No me gustaba pasar tiempo con otras personas también. Nadie en mi familia me comprendía. Tenía una discapacidad y falta de atractivo físico. Era fea. Sentía mal y triste sobre mis cualidades físicas. También no tuvé un novio. Un día cuando estaba sentado en mi balcón, un abogado visitó a la casa de mi familia. Normalmente, no me gustaba hablar con otras personas, pero yo hablé con el abogado. El visitó primero, nosotros hablamos por muchas horas en el noche. Hablamos sobre mi discapacidad, mi vida, mi familia, la escuela, y muchas cosas otras. Después muchas conversaciones, yo creyí que yo amé el abogado. Él fue la persona quien yo quería me casar. Pero, él no me vía como su novia. Yo tenía una hermana vieja quien era *más* bonita que yo y ella no tenía la discapacidad. Cuando yo creía que el abogado quería pasar tiempo con yo, él pasó tiempo con mi hermana antes y | *Attitude*: Johnny’s compassionate feelings towards Águeda’s situation and behavior are clearly displayed through the following sentences (lines 12-13)  
Tenía una discapacidad y falta de atractivo físico. Era fea. Sentía mal y triste sobre mis cualidades físicas. *I had a disability and lack of appealing. I was ugly. I felt bad and sad about my physical features.*  

**Graduation:** Johnny repeatedly used the pre-modifying intensifier ‘*muy*’ throughout his essay to mainly express negative affect (lines 8, 39-40, 41, 46, 51)  
Era muy tímido y triste y no me gustaba hablar mucho. *I was very shy and I didn’t like very much to talk*  
Yo era *muy muy* triste.*I was very very sad.*  
Or in other instances he used the adverb ‘*más*’. However, only the first example is correct (line 30), the second is not grammatically correct (line 55).  
Yo tenía una hermana vieja quien era más bonita que yo…*I had an older sister who* |
35 después nuestros conversaciones. Él me dijo sobre su amor. Cuando él hablaba, yo creyí que yo era su amor. En realidad, su amor fue mi hermana. Él querría casarse con ella. Yo era muy triste. La decepción en la situación fue muy grande. Aunque estaba muy enojado y triste, acepté la situación sin rebelarme. Acepté la situación porque amaba mi hermana y mi familia. Quería mi hermana estar feliz. Veía mi futuro muy triste y sin un novio o amigos. Porque de mi disabilidades y falta de atractivo físico, yo creía que no persona me amaría. Yo aceptó la situación y ayudé con el bogado y la fiesta, pero estaba muy triste y depresado. No tenía algunos planes y esperanzas por mi futuro porque nadie quería pasar tiempo con yo.

Ahora, yo tengo una vida más mejor. [Now, I have a better life].

He also used ‘muchos’, but only a few times (lines 4, 7, 9)

Fue muchos años pasados. [It was many years ago].

…and no tenía muchos amigos. [and I did not have a lot of friends].

Engagement: Johnny’s portrayal or interpretation of Águeda as a ‘disable person’ (lines 12, 23, 31, 47) was a predominant theme throughout his composition.

His ‘bare assertion’ of Águeda as a disable person is further explained below.

Tenía una disabilidad y falta de atractivo físico.[I had a disability and I was unappealing.]

Johnny’s construction of interpersonal meaning with Baroja’s text analyzed through the appraisal system revealed some very interesting elements: First regarding his feelings and emotions (affect) towards Baroja’s main character, and unlike the other two participants in this study, Johnny used more affectively charged words such as ‘tímid’ (shy), ‘triste’ (sad), ‘deprimida’ (depressed), ‘fe’ (ugly), ‘falta de atractivo físico’ (lack of beauty) and disabilidad (disability) which he repeated several times throughout his essay. All these emotionally charged words not only displayed a strong emotional reaction (appreciation) on his side, towards the
main character, but they also justified—especially Águeda’s portrayal as a disable person—the main character’s behavior (judgement).

Regarding the sub-system of graduation, Johnny deployed high levels of graduation through the frequent used of pre-modifying, and less sophisticated intensifiers like ‘muy’ and ‘mucho(s)’. There was even an instance in which he included ‘muy/very’ twice in a sentence “Yo era muy muy triste /I was very very sad” to create a greater “affect”. Another example that draws the attention is Johnny’s use adjectives like “buenos” used in Spanish to sharpen the focus of a sentence. Johnny tried to use this adjective to describe the “not so good” type of relationship Águeda had with her family, “No tenía relaciones buenos con mi familia…”, but he used it incorrectly; the correct position of this attributive adjective in Spanish would be “No tenía buenas relaciones con mi familia”. As described by Demonte (2008), in Spanish many adjectives can alternate between a prenominal and a postnominal position, ‘bueno-a(s)’ is one of them. However, the position in which an adjective is ultimately realized (prenominal or postnominal) depends on the nature of the adjective’s semantic interpretation. As Demonte described, although adjectives like ‘bueno’ can keep a single lexical meaning, they display additional interpretive properties depending on whether they appear prenominally or postnominally. For instance, in the sentence El buen cura versus El cura bueno, the former is interpreted as the priest being good in what he does as a ‘profession’, while in the second example it means that he is a good as a person. Therefore, the sub-system of graduation analysis of Johnny’s essay demonstrates the importance of FL students’ learning the twofold distinction in the interpretation of adjectives that alternate between prenominal and postnominal positions in languages like Spanish, especially when these adjectives can sharpen the focus of a proposition.
Finally, Johnny’s monoglossic *engagement* with the text is extremely interesting in this study because of her interpretation or assertion throughout his composition of Águeda as a “disable person”. As the instructor of the class commented in the interview, included below, Johnny’s interpretation of Águeda’s physical defect as a disability is something that not only “caught her attention”, but it was something she found annoying since it was frequently reiterated within the text.

As the instructor of the class commented above, and as previously described, Baroja did not depicted Águeda as a girl with a disability, but he simply described her as a girl with “physical defects”. Although the instructor did not describe Johnny’s interpretation as incorrect, his interpretation is a clear example of Painter’s argument (2003) about an individuals’ mother tongue having an impact in learning to perceive experience in the evaluative terms relevant to the
individual’s meaning group. From Johnny’s cultural frame of reference, Águeda’s physical defects would be indeed considered a disability, thus labeling her as a disabled person.

In his interview, Johnny recalled the writing of this first composition as “hard” not only because it required him to remember the story, but because he also did not have a “great” understanding of it as he put it. He added that maybe having a better understanding of the story would have helped him to write a “better” composition.

**Constructing Interpersonal meaning across cases**

In each of the writing samples presented in this study, the use of the *appraisal* system proved useful in closely revealing three different ways participants in this study constructed interpersonal meaning with the same text in the FL. In the first case, we have Nadia, an advanced FL student that disclosed not only a strong reaction but criticism toward Baroja’s main character as revealed through the sub-system of attitude. Then, through the sub-system of graduation, Nadia displayed her ample repertoire of lexical devices to either heighten or weaken, sharpen or soften the force and focus of her propositions in the target language. Finally, regarding the system of engagement, we “listened” to the heteroglossic voice of a woman of the 21st century that categorically refused or challenged the voice of a submissive Spanish woman of the late 19th century. This disalignment however, was considered by the instructor of the class as a “deviation” from the story.

Unlike Nadia’s writing in which we observed a student taking some risk in providing her “own” point of view from the main protagonist perspective, in the second case, there was Aliyah, a “timid” student that preferred to remain “safe” by mainly summarizing the story. However, and as previously mentioned, in Aliyah’s case, it is difficult to assume if her apprehensive reaction
toward Baroja’s text displayed in the sub-system of attitude and engagement are the result of both her difficulty writing in the target language and her struggle understanding the text. On one hand, the sub-system of graduation clearly revealed a student having some problems not only using basic structures in the target language, but also communicating certain ideas clearly. On the other hand, we have a student that expressed having a higher level of difficulty understanding the text.

Finally, there is Johnny’s text which analysis of the attitude subsystem revealed a strong emotional reaction (appreciation) on his side, towards the main character, Águeda. Johnny’s strong feelings were not only amplified through the use of affectively charged words, but also through the use of common adverbs like muy/very, mucho-a/many and más/more. Regarding the system of engagement, Johnny’s bare assertion of Águeda as a disable person showed his particular “cultural” construction of interpersonal meaning with Baroja’s text.

**Conclusions and implications**

Before considering pedagogical implications of this analysis, it is important to point that this small study of three Spanish compositions written in two different honor composition and conversation courses cannot lead to general conclusions about problems L2 college writers have developing interpersonal meaning with a text in the foreign language. This study is situated in two upper-level courses, which as described by the instructor placed emphasis on both spoken and written communication. However, it was also a course that strongly emphasized the use of correct grammar (Morocco & Soven, 1990; O’Donnell, 2007; Greenia, 1992; Reichelt, 2001; Ruiz-Funes, 1994; Valdés, Haro & Echevarriarza, 1992). Within this specific context, however, it is apparent that the instructor of the class (the reader) was expecting more than the proper use
of grammar and discourse markers; she was also expecting an aligned value position or stancetaking with respect to the beliefs or assumptions about the role of Spanish women presented by Baroja in the text.

As noted above, this first composition assignment required students’ engagement in a critical analysis and identification with the main character. More specifically, the task involved students’ critical evaluation of Spanish women role and behavior during the early 19th century; it then required students to express their views or stance from the main character perspective about her situation, hopes and plans for the future. However, all three participants believed that their deficient understanding of the story—despite completing a series of comprehensive and interpretative questions included in the textbook— inhibited their ability to fulfill the requirements of this assignment. As described in the methods section of this article, after reading the story, part of the class was devoted to the answering of comprehensive and interpretative questions. However, and based on the observations conducted in this class, students neither demonstrated trouble answering these questions nor they voiced their difficulty understanding the text. Thus, the study suggest first the need to further investigate the effectiveness of this type of comprehension and interpretation strategies, and second, the need of instructor’s inclusion of additional approaches to effectively and successfully engage L2 learners with texts in the target language.

The analysis of students writing samples through the *Appraisal* framework, showed once again that more than learning the correct use of lexicogrammatical structures in the target language, instructors need to support FL students in developing their critical perspectives (Esplugas & Landwehr, 1996). As professionals in the field have pointed out (Schultz, 1991b) advanced language knowledge is not necessarily an indicator of student ability to express
personal meaning in the target language. The analysis of Nadia’s text supports the latter claim. The sub-system of Attitude and Graduation or amplification in Nadia’s paper showed the diverse and advanced knowledge this student has over lexical and grammatical structures in the target language. However, and as the instructor of the class also expressed, although Nadia fulfilled the requirements for this composition (e.g., the use of imperfect and subjunctive, the use of sophisticated discourse markers and expressions), her construction of interpersonal meaning with Baroja’s text was considered as ‘disconnected’ or a ‘deviation’ from the story. Nadia herself acknowledged that her inability to fully understand the “value position” Baroja tried to reflect on his piece—the role of Spanish women during the 19th century—affected the structure of her text, specifically as to how to conclude it.

On the other hand, the sub-system of Attitude and Graduation or amplification in Aliyah and Johnny’s texts exposed the case of two emergent language learners with a limited or less advanced lexical repertoire who still struggle with some basic grammatical structures in the target language. However, these students did not consider their somehow limited control over lexicogrammatical structures in the target language as the reason to produce a lesser quality paper, instead, it was their difficulty construing a stance and adopting a value position toward Baroja’s text as both participants expressed it during the interviews. Therefore, and based on the Appraisal analysis of these students’ texts, we can assume that their struggles writing in the target language were strictly related to the system of Engagement. Aliyah specifically said that the task was hard because it had to be written in the first person requiring the use of verbs of affect like I think, I felt, etc., so at the end she said, she felt that she had overused the same structure. Johnny, on the other hand, believed that his difficulty remembering the story as well as his not so “great” understanding of it impacted the quality of his paper.
These findings suggest, as Ruiz-Funes (1999b, 2001) said that although students are well aware of their own reading and writing processes, the implementation of other metacognitive strategies to develop FL learners’ literary interpretation skills are necessary. I strongly believe that the Appraisal theory (Hood, 2010; Martin, 2000; Martin & White, 2005; White, 2000, 2003, 2012) offers powerful analytical and pedagogical resources to support FL to realize interpersonal and evaluative meanings and locate their own particular voice(s) within a discursive conversation in the target language.

References


Coffin, C. (2002). The Voices of History: theorising the interpersonal semantics of historical


York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.


*Discourse studies, 7*(2), 173-192.


APPENDIX A

Pío Baroja Text Águeda
APPENDIX B

ÁGUEDA COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS: (in Canteli Dominicis & Reynolds, 2011, p. 6)

6 CAPÍTULO 1

B. Comprensión.
Conteste según la lectura.

1. ¿Qué hacía Águeda en el balcón?
2. ¿Cómo era Águeda físicamente?
3. ¿Cómo era el solar que ella veía desde el balcón?
4. ¿Qué miembros tenía la familia de Águeda y cómo eran?
5. ¿Cómo trataba la familia a Águeda cuando había visita?
6. ¿Qué sentía Águeda por el abogado?
7. ¿Con quién iba a casarse el abogado?
8. ¿Cuál fue la reacción de Águeda cuando el abogado le dio la noticia de la boda?
9. ¿Qué clase de hombre soñaba con encontrar Águeda?
10. ¿Cómo eran los hombres que Águeda veía desde el balcón?

C. Interpretación.
Conteste según su opinión personal.

1. El autor nos presenta a la protagonista haciendo encaje y bordando. ¿Cuál es la imagen inmediata de ella que recibe el lector?
2. ¿Cómo consigue el autor dar un tono pesimista y decadente al cuento por medio de la descripción de lugares?
3. En esta familia hay dos personas fuertes y tres débiles, pero no todos los débiles reaccionan igual ante la opresión. ¿Cómo se diferencian entre sí las reacciones de los débiles?
4. Cuando había visitas, todos en la familia elogiaban mucho a Águeda. En su opinión, ¿por qué lo hacían?
5. ¿Por qué lloraba la protagonista en su cuarto después que terminaba la visita?
6. ¿Cree Ud. que el abogado se dio cuenta de que Águeda lo amaba? ¿Por qué (no)?
7. ¿Por qué, en su opinión, aceptó Águeda bordar la ropa de cama de su hermana?
8. Este cuento tiene una descripción de la plaza al principio y al final. ¿Con qué intención hace esto Baroja?
CHAPTER 4
THEME ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES PRODUCED BY COLLEGE STUDENTS LEARNING SPANISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE

INTRODUCTION

Narratives are considered a universal genre. This assertion is corroborated by scholars in the FL field like Muñoz-Basols, Pérez-Sinusía and David (2012) and Valdés, Dvorak, and Hannum (2008) who described that in Spanish-speaking cultures, narratives are one of the most used genres. Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks and Yalop (2000) said that in English-speaking cultures, “[A] narrative is a special kind of story that is valued very highly” in these cultures (p. 225). However, despite the popularity of narratives in both cultures, studies examining the biliterate practices of English speakers writing narratives in Spanish as a FL are scarce. Thus, many of the following questions remain to be answered: Do these writers create their compositions in Spanish according to the English rhetorical patterns? Are they aware of the Spanish literacy traditions or the different ways of writing that Spanish writers use?

Regarding the characteristics of narratives in English, and from an SFL-informed genre-based approach, Derewianka (1990) as well as Knapp and Watkins (2005) said that although the narrative’s goal is generally to entertain a reading audience, they can have several other purposes like that of being “a powerful medium for changing social opinions and attitudes (p. 221). Although the authors also agreed that narrative is a macro genre that includes fairy stories, mysteries, science fiction, romances, horror stories, parables, fables, myths, legends, historical
narratives, etc., they also said that they all share a key characteristic or basic structure; “to sequence people/characters in time and space” (Knapp & Watkins, p. 222) or as Derewianka said, “[T]he focus of the text is on a sequence of actions” (p. 40). Although Muñoz-Basols, Pérez-Sinusía and David (2012) list of key features of narrative texts in Spanish mostly matches that of Knapp and Watkins, there are some descriptions in which they differ. For instance, Muñoz et al., do not say that the main goal of the narrative is to entertain a reading audience, but to inform about a series of events in time which could be real or fictitious; “El texto narrativo informa sobre una serie de acciones en el tiempo que pueden ser reales o ficticias” (p. 6).

However, other authors like Valdés, Dvorak and Hannum (2008) and Whitley and González (2000) included among the many purposes of a narrative text in Spanish that of entertainment.

Although the author of this study could not find studies specifically identifying differences between written narratives in Spanish and English, earlier studies contrasting rhetorical patterns between several varieties of Spanish and English (Santiago, 1970; Streti, 1971, and Santana-Seda, 1974; reported in Kaplan, 1976) showed striking differences in the use of coordinate structures, additive constructions or what Kaplan (1966) referred as complex digressions from the central idea (p. 18), and one or two sentence paragraphs. An example of the former is Montaño-Harmon’s (1991) contrastive analysis of texts produced by ninth grade Anglo-American students versus Mexican students in Mexico. The texts of these latter were not only longer than those of the former group, but also contained many run-on sentences, much repetition, via synonyms, in additive and explicative relationships, and flowery, poetic language and flexible sentence structures. All of these features as the author added “…contributed to a fancy, flowery, formal, and complicated presentation of the ideas in the compositions—a
presentation totally different from that of linear, deductive, enumerative compositions written by Anglo-American students” (p. 423).

By comparing the narrative texts of two undergraduate college students produced in an upper-level 3010 Spanish Composition and Conversation class, this study tried to answer the following question:

1. What types of L1 writing knowledge do they use in their L2 narrative writing practices in a college-level Spanish class?

The students’ narratives were compared to investigate linguistic differences in the way students writing in Spanish as a FL realize the narrative genre in general and the Theme of clauses in particular. The model of Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1994), and specifically the textual metafunction reflected in Theme markedness and Theme progression, are used to analyze the texts and describe their differences and similarities.

**Theoretical Framework**

SFL is a theory of language that is different from other theories of language in several respects, particularly in its views of grammar and texts. About the former, Thompson (2004) explained that grammar used to construct texts is not seen as a rigid “set of abstract rules” (p. 6) that can be memorized and applied to all texts of a similar nature. Instead, it is a “system of choices” (p. 31) that is made according to purpose, context, and audience. Halliday (1994) referred to these latter as the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. Butt, et al. (2000) further explained these metafunctions by saying that the ideational metafunction “uses language to represent experience”; the interpersonal metafunction “uses language to encode
interaction, to show how defensible we find our propositions, to encode ideas about obligation and inclination and to express our attitudes”; and the textual metafunction “uses language to organize our experiential, logical, and interpersonal meanings into a coherent and, in the case of written and spoken language, linear whole” (p. 5-6).

The two types of analysis addressed in this next section—Theme markedness and Theme progression—are unified under the textual metafunction of language (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Halliday, 1994). Halliday and Hasan divided the textual metafunction into structural and non-structural components. The structural component, at the clause level, is the thematic structure of the clause. The non-structural component is cohesion.

Theme Analysis

Using as a theoretical basis the model of thematization proposed by Lavid, Arús and Zamorano-Mansilla (2010), the structure of the information in each student text is observed through what they referred to as THEMATIC FIELD and RHEMATIC FIELD. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) provided a standard definition of the category of Theme as the element which serves as “the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context” (p. 64). The remainder of the clause is called the Rheme, and according to Lavid, et al. (2010), the Rheme “elaborates and expands the information contained in the Theme, and it usually contains New Focal material” (p. 306, italics in original). However, Arús, Lavid and Moratón (2010) explained that this standard definition results as being problematic when applied to pro-drop languages like Spanish in which it would be difficult to decide if conjugated verbs or processes like llegaron (they arrived) or han llegado (they have arrived) should be considered the clausal theme or a clause with an unrealized subject theme because
both examples include the subject in the verbal inflection. Due to these differences in word order patterns which characterize each language and also with the purpose of diverging grammatical realizations of the same semantic type of Theme, Lavid et al., proposed a model of thematization for languages like Spanish used in this study for the analysis of students’ samples. Although it is not the purpose of this study to provide a thorough explanation of Lavid et al.’s (2010) model, a general description is provided in the methodology section of this article.

.Theme Markedness and Theme Progression

Two aspects of theme realization are of relevance to the present research: Theme markedness and Theme progression patterns. The former, as Lavid et al. (2010) explained, is “usually associated with the idea of frequency or typicality of a given linguistic choice” (p. 325). In other words, themes are classified as ‘unmarked’ if listeners/readers perceive linguistic elements such as personal pronouns (e.g. he, she, Patrick) when they are frequent, typical, or expected in a given linguistic context, and they are considered as ‘marked’ when they are atypical or uncommon (e.g. desafortunadamente/unfortunately). About the use of ‘marked themes, Eggins (1994) explained that when the speaker/writer opts for a marked choice, then she is “signaling that all things are not equal, that something in the text requires an atypical meaning to be made” (p. 318). Thompson (2005) added that thematic choice cannot only reflect the mode of the speaking/writing context but it can also indicate the diversity of the writer’s resources. For example, a novice writer with more limited resources may be restricted to less marked options. However, as Taboada (2004) said, the distinctions between marked and unmarked constructions do not seem to be as clear-cut as in English. Lavid et al., described that compared to languages like English where the range of ‘unmarked’ thematic choices is rather limited, Spanish presents a
wide range of thematic options in the different mood types. An example of Spanish including more unmarked choices is the classification of dependent or conditional clauses (e.g., If no one acted dishonestly, …) considered ‘marked’ Themes in English, but ‘unmarked’ in Spanish. It is the classification Lavid et al. proposed the one used in this study to analyzed participants’ texts.

According to Taboada (2004), Thematic progression is concerned with relatedness, or “where Themes come from, and how they relate to previous Themes and Rhemes” (p. 86). In other words, the author explained that theme progression considers how Themes evolve throughout the discourse; how the speakers might pick a Theme or Rheme from the previous clause, and link it to the subsequent discourse (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Martin, 1992). Fries (1983, 1995) suggested that, as Theme progression is concerned with the way that text develops, it may be related to text genre and reflects more general structural organization.

**Narratives**

The characteristics of narratives in English are described by Knapp and Watkins (2005), Derewianka (1990) as well as Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks and Yallop (2000, 2012) in their work. Regarding the goal of a narrative, Knapp and Watkins said that although its goal is generally to entertain a reading audience, they can have several other purposes like that of being “a powerful medium for changing social opinions and attitudes” (p. 221). Although the authors agreed that narrative is a macro genre that includes fairy stories, mysteries, science fiction, choose-your own-adventures, romances, horror stories, heroes and villains, adventure stories, parables, fables and moral tales, myths, legends, historical narratives, etc., they also said that they all share a key characteristic or basic structure; “to sequence people/characters in time and space” (Knapp & Watkins, p. 222) or as Derewianka said, “[T]he focus of the text is on a sequence of actions” (p.
Being more specific about the parts or basic structure of narratives, both authors discussed how they consist of three parts: an **introduction or orientation** where the reader/listener is introduced to the people, time, and place in the story; **complication or problem** in which the main action and tensions are presented; and **ending or resolution**. Regarding the language features of the narrative both authors listed actions verbs usually in the past tense (e.g., went, heard), temporal connectives (e.g., then, after) or linking words and descriptive language or metaphors to create images in the reader’s mind. Regarding the use of temporal connectives, Knapp and Watkins as well as Derewianka do not offer a further description of them. However, other authors like Butt, Fahey, Feez and Spinks (2012) provide a list of what they refer as “conjunctions” used in different parts of narratives. For instance, they include conjunctions such as **while, when, finally, and** used in the complication and resolution of the narrative to sequence events in time. Then, they list conjunctions such as **but** used in the complication part to signal a crisis point or in the coda to refute events. However, Thompson (2004) said because the resource of conjunction to create coherence in English text is very wide, it is difficult to agree on a list.

Finally, Knapp and Watkins also included a couple of other characteristics such as the use of rhythm and repetition to create particular effects as well as the use of playful sentence structures to create poignant effects.

On the other hand, there is Muñoz-Basols, Pérez-Sinusía and David (2012) and Valdés, Dvorak and Hannum (2008) who described the characteristics of narratives in Spanish. Although all authors listed key features of narrative texts in Spanish that mostly match those described by Knapp and Watkins (2005), there are some descriptions in which they differ, and that will be further elucidated. Regarding the characteristics in which they converged, although Muñoz et al., do not say that the main goal of the narrative is to entertain a reading audience, but to inform
about a series of events in time which could be real or fictitious; “El texto narrativo informa sobre una serie de acciones en el tiempo que pueden ser reales o ficticias” (p. 6), other authors like Valdés, Dvorak and Hannum (2008) and Whitley and González (2000) included among the many purposes of a narrative text in Spanish that of entertainment, as well as that of remembering and recreating the action and emotion of a novel, story or important moment. A second analogous characteristic is the inclusion or combination of other genres like descriptive, expository and argumentative texts within the narrative. Muñoz et al., said that in Spanish this is common, and Knapp and Watkins acknowledged that narrative is a macro-genre that “…can easily accommodate one of more of other genres and still remain dominant” (p. 221). Also, in their description, Muñoz-Basols, Pérez-Sinusía and David (2012) made a clear distinction between nonliterary (e.g., press, TV and radio reports, graphic novels, jokes, anecdotes) and literary texts (e.g., novels, stories, fables, legends). However, Knapp and Watkins (2005) and Derewianka (1990) do not make this distinction. A final characteristic all authors agreed with regards to the structure of narratives. Valdés et al., described that narratives in Spanish consist of three parts: la presentación (introduction), where the events the story is based on are established; la complicación (problem) where the main event and tensions are presented; and el desenlace or la resolución (ending or resolution), which as its name suggests, presents the resolution of the tensions (p. 38).

Continuing describing the characteristics in which narratives in Spanish differ from narratives in English, the first one concerns the use of past tense. Whitley and González (2000), as well as Valdés et al., (2008) said that in Romance Languages like Spanish the narrator uses altogether mainly two tenses or structures to narrate in the past: they are the preterit and the imperfect. They added that although both refer to the past, a distinction must be made because
they present it in a distinct way (p. 111). Whitley and González explained that through the use of imperfect, the narrator situates us in the middle of an unfinished, incomplete action, or a situation that already existed: “Con el imperfecto, el narrador nos sitúa en medio de alguna acción inacabada, incompleta, alguna situación que ya existía (p. 116). With the preterit, the authors said the narrator typically signals that the event happened and finished, it is completed, it reached its end or climax: “Este aspecto típicamente señala que la acción ocurrió y se acabó, se completó, se cumplió, alcanzó su fin o climax” (p. 117). Whitley and González said that what determines the selection of one tense over the other is the perspective of the speaker, what she wants us to see: “Lo que determina la selección es la perspectiva del hablante, lo que quiere que veamos” (p. 117).

Closely related to the distinction in the use of preterit versus imperfect in Spanish, another component in which English and Spanish narratives differ is the point of view and tone used by the narrator. Although, in their work, Knapp and Watkins (2005) as well as Derewianka (1991) do not include a description of these two elements as important elements in a narrative, SFL studies underscore the importance of stance and voice or tone in the role it plays on the reader in negotiating meanings (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011; Hood, 2004, 2010; Martin, 2000; White, 1998, 2003). For instance, in media reporting, White (1998) identified voice roles according to their role in constructing different genres (i.e., correspondent voice in news commentary and commentator voice in editorials). Hood (2004, 2010) has identified voices roles (e.g., observer, critic) in undergraduate and graduate research. For Spanish, Valdés et al., (2008) described that the point of view refers to the relationship between the narrator and what she narrates. Thus, the authors explained, in the narration, the point of view reflects two fundamental aspects: who the narrator is and what the narrator’s role in the action is. On the subject of tone, Valdés et al.,
defined it as the emotional attitude reflected on the topic (e.g., sarcasm, irony). The tone, as the authors explained, not only varies depending on the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, but it is also determined by the vocabulary and grammatical structures used. Valdés et al., stressed that the importance of the tone is such that the reader’s interpretation of a narrative will largely depend on the selection of a tone.

Finally, and closely related to the writer’s vocabulary and grammatical selection is the use of cohesive elements or temporal connectives (e.g., then, after) as Knapp and Watkins (2005) referred to them and descriptive language or metaphors. For Spanish, Whitley and González (2000) provided a detailed list of adverbials of place (e.g., aquí, allí, atrás), time (e.g., antes, ahora, luego, ya), mode (e.g., despacio, bien, tristemente), logical relations (e.g., entonces, por lo tanto), and probability (e.g., tal vez, quizás, a lo mejor). Among the many cohesive devices they list, they include coordinated conjunctions (e.g., y, o, pero), adverbs and prepositional phrases (e.g., luego, después, más tarde, primero), and adverbial conjunctions (e.g., antes que, después que, mientras). Whitley and González added that these devices provide not only a variety of circumstantial information about what we narrate, but they also make the story cohesive. They said that when a narrative lacks cohesion, a list of independent clauses is created instead of an interesting and fluent story. In their work, the authors also included a list of interjections or idioms (e.g., ¡ah!, ándale, a ver, bueno) which they said are more abundant in spoken than written texts, but when included in a written text, they are important to understand the intention or reaction of the speaker: “Pero muchas veces las interjecciones y fragmentos importan para comprender la intención o reacción del hablante, y entonces las representamos como verbos que describen su efecto o su función retórica” (p. 142).
Regarding these differences in narratives between the two cultures, scholars in the L2 and FL field like Montañó-Harmon (1991), García (2002) and more recently Byrnes (2009, 2010, 2012) and Byrnes, Maxim, and Norris (2010) have advocated for the implementation of Genre-based approaches in FL writing courses to help language learners acquire specific genres and registers writers and speakers of the target language community used in their everyday encounters. They explained that the acquisition of such genres and registers is necessary not because they are the correct rules but because they are essential for certain contexts. Furthermore, they argued that in order to have advanced biliteracy and reap the benefits of transferring skills across languages (Canagarajah, 2006, 2011; Cook, 2002, 2003, 2008; García, 2002; Hall, Cheng & Carlson, 2006), writers must have a broad discourse range in the two languages; that is, they must have opportunities to use different written varieties or registers for different social purposes and different audiences.

Methods

In this study, the researcher compared and contrasted two examples of narrative writing written by three undergraduate students enrolled in an upper-level 3010 Spanish Composition and Conversation course at a southern university in the United States. All students in this class were required to write two in-class compositions during the semester. However, only the first composition was analyzed in this study because the genre—a narrative—and topic for this composition was the same for all students in this class. For the second composition, students could choose between writing a second narrative or an argumentative essay. It is important to point out that the approach followed by the instructor in this class did not follow a Genre-based approach (Byrnes, 2009, 2010, 2012; Byrnes, Maxim & Norris, 2010) but a writing-to-learn-
language (WLL) methodology (Manchón, 2011). In other words, the objective of these compositions was for students to practice lexical and grammatical structures studied in class, not to become aware of the characteristics of the narrative genre in Spanish.

This first composition was written during the first session in the fifth week of classes, and all students had to write about “El presidente de los Estados Unidos: Barack Obama” (The president of the United States: Barack Obama). It is important to mention that students did not know about the topic or genre of the composition until they arrived to class and the instructor told them they have to write or “tell” her what they knew about President Obama. Students had the whole class, 1 hour and 15 minutes, to write each of these compositions, and the number of words required was 325. Students were allowed to use their paper or electronic dictionaries. However, of the two participants, only Sheyla did not use a dictionary. Besides these two requirements, there were no other instructions given.

Participants

During the second week of the 2014 fall semester, the researcher visited four upper-level 3010 and two 3020 Spanish Composition and Conversation courses where she invited students to participate in this study. Sheyla and Maggie (all names are pseudonyms) are the two female subjects participating in this study. All the students enrolled in the same 3010 Spanish Composition and Conversation class. They both have English as their L1 or mother tongue and they were planning to minor in Spanish.

Data Collection
The specific data collection procedures extended over a 9-week period, with around 17 sessions of observations in this class (21 hours). The researcher used the ethnographic methods of classroom observations recorded in field notes and the collection of the archival data pertaining to the classes observed. Documents collected included syllabi, class handouts, writing prompts, students’ texts produced in class, and the class textbooks required for each class. However, and as previously described, only students’ first composition texts produced in this class were considered relevant for this analysis.

Data Analysis

As previously mentioned, students’ writing samples included in this study were analyzed following Lavid et al.’s (2010) model of thematization described below. In analyzing the Thematic field, instances of interpersonal, third person projecting, and textual themes found in participants’ writing samples were tallied and summarized in Table 4.1 Regarding the different patterns of meaning reflected in Theme markedness and Theme progression used by these English speakers learning Spanish as a FL, the number of iterative versus linear progression instances were also tallied and summarized in Table 4.2.

In their characterization of the message structure of the clause, Lavid et al. proposed a categorization consisting of two main functionally distinct zones: They are the Thematic field and the Rhematic Field as shown in the example (1a) below taken from one of the writing samples of a participant in this study.

(1a) Unfortunadamente no pienso que él pueda hacer mucho porque las dos casas políticos no son de acuerdo.
‘Unfortunately I do not think that he can do much because the two political houses are in disagreement.’
Desafortunadamente no piensa que él pueda hacer mucho porque las dos casas políticas no son de acuerdo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpersonal theme</th>
<th>Pre-head</th>
<th>Thematic Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outer Thematic Field</td>
<td>Inner Thematic field</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic Head</td>
<td>Rhematic Field</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Desafortunadamente no | piens-o | que él pueda hacer mucho porque las dos casa políticas no son de acuerdo |

The *Thematic* field is defined by the authors as “a complex functional zone in a clause-initial position serving a variety of clausal and discourse functions” (p. 299). It consists of two main components, the *Inner Thematic field* and the *Outer Thematic field*. The *Inner Thematic field* consists of elements selected from the experiential structure of the clause and can include two components: the *Thematic Head* and the *Pre-head*. The *Thematic head* is the nuclear part of the *Inner Thematic field*, and it is defined as the first element in the experiential configuration of the clause. According to Lavid et al. (2010), its function is twofold: to guide the reader indicating to her the most central participants involved, and to present some experiential element as most closely aligned with the speaker’s advantage point of view (p. 300). The *Thematic* head in Spanish may be explicit or implicit like in example (1a) where the verbal suffix -o of the verb form pienso encodes the *Thematic Head* of the clause. Regarding the *pre-head*, this is typically realized by circumstantial elements or adverbial clauses.

Regarding the *Outer Thematic field*, Lavid et al. (2010) said that this is configured by elements which surround and complete the *Inner Thematic field*, and the elements that can conform it varied; they can be *textual Themes* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) such as linkers, binders, etc., (e.g. y/and, pues/so); *interpersonal Themes* like in example (1a) which express the attitude and the evaluation of the speaker with respect to his/her message (e.g.
desafortunadamente/unfortunately, en realidad/actually), and Absolute thematic constructions (Gutiérrez-Ordoñez, 1997) which are constructions not integrated in the main predication and usually appear separated by a pause or a comma from the main clause. These include two main types: participial clauses and Absolute themes. Although not all the elements Lavid et al. described in their model were present in the students’ samples analyzed in this study, their classification according to this model was problematic, especially those regarding the interpersonal Themes. As I will explain in the next section, the use of some of the textual Themes the participants use do not correspond per se to the Spanish language, but to direct translations from the English language.

Findings

As described in the introduction of this article, the study intended to discover the types of L1 writing knowledge college students composing texts in Spanish as a FL use in their L2 narrative writing practices. As it is described in the findings below, the useful constructs of Theme markedness and Theme progression from SFL allows us to see the type of linguistic resources these language learners utilized in their L2 narrative writing practices.

Markedness

The close examination and comparison of the three students’ narratives revealed how these English-Spanish writers use theme markedness as a resource for cohesion. The findings are summarized in Table 4.1 followed by a description:

Table 4.1: Theme Analysis of Texts
The first characteristic that grabs our attention from Table 4.1 is that the two participant’s narratives displayed below selected as thematic heads the story’s main participant (third person projecting) and other less central participants (Michelle Obama, la/su familia) in the story.

**Table 4.2: Sheyla’s Theme Markedness Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Field</th>
<th>Textual</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Absolute</th>
<th>Rhematic Field</th>
<th>Inner Thematic Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outer Thematic Field</td>
<td>En 2008,</td>
<td>De repente,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>La gente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>le encanta Obama porque él quiere ayudar las</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>minoridades de los Estados Unidos como incluye los</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>inmigrantes, los hispanohablantes y los</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>africanos americanos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Antes él</td>
<td>El año que Obama</td>
<td></td>
<td>Antes él</td>
<td>Obama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>apareció y el grupo democratico elegió Obama en lugar de Clinton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>La gente</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>La gente</td>
<td>Obama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>piensa que el gobierno necesita tener más</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>influencia en las vidas sociales y económicas de las</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>personas que viven en los Estados Unidos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

126
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>También</th>
<th>Obama</th>
<th>quiere crear una sistema médica por gratis.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Después de años a de luchar con los republicos</td>
<td>“Obamacare”</td>
<td>fue implementado en 2014.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>El</td>
<td>cree que todas las personas tienen la derecha a cuidado médico.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>fue elegido una otra vez en 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>En 2016,</td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>no podrá ser presidente otra vez.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Una persona</td>
<td>no puede ser presidente más de ocho años.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>fue elegido en 2012, pero menos personas les gusta a Obama en este año.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Muchas personas no son alegres con Obama porque él no ha hecho mucho durante su tiempo en la Casa Blanca.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sin embargo,</td>
<td>mucha gente</td>
<td>le gusta su esposa, Michelle Obama.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Señora Obama</td>
<td>es muy guapa e inteligente y quiere ayudar a los jóvenes con su ambiente.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Los dos Obamas</td>
<td>son muy progresivos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ellos</td>
<td>usen el internet mucho para razones sociales y políticas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>ha usado Twitter, y Facebook mucho durante su tiempo como el presidente.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>También,</td>
<td>los dos Obamas</td>
<td>participan en programas de televisión como “Este noche con Jimmy Fallon”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>De todo (in all),</td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>es un presidente muy importante.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>El</td>
<td>es el primero presidente afro-americano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>El</td>
<td>da esperar a todos que la sociedad puede cambiar para el mejor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>solo tiene dos años más como el presidente de los Estados Unidos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Unfortunadamente,</td>
<td>no pien so</td>
<td>1ª Pres. que él puede hacer mucho porque las dos casas políticas no son en acuerdo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>tiene que ser alegre después de su tiempo como el.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
presidente porque él ayuda mucha gente y dos terroristas más Hussein y Bin Laden murieron durante su tiempo.

Table 4.3: Maggie’s Theme Markedness Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Field</th>
<th>Rhematic Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outer Thematic Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Textual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-head</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
El afroamericano de los Estados Unidos fue apoyado por muchas personas de minorías porque él demostró que es posible que las minorías tendrían éxito en la política.

También apoya a muchos políticos que son buenos para las minorías como hacer cosas más fáciles para los inmigrantes o apoyar el matrimonio homosexual.

Es importante que apoye los derechos humanos de la gente de su país si sea presidente, así Barack Obama trabaja defender estos derechos.

En 2009, aún ganó el Premio Nobel de la Paz para sus esfuerzos para fortalecer la cooperación internacional entre las personas de los países diferente.

Ahora está tratando hacer paz y para la muerte de las personas inocentes en Iraq por "ISIS".

Es una situación muy difícil para todo el mundo, pero es necesario para las terroristas quienes están creando muchas violencia y las crímenes contra la humanidad.

También está tratando establecer el cuidado de salud universal en Los
| 16 | Estados Unidos como algunas otras sistemas en países europeos. | Su político se llama “Obamacare” y fue aprobado en 2010 por El senado y La cámara de Representantes. |
| 17 | Este político proporcionará el seguro médico para todos que no pueden permitírselo. |
| 18 | Aunque el político no es apoyado por todas las personas, especialmente los republicanos, fue aprobado y está ayudando muchas personas. |
| 19 | Barack Obama es un demócrata, así es opuesto por nos republicanos. |
| 20 | Estas personas especialmente no les gustan sus políticos de aumentar los impuestos porque son muy conservativos y quieren tener un país con capitalismo. |
| 21 | Obama no apoya los corporaciones grandes porque cree que la riqueza debe ser distribuida más. |
| 22 | Quiere 3ª. Pres. Quiere ayudar los pobres porque es difícil para ellos superan sus vidas solos. |
| 23 | Aunque Barack Obama no será el presidente después de 2016, fue hecho muchas cosas magníficos para este país. |
Regarding the story’s main participant (highlighted in gray in Tables 4.2 and 4.3), he is identified through the use of different coding strategies like being addressed directly by his full name, *Barack Obama*; through the use of his last name, Obama; through the use of the title, *el Presidente* /the President; through the use of the personal pronoun, *Él*; through the use of the person marker in the verbal morphology, (él) tien-e, gan-ô; and in several occasions throughout the essays by using grammatical metaphors such as *su familia, su participación*, where the process has been nominalized and the participant himself has been coded as a possessive pronoun. Taboada (2004) explained that preference for participant subjects as Themes, as observed in these students’ samples, is characteristic of the English language. However, contrary to English, Spanish favors Processes (e.g. *Tiene/has*) followed by Circumstances as Adjuncts because of the syntactic characteristics of Spanish where the Subject can be ellipted. Lavid et al. (2010) pointed out that the selection of processes as thematic *pre-heads* is a strategy that Spanish shares with other languages. Rose (2001) said that the use of this strategy is to “present affixed participant identities as ‘backgrounded’ points of departure for the message (p. 130).” Although in students’ writing samples there were instances of the subject encoded in the verb morphology (e.g. *Tiene* una familia muy simpática que incluye su esposa, Michelle Obama, y sus hijas, Malia y Sasha *(he)* has a nice family that includes his wife, Michelle Obama, and his daughters, Malia and Sasha) the use of the story’s main participant as the thematic head was very predominant as previously described.

The second component displayed in Table 4.1 was the participants’ limited use of textual themes or conjunctive devices of time and sequence. As previously mentioned, Whitley and González (2000) said that the use of adverbials of place (e.g., aquí, allí, atrás), time (e.g., antes, ahora, luego, ya), mode (e.g., despacio, bien, tristemente), logical relations (e.g., entonces, por lo
tanto), and probability (e.g., tal vez, quizás, a lo mejor) not only provide a variety of circumstantial information about what we narrate, but they also make the story cohesive. They added that when a narrative lacks cohesion, a list of independent clauses is created instead of an interesting and fluent story (p. 142). However, as observed in Table 4.1, in the very few instances students used them, some of them were not only repetitive but they were also incorrect (e.g. unfortunadamente) or they were direct translations from English (e.g. en todo, en junto/in all). Although assumptions regarding the limited or incorrect use of these textual themes are difficult to make because they may be due to different circumstances, their use seems not only to indicate, as Thompson (2004) suggests, the diversity of the writer’s resources but also the need of explicit instruction (Byrnes, 2009, 2010, 2012; Byrnes, Maxim & Norris, 2010) on the effect these have in specific genres like the narrative. Finally, and closely related to the correct use of these conjunctive devices, is their use as interpersonal themes. As Butt et al. explained, the use of some of these textual themes bring into play interpersonal themes to indicate the way the writer is evaluating the events of the complication. In other words, some of them are used as marked themes (e.g. unfortunately, surprisingly) (Eggins, 1994). However, following Lavid et al.’s (2010) model, although some of the textual themes students used as interpersonal themes are considered as such in English (e.g. quizás/perhaps, if clauses), they are not considered as such in Spanish suggesting the need of a multi-competence framework (Canagarajah, 2006, 2011; Cook, 1991, 1992, 2002, 2003, 2008; Hall, Cheng & Carlson, 2006) to analyze the narratives of L2 learners.
Theme Progression

As previously described, Theme progression is concerned with where Themes come from and how they relate to other Theme-Rheme selections in the text (Taboada, 2004). The predominant pattern observed in these two writing samples was that of:

1. **Theme iteration.** For example, in Maggie’s text, *Barack Obama* is the theme of the first clause and is subsequently iterated as ‘‘Él/He’’ in the subject themes of subsequent clauses.

In other occasions that of:

2. **Linear theme or zigzagging.** This occurs when the rheme of a preceding clause is picked up as the theme in the subsequent clause. The following example found in Sheyla’s essay illustrates this (the Rheme is underlined):

   Sin embargo, mucha gente le gusta su esposa, **Michelle Obama.** Señora Obama es muy guapa e inteligente y quiere ayudar a los jóvenes con su ambiente.

   *However, many people like Obama’s wife, Michelle Obama. Mrs. Obama is very pretty and intelligent, and she wants to help young people.*

In all, students use of iterative versus linear progression is summarized in Table 4.4 followed by a more detailed description in Figures 4.1 and 4.2.

**Table 4.4: Summary of Theme Progression in the Texts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Text 1</th>
<th>Text 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iterative Theme Progression</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear Theme Progression</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As observed in Maggie and Sheyla’s essays below, ‘Barack Obama’, ‘Él’, or ‘Obama’ was the dominant Theme or *Hyper-Theme* (Matthiessen, 1995; Matthiessen, Teruya & Lam, 2010)
throughout their compositions followed by other themes like ‘su familia/his family’, his wife Michelle Obama. Further expanding on the concept of Hyper-Theme, Matthiessen et al., explained that depending on the kinds of register, different kinds of paragraphs tend to have different kinds of Hyper-Themes. However, Matthiessen (1995) is very clear in his definition of paragraph by saying that Hyper-Themes are “…, made up of collections of nodes rather than just singles nodes (as clausal Themes typically are)”, and that the remainder of the paragraph usually develops this configuration further (p. 27). Thus, and especially referring to paragraphs in narratives, the authors said that “Hyper-Themes often signal episodic changes in location in time and/or place” (p. 114). Although in both participants’ essays we observed this Hyper-Theme changes, they do not consistently occur at the paragraph level, but at the clausal level. An example of this is Maggie’s introductory sentences where she first described that Obama is the 44th president of the United States (place) “Barack Obama es el 44th presidente de los Estados Unidos”, then in her second sentence she mentioned the years (time) he was elected “Él fue elegido ser presidente en 2008 y en 2012”, but then, the remainder of the paragraph is about Obama’s family; “Tiene una familia muy simpática que incluye su esposa, Michelle Obama, y sus hijas, Malia y Sasha”/(he) has a nice family that includes his wife, Michelle Obama, and his daughters, Malia and Sasha.

This inconsistency regarding Hyper-Theme changes was reflected in the participants’ use of linear Theme progression. As table 4.4 displays, both students employed linear Theme progression only a couple of times. Participants inconsistency using linear strategy as a textual organizational tool was further identified by numbering the themes as observed in the students’ essays below where can see that some of their paragraphs are a mixture of themes (i.e. first
Afroamerican president, people, family) without apparent textual cohesion and linear progression as they do not draw on the rheme of a previous clause for the theme of the next clause.

**Figure 4.1. Maggie’s Theme Progression Analysis**
Barack Obama es el 44\textsuperscript{th} presidente de los Estados Unidos. El fue elegido ser presidente en 2008 y en 2012. Tiene una familia muy simpática que incluye su esposa, Michelle Obama, y sus hijas, Malia y Sasha. Su familia es joven y mucha de la gente de los EEUU les gusta ellos. Su familia aún invitó la gente Americana ayuda elegir un nombre para su perro! Michelle Obama es muy activa con ayudar a despertar conciencia para un estilo de vida saludable con una programa que se llama "Let's Move!" Su participación en hacer los políticos de la nación es unas de las razones la gente de los EEUU les gustan la familia de Obama.

Barack Obama es muy famoso en todo el mundo porque es el primer presidente afroamericano de los Estados Unidos. Él fue apoyado por muchas personas de minorías porque él demostró que es posible que las minorías tendrían éxito en la política. También, apoya muchos políticos que son buenos para las minorías como hacer cosas más fáciles para los inmigrantes o apoyar el matrimonio homosexual. Es importante que apoye los derechos humanos de la gente de su país si sea presidente, así Barack Obama trabaja defender estos derechos. En 2009, aún ganó El Premio Nobel de la Paz para sus esfuerzos para fortalecer la cooperación internacional entre las personas de los países diferente. Ahora, está tratando hacer paz y para la muerte de las personas inocentes en Iraq por "ISIS". Es una situación muy difícil para todo el mundo, pero es necesario para las terroristas quienes están creando muchas violencia y las crímenes contra la humanidad.

Barack Obama también está tratando establecer el cuidado de salud universal en Los Estados Unidos como algunas otras sistemas en países europeos. Su político se llama "Obamacare" y fue aprobado en 2010 por El senado y La cámara de Representantes. Este político proporcionará el seguro médico para todos que no pueden permitírselo. Aunque el político no es apoyado por todas las personas, especialmente los republicanos, fue aprobado y está ayudando muchas personas.

Barack Obama es un demócrata, así es opuesto por nos republicanos. Estas personas especialmente no les gustan sus políticos de aumentar los impuestos porque son muy conservativos y quieren tener un país con capitalismo. Obama no apoya los corporaciones grandes porque cree que la riqueza debe ser distribuida más. Quiere ayudar los pobres porque es difícil para ellos superan sus vidas solos.

Aunque Barack Obama no será el presidente después de 2016, fue hecho muchas cosas magnificos para este país.
**Figure 4.2: Sheyla’s Theme Progression Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composición 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| En 2008, 1**Barack Obama** fue elegido a el presidente de los Estados Unidos. Antes 1él fue elegido, Obama fue senator. El año que 1Obama compitió para el candidato democrático, Hillary Clinton era la candidate favorita. De repente, 1Obama apareció y el grupo democrático eligió Obama en lugar de Clinton.

2**La gente** le encanta Obama porque 1él quiere ayudar las minoridades de los Estados Unidos como incluye los inmigrantes, los hispanohablantes y los africanos americanos. Como muchos democráticos, 1Obama piensa que el gobierno necesita tener más influencia en las vidas sociales y económicas de las personas que viven en los Estados Unidos.

También, 1Obama quiere crear una sistema médica por gratis. 1Él cree que todas las personas tienen la derecha a ciudadó médico. Después de años a de luchar con los republicos "ObamaCare" fue implementado en 2014.

1Obama fue elegido una otra vez en 2012. En 2016, 1Obama no podrá ser presidente otra vez. Una persona no puede ser presidente más de ocho años. 1Obama fue elegido en 2012, pero menos personas les gusta a Obama en este año. 3**Muchas personas** no son alegres con Obama porque 1él no ha hecho mucho durante su tiempo en la Casa Blanca.

Sin embargo, 2**mucha gente** le gusta su esposa, 4**Michelle Obama. 4Señora Obama** es muy guapa e inteligente y quiere ayudar a los jóvenes con su ambiente.

5**Los dos Obamas** son muy progresivos. 5**Ellos** usen el internet mucho para razones sociales y políticos. 1Obama ha usido Twitter, y Facebook mucho durante su tiempo como el presidente. También, 5**los dos Obamas** participan en programas de televisión como “Este noche con Jimmy Fallon”.

De todo, 1Obama es un presidente muy importante. 1Él es el primero presidente afro americano. 1Él da espera a todos que la sociedad puede cambiar para el mejor.

1Obama solo tiene dos años más como el presidente de los Estados Unidos. Unafortunadamente, no pienso que 1él puede hacer mucho porque das dos casas políticos no son en acuerdo. 1Obama tiene que ser alegre después de su tiempo como el presidente porque 1él ayuda mucha gente y dos terroristas más Huessin y Bin Laden murieron durante su tiempo.
Regarding the inconsistency of these students using the strategy of linear progression as a textual organizational tool, it is difficult to make assumptions because its rare instances found in these participants’ writing samples may be due not only to the fact that they did not receive explicit instruction as to the meaning and function of these devices in a text, but also to other several factors such as time constraints. As described in the methodology section, students had 1 hour and 15 minutes to complete the task. Although other studies have found native English speakers’ usage of linear progressing to be more recurring (Yang, Ramírez & Harman, 2011), the various results obtained may be linked to other factors such as the individual’s writing experience, age, and professional background.

Conclusions

The specific differences found in these four students narratives written in Spanish has revealed important differences in the students’ degree of control over the textual resources of Theme and Rheme and Thematic progression. Although there are no other studies to compare the results obtained in this study to, there are important implications to be made regarding these findings. The first one concerns the use overt versus null Subject Personal Pronouns in Spanish as thematic heads (e.g., él, Barack Obama) (Flores-Ferrán, Flores-Ferrán, 2002, 2004, 2007) Otheguy & Zentella, 2007). Its overuse suggest that explicit instruction on the use of textual elements like this one, attention to textual social practices and how they are valued differently in a culture should be considered in instruction on academic writing. As Taboada (2004) pointed out, the preference for participant subjects as Themes is characteristic of the English language. However, contrary to English, Spanish favours Processes, followed by Circumstances as
Adjuncts. The overuse of these pronouns could not only be considered unnecessary to the reader, but also it may give the text a sense of redundancy.

Secondly, regarding the use of textual Themes or conjunctive devices of time and sequence, and as scholars like Martin-Zorraquino (1998), Portolés (2004), Whitley and González explained (2000), in Spanish, discourse markers (e.g., adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions) could be used to achieve various purposes (e.g., to emphasize, to express attitude). However, as observed in Table 4.1, in the very few instances students used them, some of them were not only repetitive, but they were also incorrect (e.g., unfortunadamente) or they were direct translations from English (e.g., en todo, en junto/in all). Although, assumptions regarding the limited or incorrect use of these textual themes are difficult to make since it may be due to different circumstances, their limited or incorrect use seems not only to indicate as Thompson (2005) suggest the diversity of the writer’s resources, but also the need of explicit instruction on the effect these have in specific genres like the narrative.

Finally, and closely related to the correct use of these conjunctive devices is their use as interpersonal themes. As Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks, and Yallop described, the use of some of these textual themes bring into play interpersonal themes to indicate the way the writer is evaluating the events of the complication. In other words, some of them are used as marked themes (e.g., unfortunately, surprisingly) (Eggins (1994). However, following Lavid et al., (2010) model, although some of the textual themes students used as interpersonal themes are considered as such in English (e.g., quizás/perhaps, if clauses), they are not considered as such in Spanish, thus, suggesting the need of multicompetence (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2012) to evaluate these L2 students’ compositions.
Implications

The findings in this study have several implications at the cultural and pedagogical levels.

At the cultural level, past (Carson, 1992; Kaplan, 1966, 1976, 1987, 1988; Purves, 1988; Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996; Reid, 1990) and more recent studies (Byrnes (2009, 2010, 2012; Byrnes, Maxim & Norris, 2010; Colombi, 2009; García, 2002; Gibbons, 1991; Montaño-Harmon 1991) continue to support and demonstrate the need of explicitly teaching and making students aware of differences found in specific genres depending on the culture.

For instance, scholars like Montaño-Harmon (1991) have argued that the transfer of discourse patterns from one language to another “may be a factor in the inability of some students to comprehend texts or to write acceptable expository essays in standard English or in standard Spanish” (p. 424). About the comprehension of texts, she alluded to advanced students of Spanish not being able to successfully predict or hypothesize ideas because of the differences in discourse patterns. About students not being capable of writing acceptable essays in the target language, Montaño-Harmon claimed that without knowledge of the discourse features of the target language, students will not be able to write compositions which will meet the expectations of their readers:

If English-speaking writers compose texts in Spanish using the deductive, linear discourse pattern of English, at best they will sound simplistic and juvenile, or boring and dry to a native speaker of Spanish. At worse, the writer will project a hidden message of abruptness, even rudeness, insulting his Spanish-speaking reader with a linear, deductive, enumerative composition (p. 424).

As I previously mentioned, participants’ overuse of overt versus null Subject Personal Pronouns in Spanish as thematic heads in this study could not only be considered unnecessary to the
reader, but also it may give the text a sense of redundancy. The same is true for their limited or incorrect use of textual themes or discourse markers. Whitley and González (2000) said that the use of adverbials or discourse markers not only provide a variety of circumstantial information about what we narrate, but they also make the story cohesive. They added that when a narrative lacks cohesion, a list of independent clauses is created making the story boring.

Pedagogically, a very important implication regards the evaluation of L2 compositions. Montaño-Harmon (1991) and García (2002) have warned us about the use of artificial criteria or dominant cultural patterns in grading emergent writers’ compositions. In her study, García discovered that written examinations like those required for the Advanced Placement Examinations in Spanish were marked down if they did not follow the linear, deductive discourse pattern deemed logical and organized in American English. Similarly, scholars like Montaño-Harmon have advised language teachers to be careful about it because “if they do that, they are imposing artificial criteria for proficiency in composition skills in Spanish” (p. 224). García (2002) argued that in order to have advanced biliteracy and reap the benefits of transferring skills across languages, writers must be aware of their own cultural modes of representation, in addition to those in the target language.

Because SFL, and specifically SFL-genre based pedagogy is a theory that validates different ways of using language across cultures and within particular situations in those cultures (Halliday, 1994; Eggins, 2004), it is seen as highly effective in teaching of L2 writing. More specifically, genre based pedagogies highlight the connection between the discourse features and communicative purpose of a text (Maxim, 2009; Tardy, 2005, 2006). Hyland (2004) and Byrnes (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012) consider the discourse features and communicative purpose of a text two key characteristics of genre-based writing. Therefore, they have not only encouraged writing
instructors to explicitly teach genre features such as rhetorical structures or frames (Hyland, 2004) and formulaic sequences (Martin, 2009; Martin & Rose, 2003, 2007) to promote awareness of genre conventions as well as reflection on its purposes and uses, but they have also emphasized the teachers’ role in facilitating and assisting L2 students to express their own meanings in the target language (Byrnes, 2006). FL learners like the ones participating in this study could benefit enormously from explicit instruction on the features of the narrative genre in Spanish. Under this rationale, genre-based pedagogy could be integrated in future college Spanish composition courses.
References


Canagarajah, S. (2011). Writing to learn and learning to write by shuttling between


Flores-Ferrán, N. (2002). *A sociolinguistic perspective on the use of subject personal pronouns*
in Spanish narratives of Puerto Ricans in New York City. Munich: Lincom-Europa.


New York, NY: Routledge


CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Recent reports (CED, 2006; MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007; O’Connell & Norwood, 2007; Manchón, 2011, 2012; Byrnes, 2009; Byrnes, Maxim & Norris, 2010) on FL language writing instructions have pointed out the pressing need to find integrative language approaches that support emergent FL writers in their expressions of more complex ideas and also explicitly instruct them in the understanding and employment of a wide variety of linguistic resources in different writing contexts. Based on these recommendations the objectives of this qualitative study were twofold: first, to call on FL writing instructors to shift from product oriented to functional writing approaches that teach emergent writers how to “mean” (Byrnes, 2013) in more precise and effective ways in the target language; and second, to show the potential of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) how to support FL learners in enhancing their translingual and transcultural competence.

To achieve these objectives this dissertation answered the aforementioned three questions:

1) How do the textbooks used in four composition courses influence the teaching of writing and the kind of texts that are produced?
2) How do college students minoring in Spanish construct interpersonal meaning based on reading-to-write texts in the target language, and how does their construction of interpersonal meaning of the text shape their written stance?

3) What types of L1 writing knowledge do students use in their L2 narrative writing practices in a college-level Spanish class?

Based on Halliday and Hasan (1989) and Halliday’s (1999) concepts of Context and Text, chapter two answered the first research question. As Halliday and Hasan explained, the understanding of the language lies in the stated concepts. Furthermore, they added that a text should be interpreted within the context it unfolds or occurs. Thus, the description of the language activities instructors implemented in the classroom especially those closely related to writing recorded in the field notes and the analysis of the textbooks, reveal a close relationship between the context and the type of texts students were required to produce in each of these classes.

In the first Spanish Composition 3010 level class, it was easy to observe that the context of the compositions focus on developing students’ communicative abilities (Scott, 1996; Matsuda, 2001; Harklau, 2002) and the learning of correct grammatical structures in the target language (Greenia, 1992; O’Donnell, 2007; Ruiz-Funes, 1994, Valdés, Haro & Echevarriarza, 1992) were prioritized. The textbook Revista used in this class reflects these two objectives as well. However, as mentioned in the study, it is not a textbook designed to focus on developing students’ writing abilities but on developing students’ “interpersonal communication” (p. iii).

The register analysis of the first composition produced in this class, and which was the only one based on a prompt from the textbook, students had two choices: to write a newspaper
article based on the headlines given in the textbook about a paranormal or supernatural activity or to provide an opinion about the use of videogames (field). However, based on the description of activities included in this chapter, neither the instructor nor the textbook provided students in the class with explanations or descriptions about the genre and discourse characteristics of a newspaper article or an opinion essay in the target language. Halliday (1985) considered genre and register features to be key elements in determining the type of language that will be used in the production of different texts. Thus, the newspaper article as well as the opinion essay required further explanation about the kind of relationship that needed to be established between the writer and the hearer (tenor) as well as the rhetorical or discourse characteristics of these two types of genre. However, and again, based on the description of the activities students performed in each session, there was no close relationship between the lexicogrammatical patterns practiced in class and the type of genre students were required to produce in the same class.

Similarly, the context of the texts produced in the second 3010 level Spanish Composition and Conversation class was not different from the first 3010 level. The description of activities performed by students in the second 3010 level class suggested that the objectives of this course included the development of their communicative skills. Even though the students had the opportunity to practice their writing ability more often through the twelve brief at-home and two in-class composition required for this class, they did not receive explicit explanations on the genre or register characteristics of each type of text they had to complete for this course. As described in this article, the students had twelve brief at-home compositions and two in-class compositions. The brief at-home compositions covered on topics such as war, summer vacations, etc., While the first in-class composition is about “El presidente de los Estados Unidos: Barack Obama” (The president of the United States: Barack Obama), for the second in-class
composition, students were allowed to choose either of these two topics: finding an imaginary
time capsule from one hundred years ago and creating a new one to be opened in a hundred
years, or discussing the ways in which news coverage of public campaigns has developed the
power to influence outcomes. And as I previously mentioned, none of these compositions were
based on the *Revista* textbook.

Unlike the two previous 3010 level courses, the context of the third class discussed in this
study—an advanced 3020 Spanish composition and conversation class—was neither a context in
which the development of students’ communicative abilities or the mastery of grammatical
accuracy were the goals of the course. Instead, as stated in the course outline, the context
involved analysis, reflections and expressions of well-formed opinions on cinematographic and
literary pieces from Spain and Latin-America that were presented or read throughout the course.
The content, as well as the four compositions students had to write in this class were based on
the textbook, *Intrigas: Advanced Spanish through Literature and Film* by Courtad, Everly, and
Gaspar (2010).

Regarding the four compositions, each chapter of the textbook (it is comprised of six
chapters) included a Escritura/Writing section which described the type of genre students were
required to write for that chapter. So the four compositions students had to complete for this
course were based on one of these chapters: the first composition was an interpretative-literary
essay, the second was a comparison contrast essay, the third was an analysis of a character, and
the fourth one was an essay of cause and effect. However, based on the description of activities
and analysis of the textbook, neither the instructor nor the textbook provided students with
explicit explanations or descriptions about the register characteristics and discourse features of
each genre in the target language. The Escritura section included in the textbook, which again
included the description of the type of genre students are required to write, is exactly that, a “guide” about how to organize or structure the information. However, the lack of explicit explanation regarding the register characteristics and discourse features of each genre students had to write for this class were visible after students turned in the first composition—the interpretative literary essay. In class, the instructor overtly stated that the essay many students turned in did not meet the criteria of an interpretative essay. He said that what they did was to retell him the story, and that for the next composition they needed to focus and develop the elements or themes of the story.

Finally, like in the previous class, the fourth class observed in this study was a 3020 Advanced Spanish Composition and Conversation class. In this course, there were 4 short compositions (each of 150 words) included in the writing section of each prueba or exam students had during the semester, and one major (300 words) in class composition which took place during the 10th week of classes. The topics of the compositions were based on the readings included in Épocas y Avances: Lengua en su contexto cultural textbook used in this class. The textbook presents an array of historic, social, literary and anthropological temas or topics (e.g., The Renaissance in Spain, Colonial America, The Enlightenment period in Spain). However, as I described in the study, although one might think that the objective of the class, and therefore, the practice of writing in the FL was to learn content, it turned out to be partially correct. As observed in the description of activities conducted in this class, most of the activities were focused on the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar. Particularly about the acquisition of vocabulary, as the instructor described in his interview, he strongly believed that what students needed was to build or expand their vocabulary in the target language. Thus the goal of the compositions was to practice the lexicogrammatical structures practiced in each session. As a
result, and like in the other three courses described above, neither the instructor nor the textbook provided students with explicit explanations or descriptions about the register characteristics and discourse features of the type of genre students were required to write in this class. All the compositions required the students to argue or express their point of view on the given topic. For the major in class composition, which was the focus of the analysis for this class, students had to provide their point of view on one of the three topics given: they were the representation of American indigenous groups, the control of information and censorship in modern-day societies, and the undeniable concept of racial purity.

Based on the analysis of the context and type of texts produced in each of the fourth courses observed for this study, one of the conclusions in study was that the development of students’ communicative abilities and the mastery of lexicogrammatical structures were the goals of three of these courses, namely, the two SPAN 3010 levels and the last SPAN 3020 class. In these courses writing held a secondary place, and it was mainly practiced as a support activity. The goal of the second SPAN 3020 course was different in that students had to learn the content (WLC) (Manchón, 2011) of the cinematographic and literary pieces from Spain and Latin-America presented throughout the course. About the second finding that specifically addressed the first research question, different conclusions were drawn due to several differences among the courses as previously mentioned. Also as mentioned, for the first SPAN 3010 class, only the first composition (out of three) was based on the prompt from the textbook. For the second SPAN 3010 class, none of the compositions were based on the textbook. However, for the last two SPAN 3020 courses, the context and texts produced in this class were directly influenced by the textbook selection. As previously mentioned, the different genres students had to write about for this classes as well as the content were from the textbook. For the last 3020 SPAN class, the
compositions were not only based on the readings or topics included in the textbook, but also their purpose was closely related to the writing approach presented in the textbook—the learning of lexicogrammatical patterns.

In the end, the findings in this study suggest not only the need to give writing a more prominent role in the FL classroom, and particularly in the composition courses (Harklau, 2002), but also the need to overtly teach and select pedagogical materials that show emergent language learners the rhetorical characteristics of different academic genres (e.g., narrative, exposition, argumentation) in the L2 language (Byrnes, 2006, 2009, 2012; Hyland, 2004; Swales, 1990).

The second article showcased students’ challenges constructing interpersonal meaning in the foreign language, and the impact this construction has in their written production. As this article demonstrated, the use of literary texts to develop students’ analytical skills is at the core of upper FL composition courses. For this class, students had to read a brief literary piece written by Pío Baroja, a Spanish writer whose work is part of the Spanish literature canon, and then respond to it from the main character’s perspective. This reading-to-write task required more than the proper use of grammar and discourse markers; it required an aligned value position or stancetaking with respect to the role of Spanish women during the early 19th century. In this article I utilized Martin and Rose (2003) and Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal system because it explicitly reveals how writers/speakers construct their perspectives and evaluations and establish appropriate relations with the readers, aligning or distancing them strategically.

The analysis of students writing samples through the Appraisal framework, showed once again that more than learning the correct use of lexicogrammatical structures in the target language, instructors need to support FL students in developing their critical perspectives (Esplugas & Landwehr, 1996). As professionals in the field have pointed out (Schultz, 1991b)
advanced language knowledge is not necessarily an indicator of student ability to express personal meaning in the target language. The analysis of Nadia’s text supports the latter claim. The sub-system of Attitude and Graduation or amplification in Nadia’s paper showed the diverse and advanced knowledge this student has over lexical and grammatical structures in the target language. However, and as the instructor of the class also expressed, although Nadia fulfilled the requirements for this composition (e.g., the use of imperfect and subjunctive, the use of sophisticated discourse markers and expressions), her construction of interpersonal meaning with Baroja’s text was considered as ‘disconnected’ or a ‘deviation’ from the story. Nadia herself acknowledged that her inability to fully understand the “value position” Baroja tried to reflect on his piece—the role of Spanish women during the 19th century—aﬀected the structure of her text, specifically as to how to conclude it.

On the other hand, the sub-system of Attitude and Graduation or amplification in Aliyah and Johnny’s texts exposed the case of two emergent language learners with a limited or less advanced lexical repertoire who still struggle with some basic grammatical structures in the target language. However, these students did not consider their somehow limited control over lexicogrammatical structures in the target language as the reason to produce a lesser quality paper, instead, it is their difficulty construing a stance and adopting a value position toward Baroja’s text as both participants expressed it during the interviews. Therefore, and based on the Appraisal analysis of these students’ texts, we can assume that their struggles writing in the target language were strictly related to the system of Engagement. Aliyah speciﬁcally said that the task was hard because it had to be written in the first person requiring the use of verbs of affect like I think, I felt, etc., so at the end she said, she felt that she had overused the same
structure. Johnny, on the other hand, believed that his difficulty remembering the story as well as his not so “great” understanding of it impacted the quality of his paper.

These findings suggest, as Ruiz-Funes (1999b, 2001) said that although students are well aware of their own reading and writing processes, the implementation of other metacognitive strategies to develop FL learners’ literary interpretation skills are necessary. I strongly believe that the Appraisal theory (Hood, 2010; Martin, 2000; Martin & White, 2005; White, 2000, 2003, 2013) offers powerful analytical and pedagogical resources to support FL to realize interpersonal and evaluative meanings and locate their own particular voices within a discursive conversation in the target language.

Finally, the third chapter of this dissertation addressed the last question—the types of L1 writing knowledge FL learners use in their L2 narrative writing practices in a college-level Spanish class. In this article, the narrative texts of four college students enrolled in an upper-level 3010 Spanish Composition and Conversation class were analyzed using the textual metafunction reflected in Theme markedness and Theme progression from the Systemic-Functional Linguistics model (Halliday, 1994). The findings from this analysis—participants’ predominant use of overt versus null third personal pronoun (e.g. él, Barack Obama), the apparent lack of textual cohesion and linear progression reflected in the mixture of themes, and the employment of very few connective devices—demonstrated the need to explicitly teach language learners the genre rhetorical structures or frames, formulaic sequences, etc., of the target language, as well as its purposes and uses as several genre researchers have suggested (Byrnes, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2012; Hyland, 2004; Swales, 1990). Hyland (2004) and Byrnes (2006, 2009, 2011, 2012) consider discourse features and communicative purpose of a text as
two key characteristics of genre-based writing. However, as observed in this study, they are not explicitly taught to students.

Regarding the predominant use of overt versus null Subject Personal Pronouns (SPPs) as thematic heads (e.g., él, Barack Obama) by participants in this study, it is important to point out that although several studies on this subject have linked the probability of occurrence of an overt versus a null pronoun closely related to independent grammatical variables such as the person and number of the verb (Silva-Corvalán 1994), the verb’s tense (Silva-Corvalán 1982, 1997b) and the type of clause where it appears (Morales 1997), etc., it is important to underline to FL learners of Spanish like the participants in this study that paralleling the use of these SPPs to English could result in the creation of an awkward or redundant text.

The same is true concerning participants’ limited use of textual themes or conjunctive devices. As Whitley and González (2000) and Taboada (2006) explained, the strategic use of these devices is not only directly related to the writer’s intentions and the effect of the relation she wants to cause on the listener or reader, but they also make a story cohesive. Whitley and González added that when a narrative lacks cohesion, a list of independent clauses is created instead of an interesting and fluent story (p. 142). The repetitive, incorrect (e.g., unfortunadamente) or direct translations from English (e.g., en todo, en junto/in all) of these devices by the participants in this study, again, only point out to the pedagogical need of explicit instruction on the effect these discourse markers have in specific genres like the narrative.

A second component closely related to the correct use of conjunctive devices is the participants’ use of some of these discourse markers as interpersonal themes. As Butt, Fahey, Feez and Spinks (2012) explained, the use of Finites in interrogative clauses (e.g., May we…?, Probably they could), Vocatives and Mood and Comment Adjuncts such as probably, sometimes,
apparently, thankfully, etc., indicate “the kind of interaction between speakers or the positions they are taking” (p. 172). In English, some of these interpersonal themes are considered “marked themes” when placed in atypical or unexpected places within the sentence (Eggins, 1994). However, as I mentioned in this article, their classification as marked themes was difficult because some of these textual themes would be considered ‘marked’ interpersonal themes in English (e.g., quizás/perhaps, if clauses, suddenly), but not in Spanish, according to Lavid, Arús & Zamorano-Manzilla’s (2010) model. This problematic classification requires the creation of specific models and approaches that analyze these bilingual or multilingual writers writing knowledge from a multicompetence perspective (Canagarajah, 2006, 2011; Cook, 2002, 2003, 2008; Hall, Cheng & Carlson, 2006; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2012).

Finally, participants’ inconsistency regarding linear versus iterative Theme progression as a textual organizational tool, assumptions are difficult to make not only because these students are emergent language learners, thus, their Theme progression choices may be linked to several factors such as time constraints, their individual writing experience, grammatical constraints, professional background, etc., but also several studies have demonstrated (McCabe & Alonso, 2001) that patterns of thematic selection above the sentence level are governed by factors such as interpersonal or experiential and textual concerns—the way in which a speaker/writer perceives reality and the way she attempts to transmit that cognitive perception to readers—and the structure or specific genre to which a text belongs. Particularly about the latter—thematic progression being influenced by the kind of genre, I join the voices of other researchers in the field (García, 2008; Byrnes, 2009, 2012; Byrnes, Maxim, & Norris, 2010; Yang, Ramírez & Harman, 2011) that have argued that the explicit teaching and deconstruction of different academic genres (e.g., narrative, exposition, argumentation) in the L2 language classrooms could
increase students’ awareness of how some specific linguistic structures are deployed in the target language to communicate particular meanings. As it was demonstrated in this study, I believe that attention to textual social practices and how they are valued differently in a culture is necessary not because they are the correct rules but because texts are organized in ways that make them effective given its purpose and its context.

**SFL Pedagogy**

One of the central goals of this study was to demonstrate that writing in an FL is more than an exercise in formal accuracy, it is a web of social, cognitive and linguistic practices that vary with situational and cultural contexts which are learned through apprenticeship. As recent reports (CED, 2006; MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007; O’Connell & Norwood, 2007; Manchón, 2011, 2012; Byrnes, 2009; Byrnes, Maxim & Norris, 2010) on FL language writing instructions have pointed out, there is a pressing need to find integrative language approaches that culturally equip L2 writers to control and deploy a wide variety of linguistic resources in different writing contexts in the target language that allow them to negotiate and navigate between diverse worlds, knowledges, values, and ideologies. This study demonstrates how culturally sustaining SFL pedagogies could support both FL students in their literacy and writing in the target language, and FL instructors in the teaching of it.

SFL-informed pedagogy validates the idea that there is no right or wrong way to express meanings, but that a text—spoken or written—is determined by its context of culture and context of situation (Halliday, 1994; 1999; Halliday & Hasan, 1989), and it should be interpreted within the context it unfolds or occurs. In chapter two, Halliday and Hasan (1989) and Halliday’s (1999, 1991, 2003) concepts of *Context* and *Text* allowed us to see how the lexical and grammatical
categories were related to the “context of culture” prevalent in the FL composition classroom, and how they were specifically used in their “context of situation” or texts produced by students in the classroom. Also, Halliday and Hasan (1989) concept of register comprised in its three situational configurations of field, tenor, and mode could be used as a powerful tool for educators to show FL emergent writers how changes in language use result in variations in meaning making.

The analysis of students writing samples through the Appraisal (Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin and White, 2005) framework in chapter three, showed that more than learning the correct use of lexicogrammatical structures in the target language, FL learners need to learn to control and deploy a wide variety of linguistic resources that allow them to convey their critical perspectives. Martin and Rose (2003) and Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal system could be used as a powerful tool for language educators because it explicitly reveals how writers/speakers construct their perspectives and evaluations and establish appropriate relations with the readers, aligning or distancing them strategically.

Finally, chapter four demonstrated the need of explicit teaching and deconstruction of different academic genres (e.g., narrative, exposition, argumentation) in the L2 language classrooms to make students aware of how people use language differently and communicate distinct meanings in different ways across cultures and social and academic contexts. Because SFL, and specifically SFL-genre based pedagogy is a theory that validates different ways of using language across cultures and within particular situations in those cultures (Halliday, 1994; Eggins, 2004), it is seen as highly effective in teaching of L2 writing. More specifically, genre based pedagogies highlight the connection between the discourse features and communicative purpose of a text (Maxim, 2009; Tardy, 2005, 2006). Hyland (2004) and Byrnes (2009, 2010,
2011, 2012) consider the discourse features and communicative purpose of a text two key characteristics of genre-based writing. Therefore, they have not only encouraged writing instructors to explicitly teach genre features such as rhetorical structures or frames (Hyland, 2004) and formulaic sequences (Martin, 2009; Martin & Rose, 2003, 2007) to promote awareness of genre conventions as well as reflection on its purposes and uses, but they have also emphasized the teachers’ role in facilitating and assisting L2 students to express their own meanings in the target language (Byrnes, 2006). FL learners like the ones participating in this study could benefit enormously from explicit instruction on the features of the narrative genre in Spanish. Under this rationale, genre-based pedagogy could be integrated in future college Spanish composition courses.
References


