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*Análisis de la adquisición de 'Tema-Rema' en producciones
escritas por estudiantes universitarios de Gramática inglesa*

TRABAJO DE TESIS PRESENTADO POR: ANA MARÍA DE MAUSSION de CANDÉ

DIRECTORA: MGTR. MARÍA BELÉN OLIVA

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ABSTRACT

The current thesis analyzes the use of the ‘theme-rheme’ construct in the written productions of twenty-nine third year students at Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. The study stems from the reading and writing difficulties detected in students at University level, which have a direct impact on their writing ability. The construct of ‘theme-rheme’, as viewed from Systemic Functional Theory, is central in this study, since it serves as the analytic tool as well as a device for the instruction of textual organization in the students’ written productions. The instruction on ‘theme-rheme’ is also guided by Genre Pedagogy. The study aims at analyzing the effects the ‘theme-rheme’ construct has in the improvement of students’ textual productions.

Based on the notions of task-based and notional-functional approaches, three tasks of different nature were designed to analyze students’ performance. Tasks one and two were meaning-focused tasks performed by both, experimental and control groups. They aimed at comparing students’ performance with and without instruction. Task three was a form-focused task performed only by the experimental group, and its results were compared and contrasted with the results of the meaning-focused task to determine the importance of the instruction on ‘theme-rheme’.

The findings support the use of the ‘theme-rheme’ construct as a valuable tool for the improvement of students’ textual organization.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The current thesis analyzes the use of theme and rheme in the written productions of Grammar II students at Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (UNC). The study was motivated by the need to improve the writing skills of students of English as a foreign language in a particular discipline at university level. At the beginning of this work, I will devote some lines to discussing the importance of raising students' awareness of the concepts of genre, cohesion and coherence: key elements for the current research. Then, I will refer to the current situation of third year students of the English tracks at Facultad de Lenguas, UNC. I will also provide an overview of the theoretical framework that supports my study and refer to other relevant literature related to it. Next, I will deal with the methodology used in the study and the discussion of the results. Finally, I will address the pedagogical implications and limitations of the study, and make suggestions for further research.

1.1 Students' awareness of the concepts of genre, coherence and cohesion

Every culture resorts to different text types in order to represent the various kinds of social contexts through which the members of the culture interact. From a very young age, we learn to recognize and distinguish the genres present in our culture by paying attention to the consistent patterns of meaning that occur in the interaction with others in different situations. This is how we learn to predict these relatively stable patterns and interact by using them across the various social contexts. These patterns may vary from simple interactions, like greetings, to more complex interactions, like the ones present in academic and scientific discourse. But even these “complex meanings fall into consistent patterns that make it possible for us to recognize and predict how each genre is likely to unfold, and so manage new information, and interact appropriately and strategically” (Martin & Rose, 2003).

These predictable patterns need to be learned at every stage in life, so that we can interact successfully in our culture. It is even more so as they become more complex and technical in the different academic levels learners go through at the different stages

of their education. Therefore, at every level of the academic career, students need to be formally introduced to the various kinds of writings they will have to read and produce. The teaching of genres should not be limited only to earlier stages, like primary school, but the identification and description of genres should be a task educators devote time to as an ongoing intervention in literacy teaching.

When dealing with the realization of a particular genre, i.e. a text type, it is important to observe what makes it a text. Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) refer to the property of texts as '*texture*'. In Bloor and Bloor's terms, it is "the quality of being a text, rather than a set of unconnected bits of language" (2013:86). When discussing *texture*, there are two key components that come at play: a structural and a cohesive component. The structural one is built into the grammar of a language and it occurs at clause level, but governs the whole text. It is concerned with the structure of the clause and how the message is organized. The cohesive component deals with the semantic relations that exist within a text and define it as such. These key components are essential in the production of adequate, effective texts since they contribute to giving continuity to discourse.

The challenge of producing coherent and cohesive pieces of writing has been acknowledged worldwide, especially when considering writing in a second or foreign language. Several studies have devoted to the analysis of these features in ESL and EFL academic writing (Meisuo, 2000; Ahmed, 2010; Fareed, Ashraf & Bilal, 2016). These studies highlight the difficulties that EFL and ESL students undergo in terms of cohesion and coherence. Among the many suggestions made for the improvement of EFL and ESL students' writing skills, the recurrent ones are the importance of reading (especially English authentic texts), of conscious teaching of vocabulary, of teaching effective writing skills and strategies to learners, and the teaching of rhetorical conventions of English texts.

The study of the different genres, as well as the analysis of a text in terms of cohesion and coherence, is very much related to the textual organization and management of information in the clause, and therefore, the text. This is why in this study, a revision of the concepts of genre, cohesion and coherence is proposed through

the analysis of the organization of information in the clause and the theme- rheme construct.

1.2 Context and rationale of the present study

The students in Grammar II, a 3rd year subject in the teaching, translation and licentiate's programs in English at university (Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba) are half through their course of studies. As future professionals of the English language, they need to produce appropriate written academic texts, an activity they will carry out all over their professional career. That is why it is crucial that these students learn how to organize their texts in an adequate and also effective manner.

As a professor at this university, having had experience in the teaching of subjects at the beginning of the English track (leveling course- first year), I, as well as other colleagues, have observed the difficulties in reading and writing that students present when entering an undergraduate program. Evaluation tools, such as 'APRENDER'¹ tests, are proof of the reading limitations that secondary students present in their final years, which then become evident when these students enter university. This situation has a direct impact on their writing ability, which is worrying since both abilities (reading and writing) are fundamental to the achievement of solid knowledge backgrounds.

In Grammar II, the point of departure is the knowledge about English grammar that students have acquired in previous years. Throughout the teaching of the subject, this knowledge is structured and consolidated. At the same time, the Systemic Functional Grammar (henceforth SFL) approach to the study of language, developed by Halliday (1985) is incorporated. Therefore, grammar is studied in context, considering the situations in which the language is at play. SFL contents are covered and analyzed in authentic texts, applying Rose and Martin's Genre Pedagogy (2008). This pedagogy holds that instruction that is based on the study of genres considerably improves the

¹ Carried out by the National Ministry of Education in 2016, they reveal that 46,6% of the students in 5th and 6th year of secondary school do not understand a basic text.

writings of students in a particular discipline. Among the topics covered in the subject are the constructs of *theme-rheme*, which are key to this research. *Theme* has been described 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” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The remainder of the message in the clause, that which is not *theme*, has been labeled as *rheme*. These two terms represent the way in which information is distributed in the clause. The *theme* typically contains familiar, given information, which provides the setting for the information that will come next, in the *rheme*. The *rheme* typically contains unfamiliar, new information, which is necessary for the reader so as to follow the progression of the argument. Textual organization, especially the teaching of the construction of the clause in terms of theme-rheme makes reading easier, facilitating the interpretation of the text on the part of the reader. Therefore, the study of the construct ‘theme-rheme’ is relevant and interesting to address since it may help students get control over important features of their writing skills.

To my knowledge, there is still a need for research devoting to the pedagogical aspects of the teaching of textual organization. Many studies have focused on cohesive ties (Lee, 2002; Ahmed, 2010; Briesmaster & Etchegaray, 2017; Bowen & Thomas, 2020), but very few have tackled the development of the construct of ‘*theme-rheme*’ from a pedagogical perspective. Through this work, I will attempt to find out whether after having received instruction on the topic of theme-rheme from the SFL perspective, students not only learn this topic but can also apply their acquired knowledge in texts of their own production. I will aim at evaluating the learning outcome of this particular topic by assessing how students organize their writings after receiving instruction. In order to address this matter, I analyzed the sample writings of two groups of third year students, from two different moments of their academic year at Facultad de Lenguas, UNC. These samples provided the data necessary for the descriptive research that I present and discuss in the following chapters.

1.3 Aim, objectives and hypothesis

This study attempts at making a contribution to the local context, since it aims at spotting the elements that may help students perfect their writing skills, as well as

providing their professors with the knowledge about which aspects need to be strengthened and what needs to be improved.

The main objective in this research was to determine whether or not the pedagogical approach applied in Grammar II contributes to the improvement of the textual organization in the students' writings. For the purpose of this study, I designed two types of tasks: one based on meaning, whose aim was to observe the students' learning outcome of the topic *theme-rheme*, and another one based on form, in order to compare the results of the tasks and be able to observe whether students only understood the topic in question or could apply it in their written productions effectively.

The specific objectives were the following:

1. To analyze and compare the written productions of two different groups of students (experimental and control groups) regarding the theme-rheme construct in a pre- and a posttest, in order to evaluate their learning outcome of this construct.
2. To compare the results of two activities of different nature (a. task based on form and b. task based on meaning) carried out by students in the experimental group after receiving instruction on the topic of theme-rheme to establish if students only understood the topic or could apply it effectively and are capable of organizing their written productions in terms of theme-rheme.

The hypothesis that guided this research was the following:

H: After taking the subject 'Grammar II', students improve their textual organization in terms of *theme-rheme*.

1.4 Overview of the chapters

This thesis has been organized in six chapters. This first chapter has provided an introduction to the topic of the research in question. The aim of the study, main objectives and hypothesis have been outlined.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the development of the Systemic Functional Linguistics theory, which is central for the description of the aspects analyzed in the current research. The chapter also tackles Genre Pedagogy and a Second Language Acquisition theory as part of the theoretical background necessary for this study, and provides a review of relevant literature to the field. Chapter 3 is concerned with the methodology of the study, introducing the reader to the setting, population and materials, as well as the procedures and methods that were carried out in this research. Chapter 4 presents the results obtained from the analysis of the data and the discussion of those results. Finally, chapter 5 offers a conclusion through which the current study is reviewed and chapter 6 discusses the pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and some directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will describe the key principles underlying Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (SFL), with special attention to the textual metafunction, since SFL and the textual metafunction in particular serve as theoretical framework for the present study. The features of Genre Pedagogy (Rose & Martin, 2012) will also be further developed since this pedagogy is applied as a vehicle for the teaching of the different topics addressed throughout the subject of Grammar II, and the effects of the application of this pedagogy in the writing performance of Grammar II students have been observed in this study. In order to analyze the effects that the instruction on Theme- Rheme has on language learning, two activities of different nature framed under the Second Language Acquisition theory have been compared; therefore, this theory will be briefly characterized as well. Next, some studies which have covered the topic of textual organization from the SFL perspective will be reviewed.

2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics Theory

Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (SFL), primarily developed by Michael Halliday (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Eggins, 2004), describes language as a semiotic system that allows individuals to construe and interpret meanings in different social contexts. Through language we represent human experience, enact social and personal relations with people around us and build cohesive, organized stretches of discourse. The semantic complexity of language distinguishes three types of coexisting abstract meanings or metafunctions, in Halliday's terms: *ideational*, *interpersonal* and *textual*. The *ideational metafunction* expresses meanings about how we represent our experience of the world through language. Whenever we use language, we are talking about something or someone doing something (Eggins, 2004, p.12). In order to make sense of the world and of one another, we build categories and taxonomies that are expressed by means of a language. The *interpersonal metafunction* allows us to express meanings about our personal and social relations, the role relationships we take and assign to others and our attitudes to each other. Finally, the *textual metafunction* is the one that serves as the means for representing the meanings expressed in the other two metafunctions. Through this

metafunction, the flow of information is organized; inner ties are created in discourse and the meanings present are related to the surrounding context to achieve cohesion and coherence.

This systemic theory understands linguistic behavior as a choice made by the language user, which acquires meaning against those other meanings that could have been selected within the network of interconnected choices. This is what is understood as 'system'. The notion of system allows for the representation of language as a group of resources from which the language user makes a choice in each situation taking into account the most appropriate option for that particular situational context. The meanings expressed by these metafunctions are realized by making different lexico-grammatical choices, and are projected in the clause, the basic unit in Systemic Functional Grammar (Ghio & Fernández, 2008, p.27).

In SFL theory, the immediate situational context of a language event is examined to describe its impact on the choices of language. There are three key dimensions of the situations that impact on language use. They are known as register variables: *field*, which deals with the topic or focus of the activity; *tenor*, related to role relations of power and solidarity, and *mode*, related to the amount of feedback and the role of language (Eggins, 2004, p. 9). The concept of genre is also key in the understanding of context and it describes the impact of culture on language. It is referred as the staged, structured activities that become institutionalized by cultures as ways of achieving a particular goal. (Eggins, 2004, p. 9).

A relevant feature of SFL is that it seeks to develop a theory about language as a social process as well as a methodology for a detailed and systematic description of the patterns present in a language (Eggins, 2004, p.21). In order to analyze the different aspects of the language system, this theory presents a set of tools for the description of language patterns. As it was expressed above, every time we use language there are various meanings expressed simultaneously. In agreement with those meanings, SFL proposes a series of tools for the analysis of the lexico-grammar through which meanings are expressed. To observe the *field* of a text, which covers *ideational* meanings, the *transitivity system* can be used (analysis of *processes*, *participants* and *circumstances*). The *tenor* of a text, which comprises *interpersonal* meanings, can be

interpreted through the system of *mood*. Finally, the *mode* of a text, which conveys meanings associated to the *textual metafunction*, can be analyzed by means of the system of *theme*. These analytical tools can contribute to providing a thorough account of how the text is structured to make meanings in context (Eggins, 2004, p.328).

As observed in Eggins (2004, p.2) and Ghío and Fernández (2008, pp.12,13), Halliday in his first edition of “*An Introduction to Functional Grammar*” enumerates the many possible applications of SFL. Among the ones mentioned are: ‘to understand the nature and functions of language’, ‘to understand what languages have in common’, ‘to understand how languages evolve through time’, ‘to understand how a child develops language’, ‘to help people learn their mother tongue... foreign languages’, etc. Among these various applications, the common focus is the study of texts in relation to the cultural and social contexts in which they are negotiated (Eggins, 2004, p.2). In this study, I will concentrate on the analysis of text by applying the analytical tools concerned with the system of *theme* (*theme* vs. *rheme* choices, *method of development* and *thematic progression*) in an attempt to make a humble contribution to language education, one of the many fields which this theory has been applied in.

2.2 Variables analyzed in the study

As previously stated, I will explore the choices made by students in the CG and EG regarding three variables of analysis, namely: thematic structure, method of development and thematic progression.

In this section, I will define these variables and illustrate them by providing examples.

2.2.1 Thematic structure

The system of *theme* is anchored in the *textual* metafunction of language. It is concerned with the character of a clause as message; this means that a clause has certain organization that fits in with and contributes to the flow of discourse (Halliday &

Matthiessen, 2004, p.64). In English, as in many other languages, the *theme* is indicated by its position in the clause. It is defined as the point of departure of the message within the clause and it typically contains information that has already been mentioned in the text or the surrounding context. What follows in the clause, everything that is not the *theme*, is labeled as the *rheme* (new information about that point of departure). Within the clause, then, the message is organized in these two components: *theme-rheme*.

The thematic structure of a clause is related to the system of information structure, which also rules various aspects within the textual metafunction. The system of information is not a system of the clause, but of a different grammatical unit known as the information unit, though, as expressed by Halliday and Matthiessen, “the nearest grammatical unit is in fact the clause, and we can regard this as the unmarked or default condition (...) one information unit will be coextensive with one clause” (2004:89). The information unit is made up of two functional components: *given* and *new*. The *given* consists of information that is already known or predictable, and the *new* holds information that is new or unpredictable. Ideally, each information unit contains a *given* and a *new* element, except for cases such as discourse initiating units consisting of a *new* component only or other cases in which *given* is ellipsed because it refers to something already present in the context (verbal or non-verbal). Therefore, the information unit may contain a *given* element (optional), but it must have a *new* element (obligatory). The *new* component usually contains the *focus*, which carries the peak of information. As expressed before, the *given-new* functions typically coincide with the *theme-rheme* structure. However, *given* elements are not always thematized and *new* elements do not always occur in rheme position. In those cases, the information structure is considered marked.

According to the function the *theme* performs in a clause, the system recognizes three types: the *topical* or *experiential theme*, the *interpersonal theme* and the *textual theme*. The *topical theme* constitutes the first element to which we can assign a transitivity function in the clause; that is to say, the element that constitutes a *participant*, *process* or *circumstance*. This theme is present in every clause; it is an obligatory component in the clause and there can only be one of this type. The *interpersonal theme* constitutes an element to which we can assign a label from the system of mood. This is an optional theme and it precedes the *topical theme*. The *textual*

theme represents elements that contribute to cohesion, since it relates the clause to its context. This theme is an optional theme as well; there can exist more than one of this nature and it precedes the *topical theme*. If the clause consists of the topical theme only, this theme is considered *simple*. When there is more than one type of theme present in a clause, the theme is known as *multiple*. Examples of the different types of themes can be seen below.

<i>Carol</i>	<i>is heading to Mexico tomorrow.</i>
Topical	
THEME (simple)	RHEME

<i>But,</i>	<i>fortunately,</i>	<i>Mary</i>	<i>got to the airport in time for the flight.</i>
Textual	Interpersonal	Topical	
THEME (multiple)			RHEME

In addition to their functional classification, topical themes can be further classified into *marked* and *unmarked*. This is so because topical elements are the ones that have more choices as to order. For example, a clause containing two participants, a circumstance and a process can be realized in different word orders. This choice will depend on the context in which the clause occurs. (Eggins, 2004, pp.307-308). Let us consider the following case:

- a) *A cute little puppy was bought by Susan last week.*
- b) *Susan bought a cute little puppy last week.*
- c) *Last week Susan bought a cute little puppy.*
- d) *A cute little puppy Susan bought last week.*

In the example above, the clauses ‘a’ to ‘d’ share the same experiential and interpersonal meanings. The difference lies in the way in which the constituents of each clause have been organized. Some clauses use a participant as topical theme (functioning as subjects or object); one, a circumstance. The choices of topical theme may vary and they will be more or less appropriate in different contexts. A topical theme will be labeled as *unmarked* when the constituent filling the function of theme is

the typical expected one for that mood structure (for example, subjects in declarative mood clauses, as in clauses ‘a’ and ‘b’). If a constituent is moved from its typical position to the front of the clause, it is considered a *marked* theme (for instance, circumstances or objects in declarative mood clauses, as in clauses ‘c’ and ‘d’). In technical terms, this constituent, which is not the prototypical one in theme position, has been *thematized* (Lock, 1996, p.223).

As explained above, theme markedness is related to the relationship between the mood and the theme structures of the clause. Unmarked themes occur when the theme conflates with the mood structure constituent typically expected in initial position in clauses of that mood type. The following chart contains examples of unmarked thematic choices in the different mood types.

Example	Role	Mood type
<i>Michael wrote an article yesterday.</i>	Theme/subject	Declarative
<i>Did he really mean to do that?</i>	Theme/ finite + subject ²	Polar interrogative
<i>When did he go there?</i>	Theme/ Wh element	WH-interrogative
<i>Bring me some water, please.</i>	Theme/ predicator	Imperative

Theme markedness occurs when the theme conflates with another constituent, different from the typical one for the mood type in question.

Other thematic patterns frequently found in texts are *predicated themes* and *thematic equatives*. These patterns are formed by means of clefting. The strategy of clefting involves the division and repacking of information of a clause in two parts (Lock, 1996, p.238). There are two types of cleft clauses: it clefts, that produce *predicated themes*, and wh- clefts, that produce *thematic equatives*. Compare the following:

- a) *Susan bought a cute little puppy yesterday.*
- b) *It was Susan who bought a cute little puppy yesterday.*
- c) *It was a cute little puppy that Susan bought yesterday.*

² There are two perspectives: Lock (1996:223) considers the finite as unmarked theme in yes/no interrogatives; Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:76) hold that since the finite is not an element in the experiential structure of the clause, the theme includes the finite but it extends to the subject. This perspective is the one adopted in this work.

d) It was yesterday that Susan bought a cute little puppy.

In clause 'a' we can observe a simple clause with an unmarked topical theme (subject). By choosing this topical theme, 'Susan' is presented as *given* information in the clause. Clauses 'b' to 'd' illustrate the structure of It clefts. It clefts are formed by placing 'It' in subject position and a linking verb followed by a 'that' or 'wh' clause. These examples contain *predicated themes*. A *predicated theme* is selected in order to shift the status of 'given' and 'new' information. This process is used when the text producer places further emphasis on a constituent. In example 'b', the emphasis would be placed on 'Susan'; in example 'c', on 'a cute little puppy', and in example 'd' on 'yesterday'. By placing the *focus* at the beginning of the clause, the text producer highlights some piece of information, often to show contrast with something that has been said. The wh-cleft functions in a similar manner, since it focuses on one part of the information and it frequently involves contrast (Lock, 1996, p.241). What is particular about wh-clefts is that its parts are interchangeable, and its placement will depend on where the writer wants to place the *focus*. This structure is formed by a wh- clause followed by a linking verb and its complement. The section that carries the *focus* is always the one that does not contain the wh-clause. Taking example 'a', the following wh-clefts can be produced:

i) What Susan bought yesterday was a cute little puppy.

(*focus*)

ii) A cute little puppy was what Susan bought yesterday.

(*focus*)

While in example 'i', the wh-clause realizes the *thematic equative* and the *focus* of information is placed in the rheme, in example 'ii', the *thematic equative* coincides with the *focus* of information, producing a highly marked structure. As explained above, these particular structures, which produce special themes, are a resource that allow text producers to place the *focus* of information on different constituents of the clause.

2.2.2 Method of Development

The selection of theme within each clause is related to the way in which information is developed throughout the text. Text producers may select certain themes with a regular frequency of pattern with a particular purpose in mind. The progression of themes along a text is referred to as *method of development*. This concept was developed by Fries in 1981 (as cited in Ghio & Fernández, 2008, p.138). He hypothesized that the experiential content of themes correlated with what he labeled the method of development of a text or text segment (Fries, 1995). The most frequent methods of development are *chronological*, *from whole to parts*, *from general to particular* and *topographical*. We can observe below examples of excerpts showing these methods of development. The themes building a particular type of method of development have been underlined.

Chronological method of development

This method of development organizes its thematic content in temporal terms. The thematized elements to be found are mainly circumstantial adjuncts of time. In the text below, we can observe this pattern of organization.

Musk was born on June 28, 1971, in Pretoria, South Africa. As a child, Musk was so lost in his daydreams about inventions that his parents and doctors ordered a test to check his hearing.

At about the time of his parents' divorce, when he was 10, Musk developed an interest in computers. He taught himself how to program, and when he was 12 he sold his first software: a game he created called Blastar.

In grade school, Musk was short, introverted and bookish. He was bullied until he was 15 and went through a growth spurt and learned how to defend himself with karate and wrestling (...)

Excerpted from <https://www.biography.com/business-figure/elon-musk>

From whole to parts method of development

In the case of '*from whole to parts*' method of development, there is a theme realized by a participant that represents the whole, in terms of the thematic content, and

other themes, generally realized by participants, that indicate parts of that whole, as can be observed in the example below.

Lions have strong, compact bodies and powerful forelegs, teeth and jaws for pulling down and killing prey. Their coats are yellow-gold, and adult male shaggy manes range in color from blond to reddish-brown to black. The length and color of a lion's mane is likely determined by age, genetics and hormones. Young lions have light spotting on their coats that disappears as they grow (...)

Adapted from <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/lion>

From general to particular method of development

This method of development can be observed when there is a thematized participant that represents a general entity, and the subsequent themes are realized by participants representing types of that general entity introduced before. They constitute classes of the previously mentioned entity. An example of this pattern can be seen in the text below.

A mammal is an animal that breathes air, has a backbone, and grows hair at some point during its life. In addition, all female mammals have glands that can produce milk (...)

Mammals range in size from a tiny bat to a huge whale. The Philippine bamboo bat weighs only about 0.05 ounce (1.5 grams). The blue whale is the largest animal on Earth. It may be more than 100 feet (30 meters) long and may weigh 200 tons (180,000 kilograms) (...)

Excerpted from <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/mammal/353414>

Topographical method of development

This method of development organizes its thematic content in terms of space. The selected themes are mainly circumstantial adjuncts of place, as observed in the following example.

The Main Concourse is located on the upper platform level of Grand Central, in the geographical center of the station building. The 35,000-square-foot (3,300 m²) concourse leads directly to most of the terminal's upper-level tracks, although some are accessed from passageways near the concourse. The Main Concourse is usually filled with bustling crowds and is often used as a meeting place. At the center of the concourse is an information booth topped with a four-sided brass clock, one of Grand Central's most recognizable icons. At the south end of the space, the terminal's main departure boards can be found; the boards have been replaced numerous times since their initial installation in 1967 (...)

Adapted from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Central_Terminal

The different methods of development serve as a positive strategy for textual organization, since they contribute to the coherence and cohesion of the text. In many cases, they serve as a means to understanding a particular text type, since they may correlate to specific genres, as is the case of written biographies, which mainly resort to a chronological method of development (circumstantial scaffolding in initial position-theme- in the clause of circumstances of exact location in time, as observed in Martin & Rose, 2008). For example, in the excerpt from Elon Musk's biography above, the writer selected circumstances of time as topical themes (*as a child, at about the time of his parents' divorce, when he was twelve*), moving the text forward by focusing on his lifetime experience, contributing to the ultimate purpose of a biography: retelling events in the life of a renowned person.

2.2.3 Thematic Progression

Apart from the *method of development* of a text, another significant contribution that the system of theme makes to the coherence and cohesion of a text is *thematic progression*. Developed by Danes in 1974, *thematic progression* was described as “*the choice and ordering of utterance Themes, their mutual concatenation and hierarchy, as well as their relationship to the hyperthemes of the superior text units (such as paragraph, chapter...) to the whole of text, and to the situation*” (Danes, 1974, p.114, as cited in Belmonte & Mc Cabe Hidalgo, 1998, p.17). The most frequent patterns of

thematic progression are: theme reiteration or topic continuity, linear, split rheme or theme with divided rheme and derived themes.

In a *topic continuity* pattern, the theme does not change for a section in a text. This pattern can be diagrammed as follows:

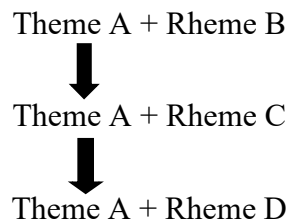


Figure 1. Theme reiteration/ topic continuity thematic progression

This common theme, shared by each clause, contains given information. New information is added in the different rhemes of the clauses. This pattern is typically found in passages of genres like biographies, narratives describing a person's behavior, and in textbooks and descriptions of factual information that center on a particular element or concept (Bloor & Bloor, 2013, p.90)

The following example illustrates the pattern of *topic continuity*.

Millions of different kinds of animals live on Earth. Animals are found throughout the world, from the freezing polar zones to the hottest deserts. They live on land and in the water. They come in a huge variety of shapes and sizes. Scientists divide animals into two main groups. Animals that have a backbone are called vertebrates. Animals that do not have a backbone are called invertebrates. About 95 percent of all animals are invertebrates (...)

Excerpted from: [https:// kids.britannica.com/kids/article/animal/352756](https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/animal/352756)

In the previous example, extracted from the Encyclopedia Britannica's web site, this pattern can be observed. The text is about animals. The underlined topical themes reiterate the central topic of the text (*animals, they, they*), and new information is added in the rhemes of those clauses. This type of textual organization is particularly useful for children, since as pointed out by Eggins, repetition is an effective way of creating cohesion, and the choice of making the same participant theme reiterated times provides the text with a clear topic (2014, p.324). In a similar way, this pattern tends to be

selected by learners of a foreign language when taking their first steps towards textual organization.

The *linear thematic progression* pattern takes the rheme of one clause as the theme of the subsequent clause. Figure two shows a diagram of this pattern.

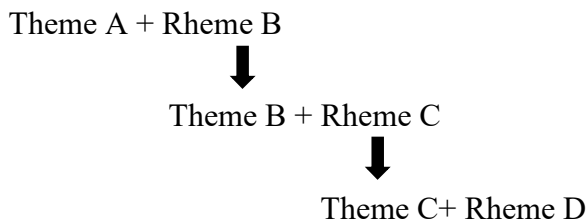


Figure 2. *Linear thematic progression*

An example of the linear pattern can be observed in the following excerpt extracted from a medical site.

Breathing starts when you inhale air into your nose or mouth. It travels down the back of your throat and into your windpipe, which is divided into air passages called bronchial tubes.

As the bronchial tubes pass through your lungs, they divide into smaller air passages called bronchioles. The bronchioles end in tiny balloon-like air sacs called alveoli. (...)

Extracted from <https://www.webmd.com/lung/how-we-breathe>

Here, it can be seen how part of the rheme of some clauses (*'air/ bronchial tubes/bronchioles'*) has been taken up as theme in the following clauses (*'it/as the bronchial tubes pass through your lungs/ the bronchioles*), allowing for the introduction of new information in the rhemes. This pattern contributes to cohesion in the text "... by building on newly introduced information. This gives the text a sense of cumulative development..." (Eggins, 2005:325). As a consequence, this tends to be one of the preferred types for the structuring of information, since it constantly releases the space in the rheme for the introduction of new or newsworthy information.

The *theme with divided rheme* pattern occurs when the rheme of a clause is made up of two (or more) components, each of which is taken up as theme of a subsequent clause. Figure three below illustrates this pattern.

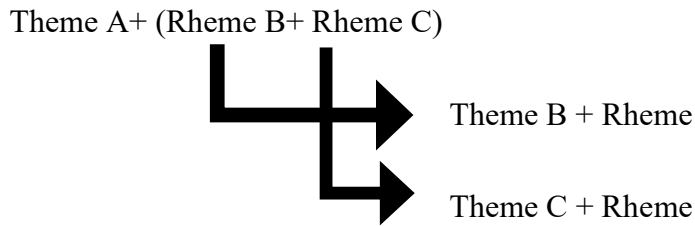


Figure 3. Theme with divided rheme/split rheme thematic progression.

The following excerpt shows this pattern.

Earth's atmosphere has a layered structure. From the ground toward the sky, the layers are the troposphere, stratosphere, mesosphere, thermosphere, and exosphere. Another layer, called the ionosphere, extends from the mesosphere to the exosphere. Beyond the exosphere is outer space. The boundaries between atmospheric layers are not clearly defined, and change depending on latitude and season.

The troposphere is the lowest atmospheric layer. On average, the troposphere extends from the ground to about 10 kilometers (6 miles) high, ranging from about 6 kilometers (4 miles) at the poles to more than 16 kilometers (10 miles) at the Equator. The top of the troposphere is higher in summer than in winter (...)

The stratosphere extends from the tropopause, the upper boundary of the troposphere, to about 50 kilometers (32 miles) above the Earth's surface. Strong horizontal winds blow in the stratosphere, but there is little turbulence. This is ideal for planes that can fly in this part of the atmosphere (...)

The mesosphere extends from the stratopause (the upper boundary of the stratosphere) to about 85 kilometers (53 miles) above the surface of the Earth. ere, temperatures again begin to fall (...)

Extracted from: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/parts-atmosphere>

In the example above, the rheme of the second clause has been split and taken up as the themes of the first clauses in the subsequent paragraphs. This kind of pattern is often found in various genres, such as opinion essays or 'expositions', in advantages and disadvantages essays or 'discussions', and 'classifying reports'³ (text types in academic fields, like the sciences, where texts follow a taxonomy of type-subtype or the

³ The terms 'expositions', 'discussions' and 'classifying reports' belong to the taxonomy of educational genres developed in the 90s by representatives of Genre Pedagogy (Rose & Martin, 2018, p.121)

humanities or political fields, where taxonomic organization may be contested by competing interest groups, as expressed in Martin & Rose, 2008, p.134). The *theme with divided rheme* thematic progression many times provides the underlying principle of organization of a text, and is used together with *topic continuity* and *linear thematic progression*, which serve for the elaboration of the main thematic points.

The *derived themes* pattern refers to expressions placed in theme position which are cohesively linked in meaning to a theme previously stated in the text (Bloor & Bloor, 2013, p.93). This means that there is a hyper theme from which subordinate themes derive, as shown in figure four.

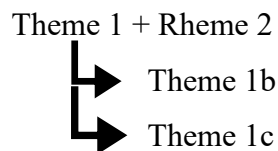


Figure 4. Derived themes thematic progression.

Example four below shows the use of this pattern.

Bacteria can be found in soil, water, plants, animals, radioactive waste, deep in the earth's crust, arctic ice and glaciers, and hot springs.

Aerobes, or aerobic bacteria, can only grow where there is oxygen. Some types can cause problems for the human environment, such as corrosion, fouling, problems with water clarity, and bad smells.

Anaerobes, or anaerobic bacteria, can only grow where there is no oxygen. In humans, this is mostly in the gastrointestinal tract. They can also cause gas, gangrene, tetanus, botulism, and most dental infections.

Facultative anaerobes, or facultative anaerobic bacteria, can live either with or without oxygen, but they prefer environments where there is oxygen. They are mostly found in soil, water, vegetation and some normal flora of humans and animals. Examples include Salmonella.

Mesophiles, or mesophilic bacteria, are the bacteria responsible for most human infections. They thrive in moderate temperatures, around 37°C. This is the temperature of the human body.

Excerpted from: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/157973#where-do-they-live>

This type of thematic pattern is frequently found in long educational texts, mainly from the fields of science or geography, where subcategories of a particular topic relate to the overall topic of a paragraph or text (Martin & Rose, 2008). For example, in the text above, each subordinate theme-*anaerobes, or anaerobic bacteria*;

facultative anaerobes or facultative anaerobic bacteria; mesophiles or mesophilic bacteria- is said to derive from a hypertheme- *bacteria*.

As observed by Eggins, all the patterns mentioned above convey a powerful means of creating cohesion and coherence in written texts (2004, p. 326). However, these topics are not explicitly taught in language classes, though they are a necessary tool to help students build effective texts in English.

2.3 Genre Pedagogy

Genre pedagogy was born after research that was carried out during the last two decades of the 20th century in Australia by representatives of the so called ‘Sydney School’ (Christie & Martin, 1997; Martin & Rose, 2008; Rose & Martin, 2012). Initially, the Sydney School wanted to design a pedagogical writing system that would allow any student to successfully overcome school demands. The study of the different types of texts used in primary school gave birth to the concept of genre as a ‘staged, goal oriented social process’. The teaching and learning strategies designed to guide students’ writings of the different school genres became known as the ‘Genre-based pedagogy’ or simply ‘Genre pedagogy’. Research on the pedagogy was developed in three stages. The first stage began with the ‘Writing Project’ (1980-1987), which was a study of student writing in Sydney primary schools. It started with children from disadvantaged schools, but the project extended and was applied as part of the syllabus in public schools. As from 1986, the ‘Disadvantaged School Program’ was created and it included two projects: the ‘Language and Social Power Project’ (1986-1990), which was part of the first research stage and focused on primary education, and the ‘Write it Right Project’ (1990-1995), which extended the research project into its second phase, and was devoted to reading and writing in secondary education. Finally, the third stage, developed during the first decade of the 21st century, aimed at applying all previous research to the design of a methodology that integrated reading and writing across the curriculum in primary, secondary and higher education. This methodology is known as ‘Reading to Learn’ (Martin & Rose, 2008; Rose & Martin, 2012).

After the implementation of these reading and writing projects in diverse communities and through different levels of education, these scholars hold that this explicit and holistic genre pedagogy allows students to learn the different academic genres necessary to take part in the academic community successfully, as well as later in professional life. According to them, effective teaching implies providing learners with explicit knowledge about the language used in the curriculum and in the classroom (Rose & Martin, 2012).

Genre Pedagogy is focused on how teachers and learners interact to build knowledge. According to this approach, learning takes place through activities that imply a sequence of steps. The sequence is known as a learning cycle, in which the main steps ‘prepare, task and elaborate’ take place. Preparing for the task is carried out by the teacher, who provides support first and then hands control over the learners to do the task themselves. Elaborations represent the goal of each learning activity and involve teacher and learner interaction. This pedagogy aims at preparing learning tasks so that learners are permanently affirmed and their knowledge builds steadily (Martin & Rose, 2005; Rose, 2018).

Joan Rothery and her colleagues, involved in the *Write it Right* project, took the first steps towards the development of a *Teaching-learning cycle* (see Figure below) to make learning to write comparable to learning to speak for every student, despite their academic strengths. The cycle has three main stages: *Deconstruction*, *Joint Construction* and *Individual Construction*. ‘Deconstruction’ involves the teacher introducing students to an example of the genre students are expected to write, giving special attention to its context, rhetorical staging and linguistic features. ‘Joint Construction’ involves the work of the teacher, together with the students, to produce another text of the same genre in the class. ‘Individual Construction’ involves students writing a text of their own production in the same genre (Martin & Rose, 2007). Through these cycles, teacher and learners address authentic texts and interact by deconstructing, modelling and jointly constructing and/or independently constructing an instance of a particular genre. The Sydney School holds that the interactive stage of joint construction is the one that provides the link between language learning at school and at home, which is crucial for students with difficulties in learning to read and write.

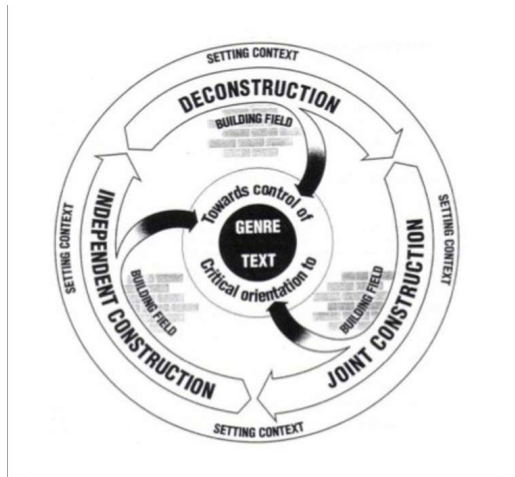


Figure 5. Teaching-learning cycle

This pedagogy is applied in the Grammar II syllabus, where the teaching of genres, their rhetorical structures and lexico-grammatical features are analyzed. In this subject, not all genres are covered, but special attention is devoted to particular genres (such as reports and explanations) which are key in this and other subjects of the curriculum. Students are permanently exposed to these genres, and several practical classes are devoted to the deconstruction and joint construction of these text types. In those classes, Genre Pedagogy becomes the means through which Grammar II topics are addressed. As expressed before, there is a need for the explicit teaching of the different academic genres students encounter during their course of studies at university. Genre Pedagogy contributes to the current study, as this work aims at demonstrating the advantages of teaching students how to write in a particular discipline.

2.4 Second Language Acquisition Theory (SLA)

The field of SLA is relatively new and it is believed to have originated during the 1960s. This theory centers on the study of how we learn a language different from our first language or mother tongue. Given its nature and complexity, the field of SLA is nourished by and impacts on a variety of areas, such as linguistics, psychology, psycholinguistics, sociology, sociolinguistics, education, among others (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Within SLA theory there is extensive literature about different approaches to language instruction. One of them, the notional-functional approach, originated during the seventies and it stemmed from theories of language and language descriptions that place emphasis on the functional and social aspects of competence (such as Halliday's Functional Grammar and Hymes' model of communicative competence). This approach is meaning-centered, and it aims at addressing the pragmatic aspects of language, but without compromising accuracy. The notional-functional approach advocates the task principle: "activities for which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks to promote learning" (Richards and Rogers, 1986:72, as cited in Ellis, 2005).

During the eighties, another approach for second language instruction emerged: the task-based approach. This approach aimed at engaging learners in authentic communicative acts inside the classroom and required learners to see the target language as a tool. The task-based approach gives utmost attention to 'fluency' over 'accuracy' but holds that grammatical competence can be achieved by students while they learn to communicate. This approach does not deny that students need to pay attention to language form as well. As observed by Ellis (2005), today teaching materials adhere to a more eclectic perspective and not to a single approach, so there is a need to distinguish between task-based teaching (based exclusively on meaning-focused tasks) and task-supported language teaching (using tasks to practice pre-selected and presented linguistic forms).

The current study combines both approaches, since it draws from the 'task-based approach' the notions of 'meaning-focused' and 'form-focused tasks', and it uses them adhering to the principles described by the 'notional-functional approach'. For this research, three different activities⁴ designed to analyze the learning outcome of students on the topic of Theme- Rheme will be analyzed; therefore, the nature of these activities or 'tasks' will be addressed. One of these tasks focuses on form. Focus on form tasks describe meaning-focused activities in which attention to form is embedded (Gass & Selinker, 2008). In the study, this form-focused task forces attention to the structures developed through the construct of theme-rheme. This form-focused task will show

⁴The activities will be thoroughly described in the 'methodology' section.

whether students have understood and studied the taught forms, and it will demonstrate if they are able to recognize them. The other two tasks focus on meaning. Meaning-focused tasks aim at engaging students in authentic acts of communication in the classroom. The concept of scaffolding is key since it involves interactive and collaborative work between participants so that they can perform the tasks successfully and later without help (Ellis, 2005). In the study, the meaning-focused tasks elicit students' free writing. In this task, free writing can be understood as the answering of a question on a particular grammar topic in paragraph form, in which students' attention is channeled towards the creation of meaning and not towards the production of a specific structure. These type of tasks are the ones that will produce evidence of the permanent learning of a content in particular. By comparing the tasks of a different nature in those students who received instruction, the present study aims to find out if the theme-rheme construct has only been understood by students or if they are able to apply it successfully in their own written productions.

2.5 Literature Review

The textual metafunction has been described by Halliday and Matthiessen as the 'enabling or facilitating function' since it is the one that allows language users to build up sequences of discourse, organize its flow and create cohesion and continuity (2004, p.30). As stated by Eggins (2004), all languages will encode textual meanings, since users need signs that show how cohesion is built between clauses, context and purpose in a given stretch of discourse. Two systems are involved in expressing textual meaning: Theme and Information Structure. The main system involved in describing the structural configurations by which the clause is organized as message is the system of Theme (Eggins, 2004: 296) and, as it is central to this study, it is this system that will be addressed. The system of information structure will be somehow tackled as well, since the notions of given- new are taken into consideration when discussing the strategies of method of development and thematic progression covered throughout this work. In this section, I will review a number of studies that have covered the topic of textual organization from the SFL perspective concerning the system of Theme and some strategies of textual organization.

Several researchers have studied the textual organization in students of English as a foreign language (EFL) from Asian and European contexts. Yang, Ramirez and Harman (2007) analyze an expository essay of a Chinese college student written for a nationwide English examination in China. The study examines two aspects of theme that are present in the textual metafunction: theme markedness and thematic progression, and further explores these components through a comparative analysis of this expository essay with an expository essay written by a North American freshman in a US university. The comparative study reveals the similarities and differences between both pieces of writing and suggests the application of a writing pedagogy (Genre Pedagogy) that provides EFL students with the necessary tools to acquire a better understanding of the nature and characteristics of expository writing. As interesting as it may be to observe the similarities and differences in writing of a native and a foreign English language learner, and although this study may shed some light regarding EFL students' textual organization, the fact that only two students were compared makes the conclusions of this study limited. Yunita (2018) investigates the theme and thematic progression patterns in students' recounts in a state vocational school in Bandung, Indonesia. This descriptive study identifies, classifies and interprets the thematic and thematic progression choices in six texts, and divides them according to their level of achievement into high, middle and low. Each group (high- mid- low) consisted of two texts. The findings indicate that theme management was understood by the teacher to benefit the process of writing, demonstrated in the quality of the students' texts, which resulted better than those written prior to the teaching-learning process. The study also suggests the relevance of exposing students to theme management through modelling and construction activities. This study recognizes the relevance of theme and thematic progression in the organization of students' writings. Still, studies with larger scale samples, in different contexts and with different genres are needed to further explore the textual organization of students' productions. Krauss (2018) examines the use and potential value of teaching the concept of thematic progression to intermediate learners of English in an academic writing course in a Thai university. The written productions of eleven students were analyzed before and after receiving instruction on thematic progression. Students were also asked through a questionnaire about their perceptions on learning about and applying thematic progression as an approach to improving their writing. Results indicate that the introduction of theme-rheme and thematic progression as features of writing did appear to impact positively, although slightly, on students'

compositions. As regards students' perceptions, the overall responses were positive, suggesting they found it a useful guiding principle for their writing productions. This study suggests that students could benefit from awareness raising on thematic progression and highlights the need to replicate it in various settings to obtain more conclusive results.

Regarding learners of Spanish origin, Alonso Belmonte and Mc Cabe-Hidalgo (1998) analyze theme selection and thematic progression in 25 compositions made by EFL Spanish students at an American university in Madrid. The texts corresponded to a mock test of written English in which students had to provide their opinion on an issue and were given a holistic grade. The theme selections and thematic progression of the students' texts were then compared with those of forty similar texts written by professionals. The authors found a series of problems regarding theme and thematic progression selections in the students' texts. These researchers conclude that the Theme-Rheme construct is a valuable instrument to assess the written productions of EFL learners. They also suggest the usefulness of incorporating the notions of theme and thematic progression in the teaching of writing skills, and the importance of paying attention to the patterns found at discursive level in the teaching of EFL. Mellos (2011) analyzes theme-rheme patterns in eight undergraduate ESL essays (from students of Latin American and Asian origin at San Diego State University) in order to explore whether theme-rheme choices can be used to identify coherence and cohesion difficulties in student writing. The essays were written in a remedial course designed to teach undergraduate ESL students how to read and analyze complex academic texts and improve their planning, drafts, revision and edition of essays. Four of the essays were evaluated as high in coherence and four as low, and based on the results of the study, specific teaching materials were created to provide a framework for how the theme-rheme analytic framework could be incorporated into the academic writing curriculum. The author concludes that the theme-rheme framework is a useful tool for identifying coherence problems in ESL student writing. These studies validate the usefulness of the Theme- Rheme construct, not only as an analytical tool but also as a resource for improving students' reading and writing skills.

In the local context, there are few investigations addressing textual organization from the SFL perspective at university level. Mainly, the texts analyzed are produced by

Spanish learners in their mother tongue. Montemayor- Borsinger and De la Penna (2012) analyze rhetorical moves and thematic composition in a corpus produced by university students of humanities during an academic reading and writing Spanish workshop. The researchers observed a varied repertoire of discursive strategies that constituted the themes of introductions and conclusions of students' lectures. There was a direct relation between the rhetorical moves and the students' choices of thematic patterns of organization, where patterns of rhetorical organization of the texts, resources used to account for their scientific knowledge and different strategies used to reinforce or mitigate the presence of the author were observed. Researchers concluded that the learning process, based on Genre Pedagogy, that took place during the workshop exercised a positive influence over the rhetorical decisions students made when producing their writings. Students were able to understand and apprehend the discursive strategies used by expert members of the community. Although this study differs from the present research in the language of instruction, the results are encouraging since they demonstrate the effectiveness of focusing on textual organization when addressing writing in a particular discipline. Gaido (2015) analyzes the impact thematic structure has in the creation of textual unity by analyzing four written productions of EFL university students. In the study, the author illustrates how appropriate thematic selections contribute to textual continuity and inappropriate ones obstruct the flow of information, and suggests clausal reconfigurations to solve problematic choices in the analyzed texts. Although the study focuses on a small scale sample, it highlights the pedagogical potential of the system of theme for the improvement of EFL students' written skills.

The studies previously mentioned share with the present study the search for analytic tools that can prove useful when analyzing learners' writings. They also highlight the need for a pedagogy and explicit resources that can contribute to the improvement of learners' reading and writing skills.

The following chapter presents the methodology applied in this research, and it describes the procedures and methods of analysis used.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The present chapter will outline the methodology used in this study. First, I will describe the setting and the student population. Next, I will refer to the materials used in this study. Finally, I will describe the procedures and methods of analysis of the study.

3.1 Setting and student population

The investigation was conducted at Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (UNC) in the city of Córdoba, Argentina, during the academic year of 2018. At this school, three undergraduate programs in six different languages are offered: Teacher training, Translation and Research programs in English, German, French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish as a Native and Foreign Language. The English programs consist of a five year course of studies through which several subjects are taught. There are core subjects, common to the three different tracks (teacher training, translation and research), and other subjects specific to each type of study program. The core subjects taught during the first three years are: English Language I-II-III, Pronunciation Practice, Phonetics and Phonology I-II, Grammar Practice, English Grammar I-II and Spanish Language I-II. For the purpose of this research, only the English Grammar II syllabus will be considered.

In English Grammar II, a third year subject, it is assumed that students have already acquired the basic knowledge about English grammar⁵. Therefore, this knowledge is strengthened and systematized so that students can recognize and apply the resources offered by the English language in the comprehension and production of oral and written texts. In this subject, students are introduced to a grammar from the systemic-functional perspective; it is a text grammar, since there is particular emphasis on the text as the basic unit of communication. This is a pivotal subject that connects the grammar courses with the linguistic ones (Linguistics I and II, fourth and fifth year subjects, respectively).

⁵ The first and second year subjects, Grammar Practice and Grammar I, have a formal, traditional orientation towards grammar. However, as expressed in the Grammar I syllabus, there is complementation of sentence and text grammar, but still grammatical analysis at sentence level is predominant.

The students for this study were third year students from the teacher training, translation and research tracks. They belonged to two of the five⁶ groups attending third year classes (group B from the morning and group D from the afternoon shift). The reason for selecting these two groups was related to the nature of students that generally attend these courses. By choosing a group from the morning and one from the afternoon, the objective was to obtain a representative group of the student population at this university. In general, those in the morning are full-time students, devoted to their university studies, while afternoon students are working students, dividing their time between their studies and job obligations, which tends to have an impact on age (afternoon students tend to be older, probably having delayed their studies on behalf of job matters and the number of years to finish their course of studies). Also, regarding gender population at this university, women tend to outnumber men. In 2018, the student population in the English programs was represented as follows: Teacher training track, 19,5% male/80,5% female; translation track, 24% male/76% female; research track, 21% male/79% female⁷. Chart 1 below illustrates this.

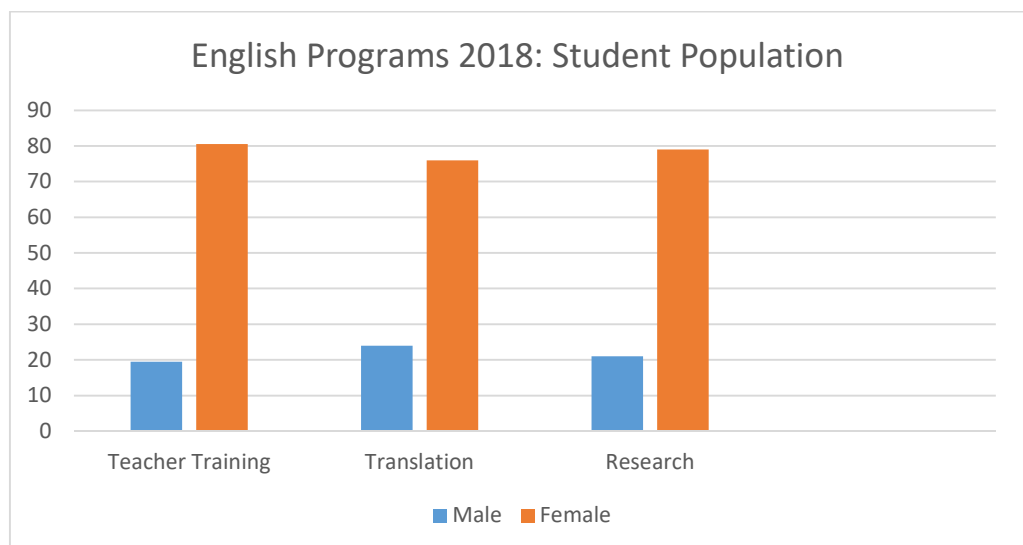


Chart 1. Student population at the English Programs 2018.

⁶ There were five groups (A to E). For some subjects, like Grammar II, groups D and E fused into one group (DE).

⁷ Information extracted from the 2018 UNC annual directory online
<https://www.unc.edu.ar/sites/default/files/ANUARIO%20UNC%202018%20WEB.pdf>

As regards their level of proficiency, third year students are expected to have acquired an advanced level of English proficiency. In order to be able to take third year subjects, they should have completed previous year subjects as a requisite. Depending on the course they want to take, they must have passed previous subjects or have become attending⁸ students. For example, in order to take English Grammar II, students must have completed and passed the final examination in English Language I and Grammar Practice (1st year), and must at least be attending students in English Language II and Grammar I (2nd year).

Twenty-nine third-year students participated in the study. The group was representative of the population in the English tracks, since 76% were women and 24% were men, ranging between 19 and 52 years of age. From them, twenty-two students who were currently taking the subject of Grammar II made up the experimental group. The control group, on the other hand, was made up of the remaining seven students who were taking 3rd year subjects other than Grammar II. Although group numbers tend to be larger (there were 71 students registered in group B and 64 in group D), the number of students attending classes regularly is significantly smaller (approximately half the registered number of students attends on a regular basis, and this number diminishes as the different subjects are taught throughout the year).

All in all, the groups of students were divided into two: the experimental group (EG), which included third year students taking Grammar II, and the control group (CG), made up of third year students who were not taking the Grammar II subject.

To gather this information, students were asked to fill in a brief section demanding demographic information before working on the tasks (name, age, gender, current third year subjects and condition, and also consent).

3.2 Materials

⁸ At UNC, Facultad de Lenguas, as well as other Universities in our territory, this means students have taken a subject and passed mid-term evaluation instances, still owing the final examination.

In the Grammar II course of 2018, during the first semester, units I, II, III and part of IV were developed. These were ‘meaning in language’, which provides a brief introduction to basic SFG concepts, genre and the variable of mode; ‘cohesion’, dealing with grammatical and lexical cohesion; ‘information management’, which tackles the systems of thematic and information structure and ‘clause combining and the use of junctives’, which deals with structural relations between clauses and logico-semantic relations in the text (see Appendix A for a full account of the topics developed in the Grammar II syllabus). In unit III, taught in the month of June, the systems of thematic and information structure were covered and students were taught how to organize their message within and between clauses in order to achieve coherent and cohesive texts. They were also instructed on some basic strategies used to manage information and how their use can contribute to the overall textual organization.

The three variables under investigation in this study were: thematic structure, thematic progression and method of development. These variables included some of the key points covered in unit three⁹. The reason for selecting elements belonging to the textual metafunction in this study was related to the fact that it is this strand of meaning (textual metafunction) that enables texts to be negotiated. That is to say, this facilitating function takes interpersonal and ideational meanings and enables the construction of sequences of discourse, organizes its flow and creates cohesion and continuity. Through the thematic structure, the three strands of meanings in language (topical/ experiential, interpersonal and textual) can be expressed in the choices of theme. By observing these selections, the contribution that thematic organization makes to the cohesive development of a text can be examined. Besides, method of development and thematic progression contribute to the cohesion and coherence of a text by showing how thematic elements succeed each other, creating patterns (Eggins, 2004). The theme-rheme structure of the clause is considered to be “*an essential component in the construction of cohesive, coherent text*” (p.326). By observing these variables, I attempted to prove my hypothesis that, after receiving instruction in Grammar II, students improve their textual organization in terms of theme- rheme.

⁹ Unit three is labeled “Information Management” and it deals mainly with the systems of thematic and information structure. It also focuses on ‘Method of Development’ and ‘Thematic Progression’ as resources that create texture. For further details of the syllabus, see Appendix A.

In order to study these variables, two tests were designed. The pretest, which consisted in one meaning-focused task, was performed by the experimental and control groups. The posttest consisted in two tasks: a meaning-focused one, performed by both groups (EG and CG); and a task based on form, performed only by the experimental group. The control group was not requested to perform the form-focused task since they did not receive instruction on theme-rheme, so it was considered unnecessary. Both, pre- and posttests were piloted with a group of four Grammar II students between April and May of the same year. Students received instruction through a 40-minute class in two opportunities before doing the posttest. The results of the pilot tests helped to make the necessary adjustments, especially regarding the time allotted for the tasks and improvement of rubrics (described in the following section).

3.3 Tasks

Tasks 1 and 2 in the pre- and posttest were a meaning-focused task. Students were prompted to write a brief report about a particular grammar topic in each task. The grammar topics were related to basic grammar content (topics taught in first year grammar and reviewed in second year grammar) to ensure students had the necessary background knowledge to produce their texts.

These tasks were designed to elicit ‘free writing’ from the students, so as to be able to analyze how students organized their texts. This means students were asked to write a brief text without any further indication of the format, nor were they instructed on the organization of the information of the text. In other words, they only received instructions as regards the content and length of this text. They had to produce a report of around 15 lines on a particular grammatical topic: countable/uncountable nouns in the pretest, and time/tense in the posttest (see figure 1 below for a clear idea of the rubric employed). This genre was selected since reports are factual texts used to describe and classify phenomena (Martin & Rose, 2008), and are very much used in the field of Language and Linguistics. As a matter of fact, in Grammar II, the genre ‘report’

is one of the most frequently used in class¹⁰. Figure 5 below shows the rubrics employed in tasks 1 and 2 of the pre- and posttest.

TASK 1- Pretest: Define countable and uncountable nouns. Refer to their similarities and differences and illustrate with examples. Write your answer in a paragraph of 12-15 lines.

TASK 2- Posttest: Define the concepts of ‘time’ and ‘tense’. What do they share? In which respect do they differ? Provide suitable examples to illustrate your point. Write your answer in a paragraph of around 15 lines.

Figure 6. Rubrics used in tasks 1 and 2. Pre- and posttest- EG and CG.

By analyzing the three variables in tasks 1 and 2 (pre- and posttest), I aimed at observing the form of textual organization employed by students in the experimental group before and after they received instruction on the topic of theme-rheme. Task 2 in the posttest was performed by the experimental group before the activity based on form, so as not to alert students to the topics under investigation in this study. In this task, the students’ attention was not drawn to theme and rheme. Both groups had the same grammatical background when doing the pretest, but only the experimental group received instruction on the topic of theme-rheme before doing the posttest. Differences in the pre- and posttest of both groups were observed to establish the level of learning of theme-rheme by students in the experimental group.

Task 3 was an activity based on form and was done as a complement to the posttest only by students taking Grammar II (EG). In this task, students were presented with a text with gaps. They were asked to read the text and then complete some gaps by selecting from a range of options. There were five gaps and, in each case, there were three options. From these options, students were told only one fitted the text and were asked to justify their choice using appropriate metalanguage (see Appendix C V for a copy of the whole task). Figure 6 below illustrates the rubric used in this task.

¹⁰ Findings from the research project “La estructuración disciplinar del saber en textos académicos de formación en inglés que teorizan sobre fenómenos lingüísticos” (‘Programa de Formación de investigadores’, Facultad de Lenguas, year 2015).

Task 3- Posttest: Read the following text and fill in the blanks with one of the alternatives provided in each case. There is only one appropriate choice. Justify your selection in each instance (you may refer to the options you did not select).

Figure 7. Rubric used in task 3. Posttest- EG (only)

This task aimed at the recognition of the subtopics taught throughout unit III: thematic progression and method of development. In this task, students focused on the topic of theme-rheme and had to resort to their knowledge in order to complete the activity successfully. By looking at the surrounding text or cotext, students were expected to detect which clause fitted the gap best. In the clauses provided as options, experiential and interpersonal meanings were the same; what varied in each case was the textual meaning conveyed. Knowledge on theme-rheme, method of development and thematic progression was needed to complete the blanks, as well as to provide the justifications, using appropriate metalanguage. This task was meant to be compared with task 2 in the posttest to observe whether Grammar II students understood the topics developed in unit three and could only recognize these elements or if they had actually learned the topic, and were able to apply their knowledge in texts of their own production. For a summary of the tasks performed by the experimental and control groups in the pre- and posttest, see table 1 below.

TESTS	PRETEST	POSTTEST	
	TASK 1	TASK 2	TASK 3
STUDENTS	Meaning-focused	Meaning-focused	Form-focused
EG	√	√	√
CG	√	√	---

Table 1. Tasks performed by EG and CG. Pre- and posttests.

3.4 Raters

Two raters analyzed the tasks in the pre- and posttest. As textual organization is directly related to the categories of analysis used in this investigation (thematic structure, method of development and thematic progression), the raters needed specific knowledge about SFL grammar in order to identify and analyze the choices made in the

students' productions. The raters were the researcher and another Grammar II professor.

Tasks 1 and 2 from the pre- and posttest were analyzed separately by each rater. For each student, three charts were devised in order to quantify and classify cases of thematic structure, method of development and thematic progression. Also, a holistic mark from 1 to 5 was assigned to each test, from which a score of 3 to 5 was allotted to the test when textual organization was considered as 'passing', and a score of 1 to 2 was allotted to the test when its textual organization was considered as 'failed'. The analysis of the cases in the pre- and posttest were shared by both raters and discussed until agreement was reached in all instances.

Task 3 had two sections: selection of the appropriate choice and justification. As in the first section of this task choices were right vs. wrong, this was marked only by the researcher. Justifications were then analyzed by the researcher and the Grammar II professor. The researcher provided a sample justification that contained the theoretical knowledge on textual organization presented in the syllabus in each case. This sample justification was shared with and agreed on with the second rater. A similar justification for each option was expected from the students.

Given that the analyses of tasks 1 and 2 in the pre- and posttest, as well as the justifications in task 3 were performed individually by each rater and later discussed until an agreement was reached, inter-rater reliability was achieved.

3.5 Procedures

This investigation was carried out with official permission of the professors in charge of Language III, group B and Phonetics and Phonology, group D at Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. These two subjects are, together with Grammar II, the core subjects in third year. Therefore, taking the tests in the period assigned to these subjects permitted having CG and EG doing the tasks simultaneously. The number of students initially taking part in the research study was forty-one (23 from group B and 18 from group D), but some of them did not complete all activities to

enable comparison, so the group was reduced to twenty-nine. The tests were administered in May (pretest) and July (posttest), 2018. Each activity was performed on a different day and, for each activity, students were allotted around 30 minutes. Before doing the activities, students were requested for permission to use the gathered data.

The project began in May, 2018 and was originally meant to last 12 months. But the year 2018 was a complicated one at University level in Córdoba and other parts of Argentina. There were a series of strikes that ended up in turmoil¹¹, which affected the second half of the academic year. Adding to that, due to personal issues and difficulties related to the pandemic of Covid 19, this researcher was not able to comply with the scheduled time and had to request for an extension to be able to complete this project.

3.5.1 Instruction Period (EG)

The participants in the experimental group underwent a four-week period of instruction on the topics covered in the unit of ‘Information Management’ given by their professors in their classroom schedule during the month of June, 2018. Students have four lecture hours (160 minutes) per week allotted to the Grammar II subject, plus two forty-minute-extra periods devoted exclusively to practical activities.

Lecture hours

During the lecture hours, students received instruction on the following four sets of topics: ‘thematic structure’, ‘information structure’, ‘method of development and thematic progression’ and ‘syntactic strategies to manage information- fronting, postponement, passivization and clefting-’, which were developed weekly following the previous order. In these classes, the professor exposed students to the theory that supported the different contents of the unit and then some activities were performed to consolidate the topics. The activities involved recognition of structures, hierarchical organization of information by resorting to an adequate syntactic strategy, ordering or reordering of clauses and sentences in the correct sequence to produce a coherent text, discussion in class of readings from the obligatory bibliography, individual or group

¹¹ There were long lasting strikes, mass rallies and even occupation of several Universities along the Argentinian territory.

written responses to questions about theory, the editing or writing of texts in groups or individually.

Extra practical classes

The two forty-minute extra periods were devoted to the analysis of texts/segments and writing tasks. These activities implied the practicing of a particular syntactic strategy, the selection of clauses in a set and justification of why that is the most effective choice, the recognition of a particular pattern of organization in a text and its further justification, the appropriate selection of clauses in a text given the particular context, and its justification, and writing a paragraph explaining why a given text is cohesive and coherent.

The instructors conducted the classes applying the ‘teaching-learning cycle’ (TLC) proposed by the Sydney school. In each session, the professors introduced the different topics by presenting the theoretical knowledge and then applying that information in concrete analyses of texts. The professors focused on the notions of genres and worked together with the students deconstructing and jointly constructing examples of different genres, such as descriptive, classifying and compositional reports, explanations and biographies. Students also worked on the independent construction of texts. Next, I will describe an example of each of these phases of the TLC.

Deconstruction Phase

When teaching the different Methods of Development, the professor worked with the deconstruction of different genres by observing its rhetorical structure and the purpose of a particular text. Then, the texts were analyzed in terms of Theme-Rheme. An example of this can be seen in the following text extracted from activity 5 in the class handout (see Appendix A1 for a full account of this activity):

Text 1

Guernica shows a large, open room with people and animals who are suffering. A bull stands over a woman crying over a dead child in her arms. A horse falls in terrible pain as it dies after being run through with a spear. A dead soldier lies under the horse,

his arm has been chopped off, but the hand grasps a shattered sword from which a flower grows. A light bulb shines strongly like an evil eye (the Spanish word for "lightbulb" is "bombilla" which sounds like "bomb"). A female figure floats in, holding a lamp which is a symbol of hope. There are many other smaller details in the painting.

Students were asked to read the texts and decide whether a particular MOD was used in those texts. First, before addressing the text, the professor contextualized the text by discussing with students whether they knew anything about Picasso, the painter of a famous work called ‘Guernica’. After this contextualization, the text was read and its purpose was discussed. Once the text was identified as a report whose aim is to characterize a phenomenon (in this case the painting), the professor, together with the students, proceeded to the identification of the different themes in the text: *Guernica, A bull, A horse, A dead soldier, his arms, but the hand, A lightbulb, A female figure, and There*. After the identification of themes, they were classified. At this stage, the professor drew the students’ attention to the different types of themes and observed how the different unmarked experiential themes referred to different participants and how the text producer guided the reader by referring to one entity and its parts. The professor also referred to the content found in the rhemes and how newsworthy information is placed in rheme position. The rhetorical structure was discussed, identifying classification stage and components. Next, the professor elicited from the students the MOD used in this text, which was identified as ‘*from whole to parts*’. Finally, students were asked to produce a short text justifying why the author followed this particular method of development, providing examples from the text, and some responses were discussed and read aloud.

The aim of this task was to make students aware of how the choices in theme with a regular frequency of pattern may contribute to building a particular MOD, and how these choices relate to different text types or genres.

At this point, it is relevant to mention that this methodology was followed to work with the deconstruction of texts through different activities in class and in the different units of the subject addressed throughout the year. For example, when dealing with the unit named ‘Interpersonal Meanings: Mood and Modality’, the uses of epistemic and non-epistemic modality were discussed and the deconstruction of texts

was done not only by analyzing the linguistic realization of these modal meanings but also by drawing students' attention to how these choices contribute to the purpose of a text type. Similarly, when working with the unit labelled 'The organization of time in the textual world', texts were deconstructed by analyzing the different choices of tense and time frames in a text as well as relating how those choices and shifts in time frames relate to the purpose of a text and to genres in particular.

Joint Construction Phase

After the deconstruction of different genres was carried out with the professors in class, students and professors worked in the joint construction of genres. To carry out these activities, professors departed from the texts analyzed in the deconstruction phase. An example of this will be described below.

After having fully analyzed the text about 'Guernica', the professor asked their students to work on a text of the same genre but different content, following the same method of development. This time, the famous painting 'Las Meninas' by Diego Velázquez was described. The professor discussed with the students what the painting is about: the infant Margareth Theresa of Spain and her court ladies or 'meninas'. Then, they worked together on the possible themes that would provide the organization of the text taking into account that the first theme should be 'Las Meninas' and the following themes should refer to the different elements that make up this portrait (i.e. the young princess, the court ladies, the painter, a mirror, etc).

Taking the first text as a model of a report, the professor worked together with the students to write a similar text. Students worked in groups to produce a similar report taking into account the text structure. The professor guided the students by making contributions or suggestions about the choices made by students when organizing information in each clause to produce a coherent and cohesive version of the text.

Independent Construction Phase

The independent construction phase was carried out mainly as a task to work at home and also as a task during the practical classes. For the independent construction phase students had to write reports or explanations, taking into account the purpose of the text and rhetorical structure, and paying special attention to choices in thematic structure and information structure. Students were also encouraged to resort to the use of particular methods of development, thematic progression patterns and particular strategies to manage information when appropriate. In the unit related to information management, for example, students were asked to write a text (a classifying report) whose rubric read: ‘Describe the elements that make up the system of Information Structure and provide relevant examples’. The resulting texts were corrected by the professors. This phase was meant to practice individual writing and the topics discussed in the unit.

3.6 Method of Analysis

In order to tabulate the data from tasks 1 and 2 of the pre- and posttests, this researcher designed a codebook for each of the variables analyzed. As expressed before, the dependent variables observed were three: thematic structure, method of development and thematic progression. The codebook tables for each variable were used to reduce data into numeric codes, so as to obtain the quantitative data necessary for the analysis and interpretation of the variables. The codes used for these variables were simple, since the marking was meant to register the number of occurrences of the structures selected in each case. Also, a scale from 1 to 5 was used to provide a holistic mark to the written productions of students in the pre- and posttests, in terms of textual organization. Scores 1 to 2 were allotted to the texts when their textual organization was problematic, considered as ‘failed’, and scores 3 to 5 were allotted to the texts when their textual organization was adequate and, in some cases, successful. The following scale was devised for the marking of the texts:

(5) excellent: successful use of textual strategies- no punctuation problems related to textual organization- text reads smoothly

(4) very good: very good use of textual strategies- no/few punctuation problems related to textual organization- text reads smoothly

(3) good: adequate use of textual strategies- some punctuation problems related to textual organization- text is understood

(2) regular: misuse or absence of textual strategies- some punctuation problems related to textual organization- text presents difficulties in getting the message across.

(1) poor: misuse or absence of textual strategies- several punctuation problems and other problems related to textual organization- text fails to get the message across.

To analyze the data from the form focused activity in the posttest, (task 3) another codebook was designed. In this case, the coding was used to register correct and incorrect answers, as well as null choices in some cases. As regards the second section of task 3 in the posttest, the justifications were analyzed as a complement of the choices to ensure that these were not random selections, but based on the knowledge obtained after instruction. The quantitative data gathered from this activity was then used to establish comparisons between this activity and task 2 in the posttest of Grammar II students.

The tabulation of results was done through simple percentages, which were observed and analyzed in depth to interpret the students' outcomes in the different tasks.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter four reports on the results obtained from the quantitative analysis of the variables of thematic structure, thematic progression and method of development in both, experimental and control groups. It also discusses the results of the form-focused activity carried out by the experimental group after receiving instruction.

4.1 Analysis of the data

To tabulate the existing data, a codebook table was devised to show the results obtained for the variables of thematic structure, thematic progression and method of development in the experimental and control groups. Each table helped the researcher divide the data into categories according to the variables analyzed (namely: types of theme and theme markedness for the variable of thematic structure; types of thematic progression, and types of method of development) in order to quantify the occurrences as well as observe and compare the students' selections in the pre- and posttest. Besides, a 1 to 5 rank scale was designed to assign a holistic mark to the students' written productions in terms of textual organization, 1 being the lowest score in the scale and 5, the highest one.

The data collected through the form-focused activity performed by the experimental group were tabulated through a codebook table in order to classify the options into: correct, incorrect and absence of answers. Also, the justifications provided by the students were analyzed by the raters following the model of answers (see Appendix B II for a copy of the key) for a general appreciation of the students' responses.

4.2 Tasks 1 and 2: Analysis of thematic structure

The analysis of thematic structure displays the selections of textual, interpersonal and marked/unmarked topical themes detected in the students' production

in both the pre- and posttest. Table 2 below shows these selections of theme made by students in the experimental group.

GR II student	THEME							
	Multiple				Marked		Unmarked	
	Textual		Interpersonal		PRE	POST	PRE	POST
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST				
A	7	2			3	4	2	6
B		2					2	8
C		1				1	3	7
D	4	1			1		4	5
E	1	4					3	8
F		2				3	10	5
G	1	5					8	8
H		1			1		4	4
I	1	1					4	8
J	2				1	2	8	3
K		1					2	5
L	3	2				3	6	5
M	2	2					4	5
N	1	2			1		6	8
O		4				4	9	10
P	3	5			1	2	11	9
Q	3	3				2	6	4
R	8	3			3	1	9	4
S	2	1					7	6
T	1	1				1	6	4
U	2	1			1	1	4	5
V	5	2			3		9	9
Total	46	46	0	0	15	24	139	136

Table 2. Thematic selections- EG

The data show forty six instances of textual themes in both pre- and posttests of the experimental group. Although an identical number of instances can be observed in both tests, it is interesting to notice the differences present in the pre- and posttest. Whereas ten students used more textual themes in the posttest than in the pretest, there were eight students that selected more textual themes in the pretest than in the posttest. Also, in the pretest, there were six students that did not use any instance of textual theme. Conversely, in the posttest, almost every student in the group decided to use a

textual theme (21 out of 22 students). It is possible that the instruction in theme and rheme contributed to the students' decision of selecting this type of thematic organization in their writings. The syllabus that is covered throughout the year in Grammar II contains six units, and from that content, there is one complete unit devoted to the instruction of clause combining and the use of junctives. Though it is true that "linking words" is a topic developed in Language I and II, and Grammar I (coordinating and subordinating conjunctions are taught in first and second year of the course of studies), all the junctives are studied in detail in Grammar II, especially from the point of view of discourse. Students are taught how the use of these junctives makes the semantic relations explicit when the cotext calls for their occurrence. The learners are made aware of how the expression of these logical meanings in many cases creates continuity in texts and contributes to textual unity. Students not only learn to recognize and utilize the markers of logical relations appropriately, but also receive explicit instruction as to the possible misuses of these markers, raising their awareness as to their accurate use in context. Such is the case of student O, whose pretest lacks the use of any textual theme. Besides, there are some punctuation problems present in the pretest (fragment- wrong use of punctuation mark) that could have been avoided with the right choice of junctive. In this student's posttest, different junctives have been used. The student's adequate use of explicit junctives makes the logical relations of addition, contrast and exemplification clear, thus contributing to the organization of the text. The result is a text that reads smoothly and is better organized than the student's previous production. This example demonstrates how explicit instruction of the use of junctives from the perspective of discourse contributes significantly to the improvement of students' overall writing skills.

As regards interpersonal themes, there were no instances of this type of theme in either the pre- or posttest of the experimental group. This was expected due to the fact that the students were requested to develop an expository text – a classifying report in the pretest and a descriptive report in the posttest. Therefore, though a selection of an argumentative text in the student's rubric may have elicited the use of this type of theme, a choice of interpersonal theme would have sounded awkward in this situation. Furthermore, since the nature of reports is to classify and describe phenomena, they do not promote the incorporation of subjective information, such as opinions or comments on a certain perspective. Giving an opinion as to how nouns or time and tense are

defined or characterized would have interfered with the development of the text, resulting in a misinterpretation of the genre in question. The absence of selections of interpersonal themes could then be interpreted as an informed choice made by the students as a result of the instruction received in Grammar II.

In relation to theme markedness, the findings in the pre- and posttest of the experimental group show almost the same number of selections of unmarked themes (139 and 136 instances, respectively). However, the selection of marked themes in the pre- and posttest of this group of students is revealing, since a substantial increase of marked themes can be appreciated in the posttest (from 15 instances in the pretest to 24 in the posttest). A total of nine out of the twenty-two students selected more marked themes in the posttest in comparison to the pretest (41% of the students). In many cases, the students modified their choices completely, going from no instance of marked theme in the pretest to two, three or even four instances in their productions in the posttest. Some examples of this are the cases of students F, L and O, which will be analyzed in detail below.

Student F presents the selection of ten unmarked themes in the pretest (plus 2 instances of fragments). The text is organized in three paragraphs through which the topic of nouns is developed and examples are presented to illustrate each type of noun. The structure of the text, though quite balanced, turns out to be rather repetitive and dull. There is a persistent reiteration of themes, but this student does not resort to the use of marked themes, which would have been useful to present comparison and contrast between the types that were to be developed in this classifying report. Besides, this student did not select any textual theme, which could have also contributed to the organization and flow of the text. See student F's pretest below.

Countable nouns are those nouns that can be counted or be pluralized. They generally refer to objects, tangible things that can somehow be perceived by means of our senses.

An example of a countable noun is "apple". We can say this noun defines an object (in this case a fruit) that can be counted and pluralized. E.g.: she bought three apples.

Uncountable nouns or mass nouns are those that cannot be counted, and; therefore, cannot be pluralized. They generally convey abstract things. They are accompanied (sometimes) by other nouns that can be counted. An example of an uncountable noun would be the noun “information”. E.g: She shared the piece of information with her family.

Example 1. Student F's pretest- EG

Conversely, in the posttest, this student selects three marked themes and six unmarked themes. Within the choices of marked themes, circumstances of matter and contingency- condition- can be observed. These choices serve the purpose of organizing information and guiding the reader as to what will be developed further in a section of the text –matter- and to the possibilities available given a certain condition. Table 2.1 illustrates the selections of marked themes of student F in the posttest.

Student F	
<i>Topical Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>
<i>(CI 3) Within time,</i>	<i>we have past, present and future.</i>
<i>(CI 4) If we take the example</i>	<i>we can see that the verb “went” depicts an action that took place in the past.</i>
<i>“she went to Europe yesterday”</i>	
<i>(CI 9) If we take the following example “she has broken the window”</i>	<i>we are* the use of the present perfect simple tense, which has been used to refer to something that happened in the past, the consequences of which are visible in the present.</i>

Table 2.1 Selections of marked themes by student F- Posttest- EG

The selection of these marked themes contributes to the overall organization of student's F posttest, since they are used to organize information in terms of given and new (Clause 3) and to introduce examples in the theme that are then elaborated in the rheme, where the real focus of the clause is (Clauses 4, 9). This shows an improvement in the textual organization of student F in terms of choices of theme and rheme.

Student L's pretest consists of only one paragraph, through which this student develops the topic of nouns. There are six identifiable clauses, all of which are introduced by unmarked themes. There are also some choices of textual themes in this text. These choices contribute to the flow of information and the overall organization.

Although student L presents a balanced text in which the types of nouns are first presented and later exemplified, a different selection of information in some cases or even the choice of a marked theme would have been desirable to give prominence to the topic being discussed. In three occasions, the writer selected the personal pronoun “we” as unmarked theme, which makes information in the text vague. Since the theme describes what the clause is about, the selection of “we” as theme in a text that describes and classifies nouns is not the best choice. An example of this can be seen in ‘*Instead, we use some other measures in order to refer to the quantity*’, where the choice of a different theme by resorting to a passive construction (*...Instead, some other measures are used...*) would have improved the organization of information in the text. Although both cases show an unmarked theme, the passive construction makes use of a theme which is less vague than the active unmarked theme ‘we’. Another example can be observed in the thematic selection of the following clause: ‘*So we can say that countable nouns can be counted on their own, while uncountable ones need a pre-modifier in order to express the quantity*’. Again, the student selected an ineffective theme “we”. This organization of information could have been improved, for example, by means of the selection of a marked theme, as in: ‘*So, while countable nouns can be counted on their own, uncountable ones need... quantity*’. See student L’s pretest below.

Countable nouns are those which can be counted, that is to say, that we can refer to one, two, etc. of them. Uncountable nouns, on the other hand, are those that cannot be counted because we don’t refer to them as one, two, etc. Instead, we use some other measures in order to refer to the quantity. For instance, we may refer to a piece of, a cup of, etc. These pre-modifiers make them countable in some way, since we can talk about “two pieces of chocolate”. So we can say that countable nouns can be counted on their own, while uncountable ones need a pre-modifier in order to express the quantity.

Example 2. Student L’s Pretest- EG

In the posttest, student L organizes information in two paragraphs. The first paragraph, introduces the topic and consists of two clauses with unmarked topical themes. The second paragraph is made up of six clauses. In this case, three selections of marked themes and two choices of textual themes are found. The first marked theme, in

clause 3, is a circumstance of matter that has been selected in order to focus on this fronted element (a language in particular), allowing the reader to anticipate what this paragraph will be about specifically. Clauses 5 and 7 show two circumstances of location as marked themes and serve as a way of contrasting two different examples in the text. Besides, clause 5 contains a textual theme that anticipates this exemplification and is linked to clause 6 by using a textual theme of addition in order to complete the elaboration of this first example. This student's selections of textual and marked themes show an improvement in the organization of information. Table 1.2 below shows the selections of textual and topical marked themes –in bold.

Student L		
<i>Textual Theme</i>	<i>Topical Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>
(CI 3)	In English,	<i>for example, we can express past, present and future tenses, which is not the case in other languages.</i>
(CI 5) For example,	in the sentence "I went to the cinema yesterday"	<i>both the time and the tense coincide</i>
(CI 6) and	\emptyset	<i>refer to the past.</i>
(CI 7)	In the case of "if I were you, I would tell him the truth"	<i>this is not the case, since "were" is a past tense does not refer to a past time, but rather to an imaginary situation in the present.</i>

Table 2.2 Selections of marked themes by student L- Posttest- EG

The case of student O shows the selection of nine unmarked themes in the pretest. This text contains three paragraphs, through which student O develops the topic of nouns. There are nine clauses and one fragment in this text. The student develops each type of noun in a different paragraph and refers to their similarities and differences in the third paragraph. Again, in this case, the student selected the personal pronoun "we" as unmarked theme in two clauses. Even though a clear organization can be observed in this text, a different choice in theme (circumstance- marked) would have contributed to a better flow of information, especially in these two cases. Although the second paragraph begins by developing the subtopic of uncountable nouns, the student selected the use of "we" as theme of the third and fourth clause. This selection interrupts the development of the topic 'uncountable nouns', which was presented in the theme of the first clause and reiterated in the second clause. Since the third clause presents examples of the statement developed in clause 2, instead of having an independent

clause introduced by “we” as theme, an independent clause preceded by a textual theme and a different topical theme would have been a better choice to introduce these examples (instead of “*They cannot be separated, *we cannot say one flour, two waters*”, the student could have said “*They cannot be separated; therefore, saying one flour, two waters would be considered ungrammatical*”). As regards the fourth clause, a reformulation of the information presented together with an impersonal subject as theme of the clause would have been desired (instead of “*We usually name the quantity of measure...*” the student could have said “*It is usual to name the quantity of measure...*”). Although the use of the pronoun ‘we’ cannot be considered ungrammatical, there are better options of themes (marked or unmarked ones, but with more specific content) that aid in building a well-structured text. Example 3 below shows a copy of this student’s pretest.

Countable nouns are nouns that refer to entities that can be separated into unities and therefore be counted with numerals: two apples, a hundred cars.

Uncountable nouns are mass nouns. They cannot be separated, we cannot say one flour, two waters. We usually name the quantity or measure, for example: 100 grams of sugar, three pieces of bread, some cake.

Countable and uncountable nouns are similar. They are nouns, they can be preceded by some, any. The difference between them is that, for countable nouns we use determiners such as a, an, two, many; whereas for uncountable nouns we use much, few, little, lots of, a great deal of (instead of a great number of, used with countable nouns).

Example 3. Student O’s pretest- EG

Student’s O posttest consists of a paragraph with fifteen clauses. In its organization, four textual themes and four marked themes can be identified. The student begins by explaining the concepts of time and tense in the first clauses. In two opportunities, she resorts to a textual theme of addition (‘*and*’) that allows for the incorporation of information through the connection of clauses, contributing to the unity of the text. In clause 7, the marked topical theme of manner-means allows for the placement of given information in theme position. Clause 8 begins with a textual theme that anticipates that an example will be discussed, followed by a marked experiential theme of cause-purpose that helps to organize information in terms of given-new. The

same happens with clauses 11 and 14, in which this student selects marked experiential themes of contingency-condition that help to present information following the given-new principle. These appropriate selections of theme confer unity to the text. Table 2.3 below illustrates the discussed selections of theme, made by student O in the posttest.

Student O		
<i>Textual Theme</i>	<i>Topical Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>
<i>(Cl 3) , and</i>	we	<i>can talk about future reference.</i>
<i>(Cl 5) , and</i>	∅	<i>is marked by the finite verb.</i>
<i>(Cl 7)</i>	By means of the different tenses	<i>we can talk about the past, the present and the future</i>
<i>(Cl 8) For example,</i>	to talk about the past	<i>we can use the past simple.</i>
<i>(Cl 11)</i>	If we want to say something about the present,	<i>we can use the simple present or present continuous:</i>
<i>(Cl 14)</i>	If we want to talk about the future,	<i>we can use either present simple (The train leaves at 5:30 tomorrow), present continuous (I am turning 21 next month) or present perfect (You have to show your ID when you have reached the security control).</i>

Table 2.3 Selections of marked themes by student O- Posttest- EG

As it has been stated, there was an increase of occurrences of marked themes in the posttests of students in the experimental group in comparison to these students' pretest. As observed through the analyzed examples, this increase in selections of marked themes seems to have favored the textual organization of these students' written productions since they flow more smoothly than the products seen in the pretest.

Table 3 below shows the selections of theme made by the students in the control group.

CONTROL GROUP	THEMATIC STRUCTURE							
	Multiple				Marked		Unmarked	
Student	Textual		Interpersonal		PRE	POST	PRE	POST
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST				
1	2	--	--	--	1	--	4	4
2	4	3	--	--	2	--	5	7
3	2	--	--	--	--	--	6	4
4	--	1	--	--	1	--	3	4

5	4	4	--	--	--	2	8	5
6	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	4
7	2	3	--	--	1	2	7	3
TOTAL	14	11	--	--	5	4	35	31

Table 3. Thematic selections- CG

As a general tendency, it has been observed that the students used fewer textual themes, and marked and unmarked themes in the posttest than in the pretest. In other words, the instruction of theme-rheme is clearly non-existent. Their choices of theme-rheme are erratic in both the pre- and posttest.

Instances of textual themes can be observed in the pre- and posttest of the control group. Students 2, 5 and 7 show selections of textual themes in both tests. These students are the ones that present the highest number of instances of textual theme, a frequency of 3 to 4 occurrences in each test. This means that the students were used to employing junctives in their written productions. It is possible that these students were taught about junctives in previous years of study, perhaps in subjects like Language I or Language II. But even in those cases, many times the junctives are wrongly used, and the student ends up producing a fragment, like in the case of student 2. This student selected the junctive 'for example' in three occasions in the pretest, producing three instances of fragments. In the posttest, the same problem was reproduced and the use of a junctive- that is to say- was wrongly punctuated, and a fragment was the result again. Many times, this inadequate use of textual themes may hinder comprehension. There were other cases of students selecting textual themes in the control group, but these presented 1 or 2 instances of the said theme (S1, S3 and S4). Another student (S6) showed no instance of textual theme in either test, which could be interpreted as lack of knowledge of the resource. This tendency of minor or null choice of textual theme in some students' writings contrasts with the selections of students 2, 5 and 7.

By comparing the selections of textual themes made by the students in the control group and the experimental group, it can be noticed how the instruction provided in Grammar II has had a positive influence in this second group. The students who took the subject (experimental group) present a more efficient use of textual themes in the posttest than those students in the control group, who made a more erratic selection of this type of theme.

Regarding interpersonal themes, the same situation of the experimental group is present in the control group; there are no instances or choices of interpersonal theme in both pre- and posttest. As expressed before, this was expected given the nature of the text they were requested to write.

With respect to marked and unmarked themes, almost the same number of choices can be observed in the pre- and posttest of this group. These results seem to indicate that had the control group been exposed to instruction, most probably, there would have been more instances of marked themes in the posttest. In the experimental group, a strong tendency towards the selection of marked themes can be appreciated as opposed to the choices made by the control group, since in the experimental group there were nine students that used more marked themes in the posttest in comparison to the pretest. However, in the control group there is no clear tendency in relation to the use of marked themes since the selection of marked themes in the pre- and posttest is almost the same (5 cases in the pretest and 4 cases in the posttest). In fact, in the pretest four students selected marked themes, whereas in the posttest only two students chose to use marked themes. These choices indicate a random selection of marked and unmarked themes made by students in the control group, which may be related to the absence of instruction, which could have helped students to organize their writings.

4.3 Tasks 1 and 2: Analysis of thematic progression

The analysis of thematic progression explores the choices of linear, topic continuity, derived theme and theme with divided rheme made by students from the experimental and control groups in the pre- and posttest. Table 4 below displays these selections of thematic progression made by students in the experimental group. The “x” in each box indicates the number of instances of a particular type of thematic progression found in the students’ pieces of writing.

GR II STUDENT	THEMATIC PROGRESSION							
	Linear		Topic continuity		Derived theme		Theme with divided rheme	
	pre	pos	pre	pos	pre	pos	pre	pos
A	X			X				X
B				XX				
C				X				
D				X			X	
E				X				
F			X	X				
G			X					
H				X				
I			X	XX		X		
J		X	X					
K								
L	X	X	X					
M								
N	X			X				
O			XX	X				X
P				XXX			X	
Q							X	X
R				X			X	
S			X	XX				
T				X				
U			X	X				
V				XX				
Total	3	2	13	22	0	1	4	3

Table 4. Selections of thematic progression- EG

The data show thirteen instances of topic continuity in the pretest and twenty-two instances of this thematic progression in the posttest of this group. Although there are few instances of linear, derived theme and theme with divided rheme in the pre and posttests, all the choices of thematic progression indicate that the students in Grammar II are taking their first steps towards textual organization, and therefore, they mainly choose the easiest and also the safest type of thematic progression (topic continuity) to organize their texts. It is interesting to notice that there were nine students who chose topic continuity in the pretest, and sixteen students that selected this type of thematic progression in the posttest. This increase might be directly related to the instruction provided in Grammar II; in fact, ten of those sixteen students had not used topic continuity in the pretest, which might be showing that after receiving instruction these students decided to organize their writings and made an informed choice. To illustrate

this point, examples extracted from student B's, I's and V's pre- and posttests will be analyzed below.

Student B's pretest consists of a paragraph with two sentences and two fragments. Although the instructions clearly requested students to write a classifying report, the text provided by student B only defines the different types of nouns in each sentence and provides an example of each type through the fragments. There is no attempt to connect pieces of information since the student did not select any resource in order to make the information flow. There are no instances of thematic progression and the topic has been barely developed. Besides, the student presents problems as regards sentence structure and punctuation mistakes, which are made evident by the presence of the fragments. Student Bs' pretest can be seen in example 4 below.

A countable noun is a name that refers to things that can be counted because of their nature and can be referred to as a unit. Ex: one car.

An uncountable noun is a name that refers to things that cannot be referred to as a unit. Ex: water.

Example 4. Student B's pretest- EG

In student B's posttest, a clear improvement can be perceived. The text presents a paragraph through which the topic is developed. In order to deal with the topic of time and tense, the student resorted to the use of topic continuity twice. Table 4.1 shows the selections of thematic progression of student B's posttest.

Student B		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>	<i>Thematic Progression</i>
<i>(CI 1) Time</i>	<i>is a universal concept.</i>	TOPIC CONTINUITY
<i>(CI 2) It</i>	<i>can be illustrated as a line of infinite length in which the present moment is always moving forward (...)</i>	
<i>(CI5) Tense</i>	<i>is a pure grammatical idea.</i>	TOPIC CONTINUITY
<i>(CI 6) It</i>	<i>'s the tool we use to refer to the time or moment when things happen.</i>	

Table 4.1 Selections of thematic progression by student B- Posttest - EG.

These selections of thematic progression made by student B contribute to the coherence of the text, providing unity to this piece of writing. Besides, the last clause integrates the topics of time and tense in a comparative and contrastive manner, acting as a sort of conclusion to the text. The student finishes by illustrating with an example that is presented as separate from the text. Although it would have been desirable for the example to be incorporated inside the paragraph, the fact that it was not presented as a fragment inside the text – as it was done in the pretest- shows an improvement towards organization and a better understanding of the structuring of the text.

In the case of student I, the pretest consists of a paragraph made up of four clauses and a fragment. At the beginning, there is an attempt at organizing information that can be seen in the first and second sentences, which present a case of topic continuity. However, this attempt is cut short by the appearance of a sentence fragment that interrupts that flow of information and affects the coherence of the text. Though it seems this student has grasped certain knowledge about textual organization in previous years, that knowledge is still limited and therefore it is reflected in the faulty construction present in the text. See student I's pretest in example 5, below.

Countable nouns are nouns that refer to things that can be counted or quantified. These nouns are generally concrete, for example: a candy, three cars. On the other hand, uncountable nouns refer to concepts or things that cannot be counted. For example: love, hair, clothing. Both are types of nouns.

Example 5. Student I's pretest- EG

Student I's posttest shows a steadier organization. The topic unfolds in a paragraph where the use of three instances of thematic progression can be recognized. These choices contribute to the flow of information throughout the text. Table 4.2 displays the selections made by student I regarding thematic progression.

Student I		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>	<i>Thematic Progression</i>
<i>(Cl 1) Time</i>	<i>is a universal concept.</i>	TOPIC
<i>(Cl 2) It</i>	<i>has three dimensions: past, present and future.</i>	CONTINUITY
<i>(Cl 4) Tense</i>	<i>is one of the features attributed to finite verb forms.</i>	

<i>(Cl 5) Tense</i>	<i>varies among languages.</i>	TOPIC
		CONTINUITY
<i>(Cl 5) Tense</i>	<i>varies among languages.</i>	DERIVED
<i>(Cl 6) A past tense</i>	<i>may refer to a past moment in life</i>	THEME
<i>(Cl 7) but a present tense</i>	<i>may also refer to a past time.</i>	

Table 4.2 Selections of thematic progression by student I- Posttest- EG

As observed in this instance, the student selected topic continuity twice and a derived theme once. These selections indicate a more confident use of the resource of thematic progression and therefore demonstrate the incidence of the instruction received. Besides, the selection of topic continuity followed by derived theme in this case accurately guides the reader from a general panorama of the topic to a more specific one. The posttest is not only better organized in terms of information flow, but also shows an improvement with regard to coherence, since clauses are fully formed this time and the text reads smoothly.

By observing student V's pretest, several irregularities can be detected. To begin with, there aren't any instances of thematic progression contributing to the flow of information; also the student has selected some cases of personal pronouns referring to people as (part of) themes, which is undesirable in this type of text. Reports describe a phenomenon; therefore, finding what is being described- the phenomenon- as theme is expected (and not a generic personal pronoun "we"). Besides, the conclusion has been omitted. There are faulty uses of textual elements related to reference and punctuation, as well. For example, there is a problematic case of reference in the sixth line, since the reference form "them" occurs too far from the referent "uncountable nouns", placed four lines before. This organization makes it difficult for the reader to retrieve the referent appropriately, especially as the reference form appears in a clause complex made up of six clauses. Also, the fact that information has been packed in such a dense clause complex hinders comprehension. Examples of the inadequate use of punctuation marks involve a couple of cases of comma splice and also the occurrence of a sentence fragment. These problems seem to indicate that the student presents difficulties when structuring texts; the inadequate construction of clauses makes it difficult for the reader to decode the information presented in the text. The cases mentioned before, together

with the omission of organization in terms of thematic progression confuse the reader and they undermine the strength of the text. Example 6 below shows a copy of the student's pretest.

Countable nouns can be defined as the kind of nouns that can be divided into whole units, that is why we can count them. For example: if we say apple, I know I can have 10 or 1 apple. On the other hand, uncountable nouns are the ones we cannot divide because they represent wholes, we need units to measure them. For example: bread, in order to count how much bread there is, we use 'a loaf of'. One main difference is the one explained above, and another difference could be that they way of measuring them is different, when we talk about apples, we are referring to one whole, not a part of, whereas when we refer to uncountable nouns, we describe or measure a part of a whole. One similarity could be that they are all nouns, objects. Another similarity is that most of them (countable and uncountable) are tangible, that is to say, we can touch them.

Example 6. Student V's pretest-EG

In the posttest, although there is still some trouble related to punctuation- in fact, only one case of comma splice-, there is an improvement in the overall textual organization given by an adequate use of topic continuity. Table 4.3 below shows student V's selections of thematic progression.

Student V		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>	<i>Thematic Progression</i>
<i>(CI 1)Time</i>	<i>is a universal feature used by every person inherent from* any language.</i>	TOPIC
<i>(CI 2) It</i>	<i>is a system based on numbers and cycles.</i>	CONTINUITY
<i>(CI 5)Tense</i>	<i>, on the other hand, is a linguistic device that depends on every language and that has to do with grammar rules and how each language expresses them.</i>	TOPIC
<i>(CI 6)It</i>	<i>Is a continuum in which in the center is located the present*</i>	CONTINUITY

Table 4.3 Selections of thematic progression by student V- Posttest- EG

It is relevant to note how this time the student adequately resorts to topic continuity on two occasions. These choices contribute to guiding the reader through the text in an orderly manner. Furthermore, the fact that the student has made an adequate selection of themes in the posttest (participants such as “time” or “tense” in agreement with the topic being discussed, and not the pronoun “we”, which is general and vague) also demonstrates the achievement of a better understanding of how the content should be organized in this type of reports in which the phenomenon being described or classified generally becomes the theme in most of the clauses in the text.

Table 5 below presents the selections of thematic progression made by the students in the control group. The “x” in each box indicates the number of instances of a particular type of thematic progression found in the students’ pieces of writing.

CONTROL GROUP	THEMATIC PROGRESSION							
	Linear		Topic Continuity		Derived Theme		Theme with divided rheme	
Student	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1			X					
2	XX			XX				
3			XX	X				
4		X	X	X				
5	XX		X	X				
6	X	X		X				
7	X	X	X	X				
Total	6	3	6	7	0	0	0	0

Table 5. Selections of thematic progression- CG

There is almost the same number of occurrences of thematic progression in both instances (twelve cases in the pretest and ten in the posttest). What is noticeable is the

erratic organization of the textual productions made by these students regarding the selection of this strategy. In general, the number of instances of thematic progression selected by each particular student in the pre- and posttest is similar. In some cases, though, thematic progression mainly occurs in the pretest, outnumbering the selections of the posttest (students 1, 3 and 5). The fact that thematic progression has been selected mostly by the same students in the pre- and posttest, and in some cases even more in the pretest than in the posttest seems to indicate that the selections have been randomly made or that these students are used to writing in this way. Besides, these students are not guided by instruction on how to organize information in a text, so in some cases, although the use of thematic progression may be considered appropriate, the comprehension of the content is hindered by punctuation and other structural problems (e.g.: fragments, comma splice, inappropriate choice of junctive, etc.). As regards the choices of types of thematic progression, the ones used are topic continuity and linear. Cases of derived theme and theme with divided rheme are non-existent, since they are more complex and require instruction for their appropriate use.

If we observe student 3's pretest, two cases of topic continuity can be found. These occur in a text made up of six clauses and two fragments. The choices made by student 3 can be seen in table 5.1 below.

Student 3		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>	<i>Thematic Progression</i>
<i>(Cl 3) you</i>	<i>can count them</i>	
<i>(Cl 4) and Ø</i>	<i>give them a number and a plural form.</i>	TOPIC
CONTINUITY		
<i>(Cl 6) for example the word "news"</i>	<i>is always singular,</i>	
<i>(Cl 7) it</i>	<i>has no plural form</i>	TOPIC
CONTINUITY		

Table 5.1 Selections of thematic progression by Student 3- Pretest- CG.

The selections of topic continuity may contribute to the organization of the paragraph, but as it is observed, this student has selected a personal pronoun referring to people as subject in one of the cases, making it theme of two clauses. This inappropriate

selection of theme in this report makes the student's lack of knowledge of the generic conventions evident. Besides, the presence of fragments also interferes with understanding and complicates the flow of information.

A very similar distribution of organization can be observed in this student's posttest. Table 5.2 shows the selections of thematic progression made by student 3 in the posttest.

Student 3		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>	<i>Thematic Progression</i>
<i>(Cl 1) Time</i>	<i>is a universal concept.</i>	
<i>(Cl 2) It</i>	<i>refers to past, present and future.</i>	TOPIC
		CONTINUITY

Table 5.2 Selections of thematic progression by student 3- Posttest- CG

Again, this student has selected topic continuity in the posttest, only once. This is his only attempt at organizing information. This brief text, made up of four clauses, contains one fragment and a wrong selection of junctive. There are several types of mistakes in such a short text, which makes it difficult for the reader to process the information presented, and reinforces the fact that instruction in the management of information is lacking (and necessary) in the control group. Conversely, an important number of students who received instruction (experimental group) could satisfactorily revert this situation and improve information management in their writings considerably. All in all, the instruction on the management of information appears to contribute to the organization of and improvement in students' texts.

4.4 Tasks 1 and 2: Analysis of method of development

Method of development covers a regular pattern of thematic development within a text, with a particular discursive purpose. The most frequent methods of development are chronological, topographical, from whole to parts and from general to particular.

The analysis of method of development explores these choices made by students in the experimental and control groups in the pre- and posttests. Table 6 below displays the selections made by students in the experimental group. The “x”s in the boxes show the number of instances of a particular type of method of development present in the pre- and posttest of each student in the experimental group.

MOD								
GRAMMAR II Students	Chronological		Topographical		Whole to parts		General to particular	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F							X	
G								
H								
I								X
J							X	
K								
L								
M								
N								
O								
P								
Q								
R							X	
S								
T							X	
U								
V								X
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2

Table 6. Selections of method of development- EG

There was no significant organization in the students’ writings in terms of method of development; this may probably be related to the type of text students were asked to write. In the pretest, students had to develop a paragraph defining countable and uncountable nouns and describing their similarities and differences, and in the posttest, they were requested to write about the differences and similarities of the concepts of time and tense. Therefore, it was expected that the themes in the clauses

made no reference to temporal markers (chronological method of development) or place (topographical), nor to a whole and its parts. There were, though, some selections regarding ‘from general to particular’ method of development. The data display four selections of this method of development in the pretest and two selections in the posttest of this group, made by different students. In all the cases, the selections of this method of development are used to introduce examples on the topic being discussed. In the case of the pretest, there are more instances probably because the topic of ‘nouns’ is a more general one, and thus, it allows for a greater selection of this method of development. In the case of the posttest, the unfolding of similarities and differences of time and tense is requested; therefore, students may have organized the text going from the general topic “similarities and differences”, and then thematize each similarity or difference in particular in subsequent clauses.

In order to observe the use of this method of development, some examples extracted from student R’s pretest and student I’s posttest will be analyzed. In the case of student R, there are three sets of thematic choices that contribute to this method of development. Table 6.1 below shows these choices.

Student R		
Theme	Rheme	Method of Development
(CI 2)Uncountable nouns,	unlike countable ones cannot be numbered or counted, mainly because they refer to liquids, materials, among others.	
(CI 3)For example, water	is an uncountable noun because we cannot ‘count’ the particles, so instead we said* ‘a bottle of water’.	
(CI4) Besides, there	are some uncountable nouns that can be used as countable, depending on their meaning.	FROM
(CI 5)For example, the noun iron	can be used as both, countable and uncountable.	GENERAL TO PARTICULAR
(CI10) Countable nouns,	as I said, are the ones that can be counted.	
(CI 11- Fg.)For example, tables and chairs.		

Table 6.1 Selections of method of development by student R- Pretest- EG

Student R's text illustrates the method of development 'from general to particular'. It can be noticed how this type of thematic organization presents no difficulties for students, as expected at this level of their course of studies (3rd year). However, some irregularities at the level of the clause can be observed (e.g.: a fragment). This student did not choose any method of development in her posttest.

The case of student I shows no choice of patterned thematic selections in the pretest, but a 'from general to particular' method of development can be observed in her posttest. Table 6.2 below presents these selections.

<i>Student I</i>		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>	<i>Method of Development</i>
<i>(CI 4) Tense</i>	<i>is one of the features attributed to finite verb forms.</i>	FROM
<i>(CI 5)Tense</i>	<i>varies among languages.</i>	
<i>(CI6)A past tense</i>	<i>may refer to a past moment in life</i>	
<i>(CI7)but a present tense</i>	<i>may also refer to a past time.</i>	GENERAL TO PARTICULAR

Table 6.2 Selections of method of development by student I- Posttest- EG

As seen in the example above, this student shows an adequate use of this method of development.

In both cases in the posttest, the students that selected a "from general to particular" method of development present no difficulties in the organization of their texts following this type. Also, as has been stated before, the topics students had to develop did not favor the selection of a different type of method of development, so the absence of other types is then expected and considered an appropriate choice.

By comparing the pre- and posttest of those students who selected a method of development in their posttest, some interesting points emerge. Student's I pretest presents a simple, plain organization. The selections of themes are all unmarked, experiential. The only resource used for organizing discourse is one case of a textual theme, which contributes to the introduction of a new category of nouns through contrast. However, there is also a case of a fragment, through which the student

introduces examples of the class previously described. Conversely, in the posttest some improvement can be appreciated. Again, this student resorts to the use of unmarked experiential themes, but unlike the pretest, in the posttest she selected a “from general to particular” method of development to introduce examples of the class described. At this point, it seems relevant to mention that Spanish students of English as a FL tend to produce fragments when introducing examples due to negative transfer with their mother tongue. In Spanish, examples can be part of sentences with no subject/predicate division (known as “oraciones unimembres”). Very often, we find cases like: “*Puedes agregar cualquier endulzante a la preparación. Por ejemplo: azúcar, miel o stevia*”. The same format is used by these students when writing in English, but these cases are considered sentence fragments or incomplete sentences. The instruction in information management (theme-rheme, method of development, thematic progression, etc.) many times helps students overcome this problem. In the case of student I, the selection of a “from general to particular” method of development allowed the student to present examples in full clauses, avoiding the typical mistake of fragments when introducing examples. Besides, the organization of the text in clauses where the experiential theme was the name of a particular tense (clauses 6 and 7) preceded by a textual theme (clause 7) shows a better, more careful organization of the student’s writing (see table 3.2 above). These small but crucial changes in her writing reflect the benefits of explicit instruction on thematic patterns of organization.

Student V’s pretest presents a varied selection of themes. In the pretest, there are unmarked as well as marked experiential themes, and there are also occurrences of textual themes. These selections contribute to the discursive organization. Nevertheless, there are some recurrent mistakes (cases of comma splice, and a fragment when introducing examples) that hinder understanding. In the posttest, this student selects unmarked experiential themes and there are also some textual themes present, which again contribute to the organization of the text. This time, the student also selects a “from general to particular” method of development to introduce examples about the topic presented (see table 6.3 below). This choice seems to have solved the problem of fragments, previously used to introduce examples. These appropriate selections made by students I and V can be interpreted as a growth on their part towards more elaborate ways of organizing discourse, as a result of receiving instruction on how to manage information when writing.

<i>Student V</i>		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>	<i>Method of Development</i>
<i>(Cl 1) Time</i>	<i>is a universal feature used by every person inherent from any language.</i>	FROM
<i>(Cl 2) It</i>	<i>is a system based on numbers and cycles.</i>	GENERAL TO PARTICULAR
<i>(Cl 3) One hour</i>	<i>is sixty minutes,</i>	
<i>(Cl 4) One minute</i>	<i>is sixty seconds.</i>	

Table 6.3 Selections of method of development by student V- Posttest-EG

Although there are more cases of method of development in the pretest than in the posttest, the cases in the posttest show a premeditated textual organization that seems to be product of the study of the topics developed in Grammar II. Conversely, the cases of method of development in the pretest seem to have been randomly selected and without further knowledge of its contribution to the organization of texts. In all cases in the pretest, the students selected a “from general to particular” method of development to introduce some of their examples. This type is the easiest one, and the one that can be more intuitively used. Also, all of these students produced sentence fragments, that made their texts problematic and many times difficult to follow. In three of the four cases, the fragments were produced when introducing examples as well. This shows the lack of knowledge these students have of strategies and tools of textual organization, and may indicate that their choices were intuitive.

Regarding the control group, there were no selections of method of development either in the pre- or posttests. The fact that there was not a single choice regarding method of development may be related to the absence of Grammar II instruction. Evidently, students were less prone to opt for particular types of discursive organization in terms of thematic selections.

4.5 Tasks 1 and 2: Holistic assessment

After doing the marking of the selections of textual themes, marked themes, method of development and thematic progression in the pre-and posttests of the experimental group, the raters assessed the students’ written productions by assigning them a holistic mark on a scale from 1 to 5, considering their textual organization.

This rank scale was applied for the marking of the Grammar II students' written productions in the pre- and posttests. In most cases, a whole number was assigned; in some others, a number with a decimal was assigned when the raters considered the mark to be in between two ranks of the scale. Table 7 below shows the marking assigned to each student in the pre- and posttest of the experimental group. The letters in the evaluation section stand for: I (improvement)- PI (partial improvement)- NI (no improvement)- R (regression).

STUDENT	PRETEST	POSTTEST	EVALUATION (pre- and posttest)
A	2.5	4	I
B	1	3	I
C	2	3	I
D	4	3	R
E	3	3.5	I
F	3	4.5	I
G	3	4	I
H	2	3.5	I
I	3.5	5	I
J	3	3.5	I
K	1	2	PI
L	3.5	4	I
M	2	3	I
N	3	3.5	I
O	2.5	4	I
P	4.5	4.5	NI
Q	3	4	I
R	3	3.5	I
S	2.5	2.5	NI
T	2.5	3	I
U	3	4	I
V	2	3	I

Table 7. Holistic marking. Pre- and posttest- EG

As can be observed, of the twenty-two students that did the pre- and posttest in the experimental group, eighteen improved their written productions in terms of textual organization (82% of the group). The score obtained by two students remained the same during pre- and posttest (students P- S), and there was one student whose posttest showed a mild improvement, but who did not get a favorable marking (student K). Also, there was one student (D) who showed a regression in her writing. As regards this last case, although the student's text presents neither punctuation nor grammar mistakes,

and was assigned a favorable mark in both instances, her production in the posttest received a lower score, since this student provided a very brief text and did not develop the topic fully. The absence of resources of textual organization in her posttest were considered when assigning her score.

From the group that obtained a better marking in the posttest, the following observations were made. There was an increase in the selection of resources used to organize their textual productions; that is to say, cases of marked themes, textual themes and thematic progression increased. As regards method of development, as previously expressed, although cases diminished, the posttest shows a more effective use of this resource. In general terms, these resources seem to have contributed to a better organization of the students' writing. Also, in many cases, the adequate use of these resources seems to have contributed to diminishing other frequent mistakes seen in the pretest, such as the occurrence of fragments when examples were introduced or the selection of vague themes.

All in all, there was an overall improvement in the students' textual organization, after the instruction on theme-rheme. This prevailing trend is indication of the advantages of providing formal instruction on the theme-rheme construct to university students.

4.6 Task 3: Form focused activity

This form focused activity explores the Grammar II learners' ability to use the targeted features taught through the instruction of the theme- rheme construct. Table 8 below shows the appropriateness of thematic selections in a fill in the gaps activity carried out by students in the experimental group, after having received instruction on the topic of theme- rheme. The choices represent the five times students had to fill in a gap in the text. For each gap, there were three possibilities. The ticks indicate correct answers, the crosses indicate incorrect answers and the lines indicate that no response was provided.

CHOICES	1			2			3			4			5			Correct answers per student
	Ok	X	-	Ok	X	-	ok	X	-	ok	X	-	Ok	X	-	
STUDENT (22)																
A	✓			✓				X			X			X		2
B	✓			✓			✓			✓				X		4
C	✓			✓			✓			✓				X		4
D	✓			✓				X		✓			✓			4
E	✓			✓			✓			✓				X		4
F	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			5
G	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			5
H	✓			✓			✓			✓					-	4
I	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			5
J	✓			✓				X		✓			✓			4
K	✓				X		✓			✓				X		3
L	✓				X			X		✓				X		2
M	✓				X		✓			✓				X		3
N	✓				X		✓			✓				X		3
O	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			5
P		X		✓			✓			✓					-	3
Q	✓			✓			✓			✓				X		4
R	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			5
S	✓			✓			✓			✓				X		4
T	✓			✓				X			X		✓			3
U	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			5
V	✓			✓				X		✓				X		3
TOTAL	21	1	0	18	4	0	16	6	0	20	2	0	9	11	2	84

Table 8. Form-focused activity- EG

The form focused activity was performed by the 22 students that made up the experimental group. It consisted in a text with gaps, which students had to fill in by choosing from three different options. The options contained clauses that shared the same experiential and interpersonal meanings, but differed in their textual meaning (arrangement of constituents). Students had to select the best choice for each section of the text, taking into account the surrounding clauses (cotext), and they had to provide a justification for each of their selections. These choices had to be made throughout the text in five opportunities. The purpose of including this activity was to observe how students in the experimental group responded to a task based on the organization of the constituents in the clause in comparison to the independent written production they

made on another opportunity. By observing both tasks, this researcher's objective was to analyze whether students in the experimental group understood the topic in question (theme-rheme) and could use it effectively in their free productions or if they could recognize the most appropriate management of information in a multiple choice activity but were not able to transfer this knowledge to their own writings. Below, the activity has been transcribed, and the right choices expected with a sample model answer/justification have been provided.

Activity: Read the following text and fill in the blanks with one of the alternatives provided in each case. There is only one appropriate choice. Justify your selection in each instance (you may refer to the options you did not select).

The origins of the bicycle are shrouded in mystery. Still, what is clear is that the early ancestors of the modern bicycle were in use by the early 1800s.

1. ___ a _____. He also gave it a padded saddle and an armrest in front of his body, which assisted him in exerting force against the ground. Granted a patent in 1818, he took his *Draisienne* to Paris, where it acquired the name *vélocipède*, a term that was to continue in use until about 1869 when the word "bicycle" came into use.

- a) *In 1817, Charles, Baron von Drais, of Sauerbrun, devised a front wheel capable of being steered.*
- b) *Charles, Baron von Drais, of Sauerbrun, devised a front wheel capable of being steered in 1817.*
- c) *Charles, Baron von Drais, of Sauerbrun, devised, in 1871, a front wheel capable of being steered.*

The velocipede gained rapid popularity in France, and almost immediately migrated to England. 2. ___ b _____. Riding academies were established, and soon many riders were seen on the streets of London. But the pastime declined almost as rapidly as it had risen, and after the early 1820s, velocipedes were rarely seen.

- a) *One of its chief exponents was the London coach maker, Denis Johnson there.*
- b) *There, one of its chief exponents was the London coach maker, Denis Johnson.*
- c) *Denis Johnson, one of its chief exponents, was the London coach maker there.*

Americans began to show an immense enthusiasm for the velocipede in 1868. By early 1869, a number of carriage builders were making cycles. Numerous riding schools were established in many eastern cities, and the sport of riding became suddenly popular. The craze ended as suddenly as it began. 3. ___ b _____. The reasons for the decline were that the cycles were heavy and cumbersome.

- a) *The sport was dying by the end of May in 1869.*
- b) *By the end of May in 1869 the sport was dying.*
- c) *It was by the end of May in 1869 that the sport was dying.*

4. ___ b _____. The bicycle met the need for inexpensive individual transportation for going to and from business, for recreational riding, and for sport.

- a) *Only a few score automobiles had been built by 1899, horses and carriages were expensive to maintain, and urban public transportation was slow and frequently inadequate.*
- b) *By 1899, only a few score automobiles had been built, horses and carriages were expensive to maintain, and urban public transportation was slow and frequently inadequate.*
- c) *Only a few score automobiles had been built, horses and carriages were expensive to maintain, and urban public transportation was slow and frequently inadequate by 1899.*

Between 1900 and 1905 the number of bicycle manufacturers in the United States shrank from 312 to 101. Interest in the automobile was only partly responsible for this. Thereafter, for over half a century, the bicycle was used largely by children.

5. ___ c _____. During the late 1960s there began a reawakening of adult interest in cycling as a non-polluting, non-congesting means of transportation and recreation. In 1970, nearly 5 million bicycles were manufactured in the United States, making cycling the nation's leading outdoor recreation.

- a) *Significant changes in construction have not been involved in recent cycle development, but rather a refinement of earlier features.*
- b) *A refinement of earlier features has been involved in recent cycle development, not significant changes in construction.*
- c) *Recent cycle development has not involved significant changes in construction, but rather a refinement of earlier features.*

Justification

1. *Option A is the most suitable one since it allows to follow a linear thematic progression: (“by the early 1800s”- “in 1817”). Options b and c thematize new information (Charles Von B).*
2. *Option B is the most appropriate since given info has been placed in theme position, and this allows for the building of linear thematic progression (“in England”- “There”). Options a and c place given information as focus in rheme position, which is undesirable.*
3. *Option B is the most suitable since it helps to build a linear thematic progression. Temporal information placed in the rheme of the previous clause is taken as theme in the selected clause (“...ended as suddenly as it began”- “by the end of May in 1869”). Also, information from the rheme in this clause (‘the sport was dying’) is picked up in the theme of the subsequent clause (“the reason for the decline” ...). Option a places temporal information that is expected in theme position towards the end of the clause. Option c resorts to a marked structure which is unnecessary since there is no contrast to be made.*
4. *Option B allows to follow a chronological method of development (“by the end of May in 1869”- “By 1899”- “... between 1900 and 1905...), in agreement with previous and subsequent thematic choices.*
5. *Option C allows to continue the chronology since its theme is a NG (noun group) that contains the idea of time (“recent cycle development”). Besides, it places new info in rheme position.*

As can be observed in the model justifications above, students were expected to select the most appropriate choices for each gap and provide a justification that implied applying the knowledge acquired in the unit of theme-rheme. They were also expected to justify their choices by using appropriate metalanguage, taking into account the concepts developed in the unit (terms like ‘*theme*’, ‘*rheme*’, ‘*thematic progression*’, ‘*method of development*’, ‘*given information*’, ‘*new information*’, ‘*focus*’ are among the expected metalanguage in their responses).

According to the gathered data, from the total number of students in the experimental group, 90% provided a favorable response (27% got all the answers right, 36% got 4 of 5 answers right, and 27% got 3 out of 5 answers right). These results seem to indicate that students were able to successfully address the topic of theme and rheme and understand how the appropriate use of these textual elements contributes to textual organization and to the smooth reading of a text. There were only two students that got two of five responses right. Although these students seem to have more difficulties in grasping the topic than the rest of the group, they could still provide some appropriate answers.

To observe the level of understanding of the topic of theme- rheme by students in the experimental group, some of their responses will be discussed below. In this form-focused activity, six students selected the correct answer in all the gaps and provided an appropriate justification for each of the selections made. Among their justifications for the choices, the following expressions were found:

“I have chosen option b as given information is thematized...”; “...the dates have been thematized to show a chronological method of development”; “I have chosen option B since it presents given information in theme position and because a lengthy, complex element should be placed in end position, thus following the principle of end weight.” (Student F)

“Option A presents unmarked information structure...”; “this option follows the end-weight principle...”; “...option B... is the more appropriate since the method of development of the text is chronological.” (Student G)

“the best option is a because the fronted time adjunct...is given information and...new information (focus) is placed in end position...; the best option is b because the theme is given information, picked up from the previous rheme...; option b is the most suitable given the context of the clause...fronting the time adjunct would help the reader follow that chronological order...” (Student I)

As can be seen in some of the responses provided above, the students were able to justify their choices and provide adequate and thorough explanations in each case (for a full account of the responses provided by the students see appendix V). The selection of appropriate metalanguage to justify their choices is indication that students were consolidating the concepts taught throughout the unit and were developing an understanding of how a text should be organized in order to be coherent and cohesive.

By exposing students to the internal mechanisms that are involved in the creation of texts, and making them aware of the rhetorical organization of texts, of how themes relate to other themes and rhemes in a text, students with the passing of time may become more proficient when producing their own writings. This form- focused activity is an example of the benefits of providing explicit instruction to students on structural organization of texts.

In fact, if we compare these results with the general results obtained by these students in the experimental group regarding the variables analyzed, the following remarks can be made. As regards the variable of theme, there were sixteen students that resorted to textual themes in the pretest, and nine students that selected marked themes. After receiving instruction, almost every student decided to use textual themes (21 out of 22) and eleven students resorted to marked themes. This increase in the number of students that selected a special type of theme may be related to the fact that this group received instruction on theme, providing them with knowledge and enough confidence to resort to these choices that contribute to the textual organization of a piece of writing. With respect to thematic progression, the type most frequently used was topic continuity. There were thirteen instances of this type made by nine students in the pretest. After receiving instruction, sixteen students selected topic continuity and twenty two instances were found. There was an increase in the number of instances of this type of thematic progression as well as in the number of students that selected this type of textual organization. This increase may also be related to the fact that the experimental group received explicit instruction on thematic progression, what may have had an incidence in the students' selections of topic continuity as another resource to organize their texts. The variable 'method of development' presents very few instances in the pretest (4) and fewer in the posttest (2). In all cases, the method of development selected was 'from general to particular'. As mentioned before, the absence of other methods of development was favorable and expected, given the nature of the texts in question. Although few cases of method of development were found in the posttest, their effective use may also be understood as a positive consequence of the instruction received by students in the experimental group.

The general panorama observed through the different resources that students in the experimental group selected showed that 82% of the students improved their written productions with respect to their overall internal cohesion and coherence. These results, together with the ones generated by the form-focused activity, reinforce the advantages of providing theme-rheme instruction to the students.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The present research investigated the effects of explicit teaching of the ‘theme-rheme’ construct in the textual organization of the written productions of Grammar II students. The ‘theme-rheme’ construct, as developed in SFL theory by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), constitutes the basis of the present study since it served as the key topic developed through the instruction of the Grammar II subject, as well as a tool for the analysis of the tasks carried out by the student population in question. The study attempted to make a contribution to the assessment of a resource that could prove effective for the improvement of students’ textual organization.

Considering the findings of the study, this chapter reviews the hypothesis and objectives stated at the beginning of this research and provides general conclusions.

Hypothesis and Objectives

H: After taking the subject ‘Grammar II’, students improve their textual organization in terms of *theme-rheme*.

General objective:

To determine whether the pedagogical approach applied in Grammar II contributes to the improvement of the textual organization in the students’ writings.

Specific objectives:

- 1. To analyze and compare the written productions of two different groups of students (experimental and control groups) regarding the theme-rheme construct in a pre- and a posttest, in order to evaluate their learning outcome of this construct.**
- 2. To compare the results of two activities of different nature (a. task based on form and b. task based on meaning) carried out by students in the experimental group after receiving instruction on the topic of theme-**

rheme to establish if students only understood the topic or could apply it effectively and are capable of organizing their written productions in terms of theme-rheme.

The findings of this study provide valuable information for educators of EFL at university level since it has been demonstrated how the ‘theme-rheme’ construct can be used as a device for the improvement of students’ textual organization. This study was concerned with the fact that many times students’ texts seem to be a collection of clauses with little relation and, when reading them, they sound disconnected. Even in those cases where no grammatical mistakes are found, there seems to be something missing. This research has proven that explicit teaching of ‘theme-rheme’ from the SFL perspective serves as a useful tool to enhance students’ written productions, as they have resulted in more coherent and cohesive texts.

It was observed that, after having received instruction on the construct ‘theme-rheme’, students’ written productions showed an overall improvement in terms of textual organization. More specifically, the changes produced in the students’ writings regarding theme selection, method of development and thematic progression showed clearer and better organized texts.

With respect to **theme selections**, the data showed that there was an increase in the number of students that selected textual themes in the posttest. In fact, almost every student (21 out of 22) included at least one textual theme to organize their writing, and in some cases, even more than three instances. There were even cases of students who had not resorted to textual themes to organize their written productions in the pretest, and selected this type of thematic organization successfully in their posttest. Since the theme “...is that which locates and orients the clause within its context” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), selecting an appropriate theme is crucial, because it not only tells the reader what the clause is about, but also links its message with the surrounding clauses, orienting the reader to what the text is about. It was observed that the effective use of **textual themes** contributed to relating the clause to its context, and therefore, the students’ texts ended up being more cohesive and coherent. In many cases, it was noticed that, in the pretest, students made recurrent mistakes regarding punctuation. Cases of comma splice and fragments were frequent, and some of them seemed to be

related to a misuse or even absence of a suitable text connector. These problems hinder comprehension and make texts difficult to follow, even to the point of preventing the message from getting across as their writers intended in the first place. It was also observed that by making logical relations explicit by means of a suitable conjunct in theme position (i.e. a textual theme) and having been taught how to adequately use them (i.e. to introduce an independent clause, and not in a fragment), students seemed to have solved this problem in the posttest. The appropriate use of **textual themes**, in many cases, contributed to diminishing these punctuation problems, and thus, the resulting texts were easier to follow and the message was conveyed successfully. The fact that there were no instances of interpersonal themes in both, pre- and posttest, was expected as well as desired given the genres elicited in both tests (reports). It can be assumed that, given the years of instruction received by these students (3rd year students in a course of language studies at University), at the time the tests were administered, they had already acquired basic knowledge about academic genres and their conventions. However, as it was demonstrated through this research, they still lacked the subtleties and precision needed to become efficient writers. As for **theme markedness**, the data showed a considerable increase in the number of instances of marked themes in the posttest with respect to the pretest. As stated by Eggins, when a writer selects a marked choice, he/she "...is signaling that all things are not equal, that something in the context requires an atypical meaning to be made" (2004: 318). The selections of **marked themes** were in all cases circumstances, mainly of manner-comparison, contingency-condition, matter and location-place. These choices contributed to the organization of discourse in terms of making explicit and anticipating the matter being discussed in the rhemes of those clauses as well as connecting these themes to what was expressed previously, thus producing better organized texts, which read smoothly. The use of marked themes was considered an adequate resource in orienting the reader to particular aspects of the phenomenon being described or classified and in contributing to the achievement of the purpose of the text, i.e.: describing the similarities and differences of the concepts of 'time' and 'tense'.

As regards the choices of **thematic progression** and **method of development** that students made after receiving instruction, they proved useful since these two resources, which show how themes connect to other themes and rhemes in discourse, collaborated in the achievement of better organized texts in terms of flow of

information. In relation to the organization of the message in terms of **‘method of development’**, even though there were no cases of ‘topographical’, ‘chronological’ and ‘from whole to parts’ methods of development, some students opted for an appropriate ‘from general to particular’ method of development, which applied to the topic of the writing: ‘time and tense’. The cases in which this resource was selected contributed to producing improved texts in terms of organization. As they were used to present the general topic and to introduce particular examples, the cases of ‘from general to particular’ method of development seemed to have contributed to deleting the punctuation problems detected earlier (i.e.: cases of fragments when introducing examples), since this time, full independent clauses were used to develop these ideas. The same appears to be the case when observing the instances of **thematic progression**. The most frequently used type was ‘topic continuity’. Through the selections of this type of thematic organization, learners were more aware of the construction of clauses, and therefore, did not fall into the recurrent punctuation problems (i.e. cases of fragments and comma splice) that hinder the flow of information. Besides, a better understanding of thematic selections also contributed to the production of improved discursive organization in the students’ writings, since there was a reduction of inadequate themes (such as the inappropriate choice of the inclusive pronoun ‘we’ when describing or classifying an abstract entity) and the selection of more appropriate thematic choices, in agreement with the matter being described through the reports. By connecting these themes with other themes and rhemes in the text, students produced meaningful pieces, easy to read; clauses in the texts hung together, which resulted in an overall improvement of the text quality.

Considering the **form-focused activity** carried out by the experimental group, it was observed that 90% of the students produced a favorable response. This form-focused activity showed students’ awareness of how the theme-rheme construct operates in texts. Students, in general, were able to identify most of the right choices and produced adequate justifications for those choices. The comparison of both tasks (form-focused and meaning focused), which derive from Second Language Acquisition theory developed in the Theoretical framework section, provide a general panorama of the pedagogical value of the theme-rheme construct. By comparing the results of this form-focused activity with the holistic assessment given to the students’ productions in the posttest (82% showed improvement regarding textual organization), the findings

advocate for the teaching of the theme-rheme construct as a valuable resource for the organization of information in students' writings.

In agreement with the results, it can be said that the teaching of the construct theme-rheme seems to be a useful resource for the improvement of the students' textual organization. The hypothesis that guided this research was confirmed. By receiving formal instruction on this topic, students seem to be grasping the idea that the organization of information in the clause is tied to what was said before and what is going to be said afterwards, that there are resources that can be used to organize this information, and that these resources contribute to the coherence and cohesion of texts.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The current chapter suggests the pedagogical implications of the study, including possible scenarios of application of the ‘theme-rheme’ construct. It also discusses the limitations of the present study and some directions for future research.

6.1 Implications

As has been observed by this work and other studies (Eggins, 2004; Christie & Dreyfus, 2007; Wang, 2007; Mellos, 2011), an understanding of the theme-rheme construct can be used for English writing instruction to diagnose students’ weaknesses and to improve their cohesion at the level of discourse. Particularly, this study has demonstrated that including adequate choices of textual themes, marked themes and selections of an appropriate method of development and/or thematic progression contributes to the creation of continuity and cohesion in EFL students’ texts.

Therefore, one of the pedagogical implications that derives from this research is that the ‘theme-rheme’ construct could be introduced as a tool for the improvement of students’ written productions in other core subjects of the English curriculum at university. For instance, working in combination with 3rd year language professors would be valuable for both subjects, Language III and Grammar II, not only because the array of genres analyzed would be expanded, but also because, in this way, students would systematize an efficient way of approaching their writing, what would result in more precise and effective written productions on their part.

Another possible way to introduce our university students to the ‘theme-rheme’ construct could be offering them a series of workshops based on the SFL approach to the theme-rheme construct, addressing the most frequent academic genres used in the different subjects at university. Each workshop could be devoted to addressing one particular text type. Attendees, then, would be able to select one or more workshops, and practice the genres they find more difficult, according to their particular situation.

In this way, students would strengthen their writing ability and obtain instruction tailored to their needs.

6.2 Limitations of the study

Despite the contributions presented in the current study, there were still several limitations. An important limitation may be the size and scope of the analyzed sample. While the analysis attempted to observe the writing behavior in two groups of third year students, not all of them completed the pre- and posttests; therefore, the sample was reduced. Although the number of students analyzed was still representative, it would be interesting to carry out a similar study with a large scale sample. Also, the findings were limited to the text type analyzed. These results could have been reinforced by observing the students' writing in different genres and not only in reports, but, due to time constraints, it was not possible to cover a wider variety.

Another possible limitation is related to the time lapse between pre- and posttest. Though a general improvement was observed in the students' written productions, the learning process takes time and it varies in every student, depending on a variety of factors that, many times, exceed the learning environment. Also, as pointed out by Ellis (2005), "grammar instruction does not enable learners to 'beat' the natural route of acquisition (i.e. the order in which learners have been found to acquire specific grammatical features and the stages of development involved in this)". Therefore, having a larger period of time to observe students' development would probably yield better results in their performance.

Besides, after the instruction, students were assessed through only one piece of writing. So, even though the results are encouraging, this fact also limits their scope. Having the opportunity of observing and analyzing the students' written productions in a larger number of instances would result in a more revealing panorama of their achievements.

6.3. Directions for future research

The implications and limitations discussed in the sections above provide the directions for future research. First, as pointed out before the number of students that took part in this investigation was limited, so a larger scale sample is needed. Carrying out a similar study with the whole third year population would provide a more detailed perspective of the difficulties students have when organizing their texts. This would allow teachers to anticipate problems and make the necessary changes in their syllabuses to contribute to the improvement of students' discursive organization of their texts.

Another possible line of research could be to analyze the same group of students in different opportunities in order to see their evolution. This type of research would entail exposing students to a larger period of instruction and conducting a follow-up on their written productions. A study of this kind would not only enhance students' writing opportunities but also provide them with specific feedback to tackle their particular needs. As for researchers, it would provide insight into the students' needs at different stages of development of their writing.

Finally, since this study has concentrated only on one type of genre, analyzing students' writing performance in a wider variety of genres is still pending. Further research on the different genres students approach during their university studies is required. A diagnosis of this kind would give professors an understanding of common problems as well as more genre specific difficulties, allowing them to contribute to the improvement of students' writing performance. For example, a contrastive analysis of the theme-rheme construct across the different disciplines covered in the translation track would be beneficial to both, professors and students, by showing the former the specific problems students may have related to a particular discipline, and by disclosing to the latter how disciplinary orientations can shape particular aspects of writing.

APPENDIX A I: GRAMMAR II -SYLLABUS



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CÓRDOBA
FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

Programa Académico **Ciclo Lectivo 2018**



Asignatura: GRAMÁTICA INGLESA II

Cátedra: Única.

Profesor: Titular: María Belén Oliva
 Adjunta: Angélica Gaido
 Asistentes: Ana Inés Calvo y Natalia Rius

Sección: Inglés

Carrera/s: PROFESORADO, TRADUCTORADO y LICENCIATURA

Curso: 3º AÑO

Régimen de cursado: ANUAL

Carga horaria semanal: 4 horas cátedra

Correlatividades: Materias regularizadas: Lengua II y Gramática I Materias aprobadas: Lengua I y Práctica Gramatical

FUNDAMENTACIÓN

Gramática II es una asignatura instrumental que cierra el ciclo de las *gramáticas* que se dictan en las carreras del profesorado, el traductorado y la licenciatura de inglés en la Facultad de Lenguas, de acuerdo a lo establecido en el plan de estudios vigente. El dictado de esta asignatura parte del supuesto de que los alumnos ya poseen los conocimientos básicos sobre la gramática inglesa. Por lo tanto, el curso tiene como finalidad retomar y sistematizar dichos conocimientos a fin de que los alumnos logren reconocer y aplicar los recursos que ofrece la lengua para la comprensión y producción de textos orales y escritos en forma apropiada y efectiva. Para lograr tal fin, el curso pone especial énfasis en el texto como unidad comunicacional y se nutre de los aportes de la gramática sistémico-funcional incorporando nociones tales como género, cohesión y coherencia, organización de la información y significados interpersonales.

OBJETIVOS

Generales:

Al finalizar el curso, se espera que los alumnos estén en condiciones de: · Reconocer los modos en que la gramática contribuye a la construcción de un texto. · Redactar textos descriptivo-explicativos basados en el análisis de los recursos léxico gramaticales empleados en distintos tipos de textos.

Específicos:

A través del desarrollo de los contenidos programáticos, se procurará que el alumno logre: · Identificar las funciones comunicativas que cumplen las distintas opciones léxico gramaticales en el discurso oral y escrito.

- Producir textos cohesivos y coherentes.
- Auto-evaluar su producción escrita y oral.
- Seleccionar los recursos léxico-gramaticales más adecuados a cada tipo de texto o género discursivo.
- Reconocer y utilizar con propiedad índices y marcadores de relaciones lógicas. · Comprender y/o explicar las ideas principales de un texto y las relaciones entre las mismas.
- Emplear con precisión el metalenguaje adecuado para el análisis lingüístico.

PROGRAMA

Unit I: The Grammar of Texts

Formal and functional grammar.
The place of lexicogrammar in language. The organization of lexicogrammar. The notion of text. Genres.
Written and oral texts: main characteristics.

Unit II: Cohesion

Reference. Anaphora and Cataphora. The role of exophoric reference.
Ellipsis and substitution.
Lexical cohesion.
Conjunction

Unit III : Information management

The role of word order in signaling information status.
Theme and Rheme. Types of Theme.
Given and new information. Information focus.
Syntactic strategies to manage information: Clefting. Postponement.
Fronting. Existential clauses. Passivization.
Theme and texture: Method of development and thematic progression.

Unit IV: Clause combining and the use of junctives

Logico-semantic relations in texts: types and realization.

The use of junctives.

Structural relations between clauses. The system of taxis: parataxis and hypotaxis. Reduced clauses. Cases of embedding.

Punctuation problems. Dangling modifiers.

Unit V: Interpersonal meanings: Mood and Modality

Language as interaction: speech roles.

Mood and speech functions.

Expressing judgments and attitudes: Modality.

Epistemic and non-epistemic modal meanings: realizations.

Unit VI: The organization of time in the textual world

The relevance of temporal choices in the overall organization of a text.

Time-frames and time-frame shifts in discourse. Markers of temporal shifts. Tense and aspect choices. Tense shifts.

Genre-related choices of tenses.

METODOLOGÍA Y ACTIVIDADES DE LOS ALUMNOS

Las unidades de aprendizaje serán introducidas a través de ejemplificación destinada a destacar el valor funcional-discursivo de cada aspecto del sistema léxico-gramatical. La explicación y discusión del tema, con el soporte teórico de la bibliografía pertinente, será seguida de actividades de reconocimiento y producción por parte de los alumnos. La

ejercitación se orientará al análisis y utilización de los recursos gramaticales como claves para la comprensión de textos, y en el empleo eficiente de dichos recursos en el discurso oral y escrito.

Las actividades de los alumnos serán del tipo de las que se incluyen a continuación:

- a) Identificación de la función de una emisión o serie de emisiones en un texto. b) Especificación de los elementos que contribuyen a la cohesión textual y selección de los elementos cohesivos apropiados en un texto determinado.
- c) Observación de las propiedades micro-estructurales de un texto y de su valor en la macro estructura del mismo.
- d) Ejercicios de jerarquización de la información a través del uso de la estructura sintáctica adecuada.
- e) Reconocimiento de la estructura temporal de distintos tipos de textos y producción de las formas verbales adecuadas a una organización textual particular.
- f) Ordenamiento o re-ordenamiento de cláusulas y oraciones en la secuencia correcta para lograr la progresión lógica necesaria para la coherencia textual.
- g) Edición y/o composición de textos en forma individual, grupal o colectiva. h) Lectura de la bibliografía obligatoria.
- i) Discusión en clase de los temas tratados en la bibliografía obligatoria. j) Elaboración individual o grupal de respuestas a preguntas teóricas.

MODALIDAD DE EVALUACIÓN

Los alumnos REGULARES deberán aprobar 2 (dos) parciales. En el caso de aplazo o inasistencia en uno de ellos, los alumnos tendrán la opción a un parcial de recuperación al final del ciclo lectivo. Los parciales serán de carácter teórico-práctico.

Los alumnos LIBRES deberán aprobar una sección adicional en el examen final.

El EXAMEN FINAL será escrito y de carácter teórico-práctico. Consistirá en una Sección A, común a todos los alumnos examinados, y una Sección B, para los alumnos libres exclusivamente. A su vez, la Sección A podrá incluir una(s) actividad(es) integradora(s) de carácter eliminatorio. Asimismo, si el alumno no obtuviera el 60% de los puntos en 2 (dos) de los temas evaluados, será aplazado en el examen. La Sección B (alumnos libres) será también de carácter eliminatorio.

Los alumnos aspirantes al régimen de PROMOCIÓN, deberán tener aprobadas las materias Lengua Inglesa II y Gramática Inglesa I. El cupo máximo de estudiantes promocionales inscriptos será de 25 por comisión. Si el número de postulantes excediera ese cupo, se los seleccionará a través de un orden de mérito que resultará del primer trabajo práctico. Además, los estudiantes promocionales deberán contar con un mínimo de 80% de asistencia a clase, aprobar dos parciales y cuatro trabajos prácticos. Tendrán opción a recuperar un parcial por ausencia, aplazo, o para elevar el promedio general, y un trabajo práctico por ausencia o aplazo. La nota final será el resultado del promedio de la suma de los dos parciales más el promedio de los prácticos. Los trabajos prácticos serán evaluaciones objetivas o con desarrollo de preguntas sobre temas trabajados en clase. El estudiante deberá obtener una nota final no inferior a 7.

CRITERIOS DE EVALUACIÓN

En consonancia con las expectativas de logro planteadas en **Objetivos específicos**, para la evaluación de la competencia del alumno se tendrán en cuenta los siguientes criterios:

- Dominio de los distintos tipos de estructuras oracionales del inglés.
- Empleo correcto de las formas verbales (tiempo, aspecto, concordancia, voz) adecuadas a distintos contextos de uso.

- Reconocimiento de la función de distintas expresiones de modalidad y empleo adecuado de las mismas en distintos tipos de textos.
- Comprensión de las relaciones lógico-semánticas entre los distintos fragmentos de un texto.
- Capacidad de organizar la información de manera coherente en la composición de un texto.
- Precisión en el empleo del metalenguaje apropiado para describir y explicar los distintos fenómenos gramaticales estudiados en la asignatura.

CRONOGRAMA TENTATIVO

Unidades	Mes	Material de Lectura Obligatoria
Unidad I	Abril	Lock, G. (1996): capítulo 1 Bloor, T. & Bloor, M. (2013): capítulo 1 Egins (2004): capítulo 2 Libro de cátedra: capítulo 1

Unidad II	Mayo	Egins (2004): capítulo 2 Libro de cátedra: capítulo 2
Trabajo Práctico 1	Mayo	
Unidad III	Junio	Lock, G. (1996): capítulo 11 Bloor, T. & Bloor, M. (2013): capítulo 5 Libro de cátedra: capítulo 3
Primer parcial	Junio 18- 29	
Trabajo Práctico 2	Entre mayo-julio	
Unidad IV	Agosto	Lock, G. (1996): capítulo 12 Libro de cátedra: capítulo 4
Trabajo Práctico 3	Septiembre	
Unidad V	Septiembre	Lock, G. (1996): capítulo 10 Libro de cátedra: capítulo 5
Unidad VI	Octubre	Libro de cátedra: capítulo 6
Trabajo Práctico 4	Entre agosto-octubre	
Segundo parcial	Octubre 15-26	
Parcial recuperatorio	Noviembre 1-2	

Nota: Los Trabajos Prácticos 2 y 4 serán evaluaciones a realizarse en la casa en fechas acordadas entre el docente y los estudiantes.

BIBLIOGRAFÍA

Obligatoria:

- Bloor, T. & Bloor, M. (2013). *The Functional Analysis of English* (3rd ed.). London/New York: Routledge. (chapters 1 & 5).
- Egins, S. (2004). *Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics* (2nd ed.). New York: Continuum International Publishing Group. (chapter 2)
- Gaido, A., Oliva, M.B., Calvo, A. & N. Rius (en prensa). *English Grammar: Basic Notions on Systemic-Functional Grammar*. (edición revisada 2016)
- Lock, G. (1996). *Functional English Grammar: An Introduction for Second Language Teachers*. Cambridge: C.U.P. (Chapters 1, 10, 11 & 12)

Actividades prácticas:

- Gaido, A., Oliva, M.B., Calvo, A. & N. Rius (en prensa). *English Grammar: Basic Notions on Systemic-Functional Grammar*. (edición revisada 2016).

Recomendada:

- Biber, D., Conrad, S., & G. Leech. (2002). *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Bloor, T. & Bloor, M. (2013). *The Functional Analysis of English* (3rd ed.). London/New York: Routledge.
- Downing, A., & Locke P. (1992). *A University Course in English Grammar*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Fontaine, L. (2013). *Analysing English Grammar. A Systemic Functional Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frodesen, J., & J. Eyring. (1997). *Grammar Dimensions: Book Four*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers (Units 1, 12, 24 & 25)
- Greenbaum, S., & R. Quirk. (1990). *A Student's Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.
- Halliday, M. A. K. & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (3rd ed.). London: E. Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *Spoken and Written Language*. Oxford: O.U.P.
- Halliday, M.A.K. y Hasan, R. (1976) *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Lock, G. (1996). *Functional English Grammar: An Introduction for Second Language Teachers*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (1994). *Language as Discourse: Perspectives for Language Teaching*. London: Longman (pp. 1-9).
- Martin, J. R. et al. (1997) *Working with Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Thompson, G. (1996). *Introducing Functional Grammar*. New York: Arnold.


Mgtr. María Belén Oliva

APPENDIX A II: GRAMMAR II- ACTIVITIES (CLASS HANDOUT)

Activity 5

Read the following texts and after marking off the Themes, decide whether or not the author has followed a particular method of development. Justify your answer in writing (5 lines).

Text 1

Guernica shows a large, open room with people and animals who are suffering. A bull stands over a woman crying over a dead child in her arms. A horse falls in terrible pain as it dies after being run through with a spear. A dead soldier lies under the horse, his arm has been chopped off, but the hand grasps a shattered sword from which a flower grows. A light bulb shines strongly like an evil eye (the Spanish word for "lightbulb" is "bombilla" which sounds like "bomb"). A female figure floats in, holding a lamp which is a symbol of hope. There are many other smaller details in the painting.

(From wikipedia.com)

Text 2

The Red Panda is a mostly herbivorous mammal, slightly larger than a domestic cat (55 cm long). Its semi-retractile claws are similar to the Giant Panda's claws. Also, its "false thumb" is really an extension of the wrist bone. Thick fur on the soles of the feet offers protection from cold and hides scent glands. The Red Panda is native to the Himalayas in Nepal and southern China.

(Adapted from <http://divaboo.info>)

Text 3

Vincent van Gogh was born Vincent Willem van Gogh on March 30, 1853, in Groot-Zundert, Netherlands. At a young age—his name and birthdate already etched on his dead brother's headstone—van Gogh was melancholy. At age 15, van Gogh's family was struggling financially, and he was forced to leave school and go to work. He got a job at his Uncle Cornelis' art dealership, Goupil & Cie., a firm of art dealers in The Hague. By this time, van Gogh was fluent in French, German and English, as well as his native Dutch. In June of 1873, van Gogh was transferred to the Goupil Gallery in London. There, he fell in love with English culture.

(Adapted from <http://www.biography.com>)

Text 4

Dinosaurs are a varied group of animals from taxonomic, morphological and ecological standpoints. Birds, at over 10,000 living species, are the most diverse group of vertebrates besides perciform fish. Some are herbivorous, others carnivorous. Many extinct groups included quadrupedal species, and some were able to shift between these stances. Elaborate display structures such as horns or crests are common to all dinosaur groups, and some extinct groups developed skeletal modifications such as bony armor and spines. While modern dinosaurs (birds) are generally small due to the constraints of flight, many prehistoric dinosaurs were large-bodied. Still, the idea that non-avian dinosaurs were uniformly gigantic is a misconception based on preservation bias, as large, sturdy bones are more likely to last until they are fossilized. Many dinosaurs were quite small: *Xixianykus*, for example, was only about 50 cm (20 in) long.

(Adapted from wikipedia.com)

Text 5

My living room is quite large with a bay window that looks over the park. The walls are cream and the carpet is green. On one side, there is a fireplace and some bookshelves. In the middle, there is a coffee table, and in the corner there is a large television. I don't have a separate dining room so the dining table and chairs are also in the living room. On the wall, there are some interesting pictures. I like my living room very much.

(From a student's task)

TASK 2

Las respuestas consignadas en la siguiente actividad serán utilizadas con fines de investigación. La identidad de las personas que sean parte de esta investigación será preservada.

Nombre y Apellido:

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Edad:

Comisión:

Materias de tercer año que cursa actualmente y condición:

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Estoy de acuerdo en que se utilice esta información con fines de investigación.

Firma:

Define the concepts of ‘time’ and ‘tense’. What do they share? In which respect do they differ? Provide suitable examples to illustrate your point. Write your answer in a paragraph of around 15 lines.

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TASK 3

Read the following text and fill in the blanks with one of the alternatives provided in each case. There is only one appropriate choice. Justify your selection in each instance (you may refer to the options you did not select).

The origins of the bicycle are shrouded in mystery. Still, what is clear is that the early ancestors of the modern bicycle were in use by the early 1800s.

1. _____ . He also gave it a padded saddle and an armrest in front of his body, which assisted him in exerting force against the ground. Granted a patent in 1818, he took his *Draisienne* to Paris, where it acquired the name *vélocipède*, a term that was to continue in use until about 1869 when the word “bicycle” came into use.

- a) *In 1817, Charles, Baron von Drais, of Sauerbrun, devised a front wheel capable of being steered.*
- b) *Charles, Baron von Drais, of Sauerbrun, devised a front wheel capable of being steered in 1817.*
- c) *Charles, Baron von Drais, of Sauerbrun, devised, in 1871, a front wheel capable of being steered.*

The velocipede gained rapid popularity in France, and almost immediately migrated to England. 2. _____ .

Riding academies were established, and soon many riders were seen on the streets of London. But the pastime declined almost as rapidly as it had risen, and after the early 1820s, velocipedes were rarely seen.

- a) *One of its chief exponents was the London coach maker, Denis Johnson there.*
- b) *There, one of its chief exponents was the London coach maker, Denis Johnson.*
- c) *Denis Johnson, one of its chief exponents, was the London coach maker there.*

Americans began to show an immense enthusiasm for the velocipede in 1868. By early 1869, a number of carriage builders were making cycles. Numerous riding schools were established in many eastern cities, and the sport of riding became suddenly popular. The craze ended as suddenly as it began.

3. _____ The reasons for the decline were that the cycles were heavy and cumbersome.

- a) *The sport was dying by the end of May in 1869.*
- b) *By the end of May in 1869 the sport was dying.*
- c) *It was by the end of May in 1869 that the sport was dying.*

4. _____.

The bicycle met the need for inexpensive individual transportation for going to and from business, for recreational riding, and for sport.

- a) *Only a few score automobiles had been built by 1899, horses and carriages were expensive to maintain, and urban public transportation was slow and frequently inadequate.*
- b) *By 1899, only a few score automobiles had been built, horses and carriages were expensive to maintain, and urban public transportation was slow and frequently inadequate.*
- c) *Only a few score automobiles had been built, horses and carriages were expensive to maintain, and urban public transportation was slow and frequently inadequate by 1899.*

Between 1900 and 1905 the number of bicycle manufacturers in the United States shrank from 312 to 101. Interest in the automobile was only partly responsible for this. Thereafter, for over half a century, the bicycle was used largely by children.

5. _____.

During the late 1960s there began a reawakening of adult interest in cycling as a non-polluting, non-congesting means of transportation and recreation. In 1970, nearly 5 million bicycles were manufactured in the United States, making cycling the nation's leading outdoor recreation.

- a) *Significant changes in construction have not been involved in recent cycle development, but rather a refinement of earlier features.*
- b) *A refinement of earlier features has been involved in recent cycle development, not significant changes in construction.*
- c) *Recent cycle development has not involved significant changes in construction, but rather a refinement of earlier features.*

Justification

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APPENDIX B II: TASK 3- KEY

Read the following text and fill in the blanks with one of the alternatives provided in each case. There is only one appropriate choice. Justify your selection in each instance (you may refer to the options you did not select).

The origins of the bicycle are shrouded in mystery. Still, what is clear is that the early ancestors of the modern bicycle were in use by the early 1800s.

1. a . He also gave it a padded saddle and an armrest in front of his body, which assisted him in exerting force against the ground. Granted a patent in 1818, he took his *Draisienne* to Paris, where it acquired the name *vélocipède*, a term that was to continue in use until about 1869 when the word “bicycle” came into use.

- d) In 1817, Charles, Baron von Drais, of Sauerbrun, devised a front wheel capable of being steered.*
- e) Charles, Baron von Drais, of Sauerbrun, devised a front wheel capable of being steered in 1817.*
- f) Charles, Baron von Drais, of Sauerbrun, devised, in 1871, a front wheel capable of being steered.*

The velocipede gained rapid popularity in France, and almost immediately migrated to England. 2. b . Riding academies were established, and soon many riders were seen on the streets of London. But the pastime declined almost as rapidly as it had risen, and after the early 1820s, velocipedes were rarely seen.

- d) One of its chief exponents was the London coach maker, Denis Johnson there.*
- e) There, one of its chief exponents was the London coach maker, Denis Johnson.*
- f) Denis Johnson, one of its chief exponents, was the London coach maker there.*

Americans began to show an immense enthusiasm for the velocipede in 1868. By early 1869, a number of carriage builders were making cycles. Numerous riding schools were established in many eastern cities, and the sport of riding became suddenly popular. The craze ended as suddenly as it began. 3. b The reasons for the decline were that the cycles were heavy and cumbersome.

- d) The sport was dying by the end of May in 1869.*
- e) By the end of May in 1869 the sport was dying.*

f) It was by the end of May in 1869 that the sport was dying.

4. b . The bicycle met the need for inexpensive individual transportation for going to and from business, for recreational riding, and for sport.

- d) Only a few score automobiles had been built by 1899, horses and carriages were expensive to maintain, and urban public transportation was slow and frequently inadequate.*
- e) By 1899, only a few score automobiles had been built, horses and carriages were expensive to maintain, and urban public transportation was slow and frequently inadequate.*
- f) Only a few score automobiles had been built, horses and carriages were expensive to maintain, and urban public transportation was slow and frequently inadequate by 1899.*

Between 1900 and 1905 the number of bicycle manufacturers in the United States shrank from 312 to 101. Interest in the automobile was only partly responsible for this. Thereafter, for over half a century, the bicycle was used largely by children.

5. c . During the late 1960s there began a reawakening of adult interest in cycling as a non-polluting, non-congesting means of transportation and recreation. In 1970, nearly 5 million bicycles were manufactured in the United States, making cycling the nation's leading outdoor recreation.

- d) Significant changes in construction have not been involved in recent cycle development, but rather a refinement of earlier features.*
- e) A refinement of earlier features has been involved in recent cycle development, not significant changes in construction.*
- f) Recent cycle development has not involved significant changes in construction, but rather a refinement of earlier features.*

Justification (sample)

- 6. Option A is the best choice since it contributes to building a linear thematic progression (“by the early 1800s”- “in 1817”). Options B and C are not the most adequate choices since they thematize new information (Charles Von B).*
- 7. Option B is the best choice since given information is placed in theme position and this choice allows to follow a linear thematic progression (“in England”- “There”). Options A and C are not the most appropriate choices since they place given information as focus in the rheme.*
- 8. Option B is the most appropriate since it allows to follow a linear thematic progression (“...ended as suddenly as it began”- “by the end of May in 1869”).*

Also, information from the rheme ('the sport was dying') is picked up in the theme of the subsequent clause ("the reason for the decline" ...).

9. *Option B is the most suitable choice since it helps build a chronological method of development ("by the end of May in 1869"- "By 1899"- "... between 1900 and 1905...)*

10. *Option C is the most appropriate since it allows to continue the chronology (a noun group that contains idea of time -recent cycle development- has been used. This option places new information in rheme position.*

APPENDIX C I

PRETEST – GRAMMAR II STUDENTS

GROUP D- afternoon

(M- male/ F-female)

Student A (M)

There are two main types of nouns that share the same characteristics and differ from each other in other aspects: countable and uncountable nouns. As regards similarities, both types of nouns identify an entity in our world, [Ø] refer to an object, a place, a feeling, etc. For instance: “Many cars were involved in the accident” and “Happiness is what we all pursue”. In those examples, we can identify a countable noun (car) and an uncountable one (happiness) and the two of them refers to an entity in our reality.

However, there is a major difference between this two classes. Countable nouns, as their name suggests, are those which are likely to be “counted”, [Ø]divided into different elements or units. In the case of cars, we can count this object and [Ø] distinguish different unities: 1 car, 2 cars, etc. On the contrary, uncountable nouns cannot be divided into units as they present this as part of their nature. For example: happiness is an uncountable noun due to the fact that we cannot identify different units (1 happiness, 2 happiness, etc). In fact, they cannot be splitted and frecuently they have singular agreement (they cannot be plural nouns as they cannot be “counted”).

Student B (F)

A countable noun is a name that refers to things that can be counted because of their nature and can be referred to as a unit. Ex: one car.

An uncountable noun is a name that refers to things that cannot be referred to as a unit. Ex: water.

Student C (F)

Countable and uncountable nouns are words that represent concrete things in both cases. The main difference is that countable nouns can be counted or numbered, whereas uncountable nouns can't be numbered or counted but they can be divided into parts with the help of other words or word phrases, such as quantifiers or partitives. For example: one apple-two apples (count noun)/ water- some water (uncountable noun). Another difference is that countable nouns have a plural form (we add “s” or “es” to the noun)

while uncountable nouns don't. For example: a watch- watches (count noun)/ sugar- a cup of sugar.

Student D (F)

Countable nouns and uncountable nouns differ in various ways. First of all, countable nouns, as the name states, can actually be counted. On the other hand uncountable nouns cannot. Secondly, for the previous reason, countable nouns can be preceded by determiners which indicate number while uncountable nouns do not. Instead, they are preceded by other types of determiners or premodifiers like "a piece of", "a cup of", "two slices of", "a strike of", etc.

Student E (F)

Countable nouns are nouns which we can count without the need of a partitive. They can be premodified by numbers and other quantifiers, for example: 3 computers. On the contrary, uncountable nouns need to be accompanied by a partitive in order to be counted. For example: a glass of water, a piece of chocolate.

Student F (M)

Countable nouns are those nouns that can be counted or be pluralized. They generally refer to objects, tangible things that can somehow be perceived by means of our senses. An example of a countable noun is "apple". We can say this noun defines an object (in this case a fruit) that can be counted and pluralized. E.g.: she bought three apples. Uncountable nouns or mass nouns are those that cannot be counted, and; therefore, cannot be pluralized. They generally convey abstract things. They are accompanied (sometimes) by other nouns that can be counted. An example of an uncountable noun would be the noun "information". E.g: She shared the piece of information with her family.

Student G (M)

Countable nouns consist of nouns that can be identify and separate into units and thus, can be premodified by determiners such as "one", "ten" or any other numeral. On the other hand, uncountable nouns, also called mass nouns are nouns that, in order to be measured, need a unit measurement (such as "pounds" or "meters") or a word or phrase indicating quantity (" a pich of", "some", etc). The main difference between countable

and uncountable nouns is the pre and postmodifiers that each can take. Countable nouns can be premodified so as to specify the number of items. Uncountable nouns cannot be premodified in this way ('I want three milk' is incorrect). The correct way of saying it is to add, for example, the word "litres": I want three litres of milk.

Student H (F)

Countable nouns are all the things that you can count. The word itself is somewhat self-explanatory. Uncountable nouns are mass nouns; if you want to refer just to a part of such nouns you need to use partitives. E.g.: a cup of sugar; a glass of water; a piece of advice. Both countable and uncountable can be pre and postmodified.

GROUP B- morning

Student I (F)

Countable nouns are nouns that refer to things that can be counted or quantified. These nouns are generally concrete, for example: a candy, three cars. On the other hand, uncountable nouns refer to concepts or things that cannot be counted. For example: love, hair, clothing. Both are types of nouns.

Student J (F)

Countable and uncountable are two types of nouns. Both of them can be used with the indefinite article "a". An example of an uncountable noun mentioned before is "a piece of advice". An example of a countable noun is "I saw a man". However, they differ in terms of meaning. Countable nouns are those nouns that can be counted and used in its plural form. For example, "I've found two cars in front of my house", in which "cars" is a countable noun. Uncountable nouns cannot be counted and are always singular. For example, "we need to buy sugar", in which "sugar" is an uncountable noun. In order to make them plural, they need to follow a pattern. For example, "a piece of advice", "a cup of coffee", "a bag of sugar", among others.

Student K (F)

Countable nouns are the type of lexical item that can be treated as individuals (that is to say they can be counted). For example; "an apple", "apples". We can use them with an article to show one or with -s to show more than one.

Whereas, uncountable nouns are the type of lexical item that are treated as a whole because they cannot be individualized (that is to say that they cannot be counted because they are treated as a whole). For example abstract nouns such as “love”.

Student L (F)

Countable nouns are those which can be counted, that is to say, that we can refer to one, two, etc. of them. Uncountable nouns, on the other hand, are those that cannot be counted because we don't refer to them as one, two, etc. Instead, we use some other measures in order to refer to the quantity. For instance, we may refer to a piece of, a cup of, etc. These pre-modifiers make them countable in some way, since we can talk about “two pieces of chocolate”. So we can say that countable nouns can be counted on their own, while uncountable ones need a pre-modifier in order to express the quantity.

Student M (F)

Countable nouns are those can be counted, whereas uncountable nouns cannot be. Therefore, we can mention one main difference between these types of nouns: countable nouns have a plural form; for instance, table-tables. By contrary, uncountable nouns do not have a plural form; for example: the noun water.

Student N (M)

Countable nouns are those that can be counted individually. Uncountable are abstract or mass nouns. Both can be premodified/ postmodified. Only countable nouns are modified by numbers. For example: one bottle, two bottles, or some bottles. On the other hand, uncountable cannot be modified by numeral determiner: *one water. There is an exception to this rule, that is if you are referring to one specific type of water. In that case we can say “one water”.

Countable and uncountable are both common nouns. Uncountable nouns may refer to materials.

Student O (F)

Countable nouns are nouns that refer to entities that can be separated into unities and therefore be counted with numerals: two apples, a hundred cars.

Uncountable nouns are mass nouns. They cannot be separated, we cannot say one flour, two waters. We usually name the quantity or measure, for example: 100 grams of sugar, three pieces of bread, some cake.

Countable and uncountable nouns are similar. They are nouns, they can be preceded by some, any. The difference between them is that, for countable nouns we use determiners such as a, an, two, many; whereas for uncountable nouns we use much, few, little, lots of, a great deal of (instead of a great number of, used with countable nouns).

Student P (F)

Nouns can be uncountable or countable. Uncountable nouns are those that refer to things that cannot be counted. Examples include: happiness, news, money, sugar, information. They are always singular and they must be used with singular verbs as “This news is very important”. They are not preceded by the indefinite article a or an but they can be preceded by some, any, a little, much: “I’ve got some money”. On the contrary, countable nouns are those that refer to something that can be counted.

Examples include: dog, cat, animal, man, person. They have both singular and plural forms like cat/cats; animal/animals. Singular verbs are used with singular countable nouns as “My cat is playing”, while plural verbs are used with plural countable nouns as in the sentence “My cats are playing”. In the singular, countable nouns can be preceded by the indefinite article a or an as in the sentence “A cat is an animal”.

Student Q (F)

When talking about nouns, we should take into account that they can be countable and uncountable and that they present some differences and similarities. On the one hand, as regards the differences between countable and uncountable nouns we can mention three. The first difference is that countable nouns are those that refer to something that can be counted (e.g. cat, table, pencil, apple, etc.), while uncountable nouns refer to things that cannot be counted because they are seen as a whole or mass (e.g. water, rice, cement, gold, milk, coffee, etc). The second difference is while countable nouns have both singular and plural forms (e.g. cat/cats, table/tables, pencil/pencils, apple/apples, etc.), uncountable nouns do not present a plural form. The third difference is that singular countable nouns are preceded by *a* or *an*, whereas uncountable nouns cannot be preceded by *a* or *an*. On the other hand, the similarity between countable and

uncountable nouns is that some uncountable nouns can also be used in the plural but the meaning of that noun change. For example, “would you like some coffee?” (in this case coffee is uncountable because it refers to the drink in general) and “she ordered two coffees” (in this case the originally uncountable noun is used as countable in the plural form, but this time it refers to a two cups of coffee).

Student R (F)

Nouns can be classified into countable and uncountable nouns. Uncountable nouns, unlike countable ones cannot be numbered or counted, mainly because they refer to liquids, materials, among others. For example, water is an uncountable noun because we cannot ‘count’ the particles, so instead we said “a bottle of water”. Besides, there are some countable nouns that can be used as uncountable, depending on the meaning. For example, the noun ‘iron’ can be used as both, countable or uncountable. If I say “Mario has bought a new iron” I am referring to an iron to play golf so I can count 1, 2, 3 or more, but if I say “My house is made of wood and iron”, I am referring to the materials, so I cannot ‘count’ a measure in a way it on. Countable nouns, as I said, are the ones that can be counted. For example, tables and chairs, and depending on the number we will have to use a definite article or the plural form. For example, “my mother bought a table yesterday” refers to only one.

Student S (F)

Countable nouns, as the word indicates, are those nouns that can be counted, that is to say, we can have a number of items signaled by that noun, for example the noun ‘desk’: we are able to count how many desks are in the room because it is a countable nouns. These types of nouns are generally concrete.

Uncountable nouns are those that cannot be counted, by this I mean that we can an amount of a certain item but not a number of it. For example the noun ‘rice’: we are not able to count how many but how much rice is in a plate.

Student T (M)

Countable nouns refer to items that can be count because their quantity is not that big or they are easier to numerate, whereas uncountable nouns (also named mass nouns) make reference to items that cannot be count because of the material they have. An example of countable noun could be an apple and an example of an uncountable one could be

weather. The main difference between them is the possibility of using numerals with the first type while the second type is used with partitives, that is, word or expressions that quantify the amount of that uncountable noun that we have, i.e. a spell of bad weather, a bag of sand, a wisp of hair. It is important to mention that in these cases, the uncountable nouns are still uncountable, the 'countable' part is the partitive (spell, bag, wisp).

Student U (F)

Countable nouns refer to nouns that can be counted, that can be thought as individual units. On the other hand, uncountable nouns refer to nouns that cannot be divided, they are considered to be a whole. Uncountable nouns are also called mass nouns. For example, in the sentence "in my house there are two tables made of wood", the noun tables is countable because is a whole of something, can't be divided into separate units.

Student V (F)

Countable nouns can be defined as the kind of nouns that can be divided into whole units, that is why we can count them. For example: if we say apple, I know I can have 10 or 1 apple. On the other hand, uncountable nouns are the ones we cannot divide because they represent wholes, we need units to measure them. For example: bread, in order to count how much bread there is, we use 'a loaf of'. One main difference is the one explained above, and another difference could be that they way of measuring them is different, when we talk about apples, we are referring to one whole, not a part of, whereas when we refer to uncountable nouns, we describe or measure a part of a whole. One similarity could be that they are all nouns, objects. Another similarity is tthat most of them (countable and uncountable) are tangible, that is to say, we can touch them.

APPENDIX C II**PRETEST- CONTROL GROUP****(F- Female/ M- Male)****GROUP D- afternoon**

Student 1 (F)

Countable nouns are the ones that represent an entity that can be counted and divided. On the other hand, uncountable nouns refer to entity that need to be divided by other means. The main difference between these two types of nouns is that the first can be modified by the indefinite article. In contrast, uncountable nouns have to be preceded by other nouns that determine their quantity.

Regarding similarities, both perform all functions that nouns can perform in any sentence.

Student 2 (F)

Nouns can be classified in two groups, countable nouns and uncountable nouns. On the other hand, countable nouns are the nouns that can present an article antecedent of them, the ones that can actually be identified by its quantity. For example: One car, two cars.

On the other hand if we say "Coffee is bad for your health", we are referring to uncountable nouns, nouns that can generally be liquids or difficult to have a specific number of its quantity. For example "rice". We can't say "one rice or two rices". Lastly, other examples in which we can see their differences is because we can say "little or a little" only with uncountable nouns, and this helps us have another view of how much we're talking about. For example "little money" vs "a little money". In the first example we state that we have the necessary amount of money, whether in the second one, we state otherwise.

Student 3 (M)

Countable nouns are nouns that can have a plural form. For example apples, you can count them and give them a number and a plural form.

Uncountable nouns, generally have only plural or singular form, for example the word “news” is always singular, it has no plural form, or people, a word that has only plural form: “people are”.

Student 4 (F)

Countable nouns are those which can be counted. For example 1 table, two dogs. They have a singular and a plural form. Uncountable nouns are those that cannot be counted. For example: water. When we use uncountable nouns, they are usually used with modifiers; for example a glass of water.

Student 5 (F)

There are similarities and differences as regards countable and uncountable nouns. First of all, all nouns correspond to the same grammatical category which is called “noun”. Secondly, all nouns represent a part of our world. For example, every human creation needs to be named as in table which is a furniture human beings use to eat. One of the differences is that there exists two types of nouns- countable and uncountable-. The first one corresponds to objects which can be counted whereas on the second one there are a great variety of things that cannot be counted. Other difference is that nouns may refer to a state of the thing we are naming. To conclude, nouns are a very important in human beings life because they help us in our everyday life.

Student 6 (M)

Countable nouns are the nouns that can be counted individually in numbers, while uncountable nouns are the nouns that cannot be counted in numbers. The uncountable nouns can be referred to as a group when partitives are used.

Countable nouns: tree, car, flower, chair.

Uncountable: luck, hope, strength, water, air.

With the use of partitives: a stroke of luck.

GROUP B- morning

Student 7 (F)

Uncountable nouns are mass nouns. They refer to abstract concepts, materials and things which are seen as a whole. Semantically, many times they need to be accompany

by a partitive in order to show amount. For example: She needs a sheet of paper to write down the information.

On the contrary, countable nouns are those which, as they name imply, can be counted and take numerals. For instance: I have five pens in my bag.

There are some nouns which can be used as countable as well as uncountable nouns but they differ semantically.

APPENDIX C III

POSTTEST- GRAMMAR II STUDENTS- EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

GROUP D- afternoon

Student A

“Time” and “tense” are two terms that are frequently misunderstood or confused. Time is a universal concept that every human being in the world has. All cultures own this concept to express when a specific event takes place (past, present or future). Unlike time, tense refers to the grammatical arrangements used by each language/ culture to express the idea of time. It has to do with verb inflections, for example, used to refer to a point in the timeline. As it has been said, they are different since time is a universal concept whereas tense is relative to each culture. However, they share one important aspect- they both refer to the same topic: identifying one event in the timeline. For instance, in the sentence “Mary is taking her entry exam next Friday” we can identify time and tense. As regards time, the action is going to take place in the near future; as regards tense, the reference to a future event is realized by the use of the present continuous tense plus the use of an adjunct (“next Friday”).

Student B

Time is a universal concept. It can be illustrated as a line of infinite length in which the present moment is always moving forward and everything before that point is considered part of the past, and everything that is after that point is part of the future. Tense is a pure grammatical idea. It’s the tool we use to refer to the time or moment when things happen. Both concepts, time and tense, make reference to the past, present and future moment, but differently.

I am seeing the doctor tomorrow at 4pm.

Tense: Present Progressive.

Time reference: Future time reference.

Student C

“Time” refers to a “universal” notion of the past, present and future, which is present in all languages. While “tense” refers to the different uses within each time to express different situations that may vary.

Time and tense are similar in terms that both are related to verbs, they modify their forms.

The main difference is the universality of time and the variations of tenses in a language, which can vary, in turn among languages.

One example of time and tense is: I'm travelling to Europe next holidays. Here the time is "future" the meaning is related to a future action. But the tense is "Present Continuous" expressing a near future action.

Student D

Tense is related to how we express the idea of time. We have many tenses to refer to past time, others to express present time and others for future time.

Tenses allow to make concrete the abstraction of time.

Student E

Time is inherent to any language and it's chronological. There are three times in all languages:

- past time (before present moment)
- present time (at the moment)
- future time (ahead the present moment)

On the contrary, tense varies from language to language, they are particular to a specific language.

For example, a sentence can have future time reference but present tense, as in:

"The train leaves at 3 o'clock".

The tense used is Simple Present but the time reference is future.

Student F

Time is a universal concept. It is inherent in every language in the world. Within time, we have past, present and future. If we take the example "She went to Europe yesterday", we can see that the verb "went" depicts an action that took place in the past time.

Tense, however, is a linguistic characteristic and a way of expressing time. Tenses vary among languages, and there are languages which are richer as regards tense, i.e. certain languages have a wider range of tenses available for speakers to convey meanings.

If we take the following example: “She has broken the window” we are the use of the present perfect simple tense, which has been used to refer to something that happened in the past, the consequences of which are visible in the present.

Student G

Time and tense are different because time is an universal phenomenon whereas tense is the grammatical representation of time, and depends on the language. That is to say, time exists by itself while tense is a characteristic of each language. They are similar given that both can be divided into past, present and future. However past tense can be expressed (in the English language) by using Past Simple, Past Continuous, Present Perfect, among others. Thus, the same past event can be presented in various ways. For example, “Michael cooked a pie yesterday” expresses an action that took place in the past (regarding time), and the Past Simple tense has been used. Another way of expressing the same action could be: “Michael was cooking a pie yesterday”.

Student H

The concepts of ‘time’ and ‘tense’ are part of the grammar of every language. Time has to do with when an action or event took place, that is, in the past, present or future. Tense is the resource that a language provides to express the time when an action or event takes place. Moreover, tense expresses the completeness or incompleteness of an action.

GROUP B- morning

Student I

Time is a universal concept. It has three dimensions: past, present and future. All languages recognize the same concept of time. Tense is one of the features attributed to finite verb forms. Tense varies among languages. A past tense may refer to a past moment in life but a present tense may also refer to a past time. Time and tense are related in that tense may provide information about when an action took or will take place, although this is not necessarily the case, since some uses of tense require adverbials of time to indicate the specific moment in time when the action/ process takes place.

Student J

Tense has a grammatical connotation that refers to different grammatical tenses in a language, such as present simple, past simple, present simple, present continuous, future simple, future perfect, among others. For example, “She has been working all night to finish the project.” This sentence is written in present perfect. Different from tense, time has a universal connotation that refers to the moment in which an action or state happens. It make reference to past, present and future. In the previous, although it is in Present Perfect, it is in past time, as the action was already done.

Student K

Time refers to the idea of the reality humans live each day. Whereas tense refers to present, past and future. They share the fact that we can express our reality by means of using different tenses because each tense has its specific use in a specific time. We cannot say that “time” and “tense” are the same because they do not refer to the same concept. Time refers to the present moment and the reality we experience, and tense to what we express when speaking of that reality.

Student L

Time is a universal concept which refers to whether something happened in the past, present or future. Tense, on the other hand, refers to a concept particular to each language.

In English, for example, we can express past, present and future tenses, which is not the case in other languages. These two concepts do not always coincide. For example, in the sentence “I went to the cinema yesterday” both the time and the tense coincide and refer to the past. In the case of “If I were you, I would tell him the truth” this is not the case, since “were” is in a past tense but does not refer to a past time, but rather to an imaginary situation in the present. We can say, moreover, that the notion of time is abstract.

Student M

Both concepts ‘time’ and ‘tense’ refer to past, present and future. However, the main difference is that ‘tense’ may be referring to something in the past or in the future but with a tense that does not necessarily show that specific time. For example: ‘I’m visiting my sister tomorrow’. The time of the clause is future, whereas the tense is ‘Present

Continuous'. Another example: 'I have already done what you said', the sentence has a past meaning but the tense is 'Present Perfect'.

Student N

Time is a concept which is universal and shared by every culture. Past, present and future ideas are part of it.

Tense is a grammatical aspect and makes reference to the form of verbs depending on what they want to mean.

Time and tense may coincide or not. One can use present tense to refer to a past event to give it more vividness, as in "Christ dies in the cross". It is widely known that the fact mentioned took place in the past but the use of simple present may mean that the person who said or wrote it can conceive this idea as permanent or true, depending on their religious point of view, which affects the idea on how we perceive the notions of time and tense.

Student O

Time is a concept that has to do with our perception of reality. There generally are two times: past and present, and we can talk about future reference. Tense is a grammatical category and is marked by the finite verb. Tenses can be simple, continuous, perfect. By means of the different tenses we can talk about the past, the present and the future. For example, to talk about the past we can use the past simple: I went to class yesterday, but the school was closed. If we want to say something about the present we can use the simple present or present continuous: I eat a sandwich every day/ I am eating a sandwich right now. If we want to talk about the future we can use either present simple (The train leaves at 5:30 tomorrow), present continuous (I am turning 21 next month) or present perfect (You have to show your ID when you have reached the security control). One of the differences between time and tense is that tenses offer a variety of temporal perspectives on events and states.

Student P

Time is an universal term. It refers to past, present and future. It is a linear concept.

Tense is a grammatical concept.

They both share the words past, present and future. However, they differ in concepts.

While time is an universal term, tense is related to a grammatical background. For

example, in the sentence “I go to the pub, and there she is, staring at me” the time of the sentence is present but the tense refers to a past action, or the speaker is telling a story that happened to him in the past. But he is using present to convey an special meaning.

Student Q

When it comes to these two concepts we can mention some similarities and some differences between them. As regards the differences, the first difference is that time is the dimension in which events take place, whereas tense is a grammatical category which is marked by verb inflection and expresses when an event or action happens in the flow of time. The second difference is that there are only two tense forms of verbs in English, namely the present tense form and the past tense form, and on the contrary there are three times: present time, past time and future time. Another difference is that the first concept, time, is not a grammatical structure, whereas the second, tense is a very important linguistic tool expressing time relations. As regards the similarity between time and tense, each morpho-syntactic tense form has a “default” meaning that specifies time.

Student R

Time is a universal concept, a grammatical concept that allows the speaker of a language to situate and differentiate between past, present and future. Conversely, ‘tense’ is a grammatical concept but it is not universal, since it depends on the language. Time shows modality, voice, tense, aspect and mood.

For example, if I say ‘I speak English at present’ is an example that illustrates the tense of ‘time’ since I’m referring to the present, while if I say ‘She has been writing for several hours’ helps me to illustrate the tense, and therefore we can see different characteristics, such as mood, modality, time and aspect.

Student S

Time is related to past, present and future, to the “general” reference when talking, that is to say it provides the general frame of temporal space in speech.

Tense is related to the specific moment in time that is being mentioned in speech. Tense allows you to position in a particular point of a “time line”.

For example in the clause:

-I had been studying the whole week.

The time is past (since the action occurred in the past).

The tense is past perfect continuous (since the action is seen as progressive and previous to another action).

Student T

Time has to do with a position on the timeline when the action happened: today, tomorrow, yesterday, etc. It refers specifically to the point in time when the action or event occurred. Tense is related to the way the time is expressed. For example, 'she had been walking for such a long time'. In this case, the time reference is past in the past, since the past perfect continuous denotes that the action happened at some point in the past before another past action (which was not mentioned). Now, the tense is just the way this time reference and use is represented (through the auxiliaries 'been' and 'had' and the lexical verb with the 'ing' form).

Student U

Time and tense are characteristics of grammar that are conveyed in finite verbs. Time is the specific moment in which an action takes place. It is usually represented as an endless line with a moving point, this point being the present time, everything before that the past and everything after it the future. Tense, on the other hand, is the form that the verb adopts in order to convey that time. In the example "my plane leaves tomorrow at 7 p.m." the time of the action is future but the tense is present simple (meaning time and tense do not always coincide).

Student V

Time is a universal feature used by every person inherent from any language. It is a system based on numbers and cycles. One hour is sixty minutes, one minute is sixty seconds. Tense, on the other hand, is a linguistic device that depends on every language and that has to do with grammar rules and how each language expresses them. It is a continuum in which in the center is located the present. Past time and future time have inflections of gender and numbers depending on the language. For example, "she works everyday" is in the present tense but the action is not taking place at the very moment, time of speaking necessarily.

APPENDIX C IV

POSTTEST- CONTROL GROUP

GROUP D

Student 1

Time is a cultural concept.

Tense is a linguistic device that allows us to positioned what we say in time.

Time is divided in past, present and future, whereas tense is divided in many others that depend on each language.

We may use a present tense to refer to a future action as in the sentence “My plane leaves at 9pm tomorrow.”

Student 2

Both concepts time and tense are related because they grammatical concepts. However they are not the same and they shouldn't be confused between one another, although a lot of the times they are.

Time makes reference only to three concepts: past time, present time and future time. It is a universal concept in all of it's extent.

Tense on the other hand refers to different types of circumstances the sentences can be in. That is to say: simple present tense, future continuous tense, present progressive tense, etc. For example: He's studying medicine at University shows present time reference although it's tense is present progressive.

Student 3

Time is a universal concept. It refers to past, present and future. Whereas tense is a grammatical device, particular to each language.

Past tenses can have present reference or future tenses can also express present situations.

Student 4

Time indicates when an action took place. It can be present, past or future.

Tense can be either present or past but they can refer to the future.

Student 5

Time and tense have a similitude and a difference. Time corresponds to the factual time a human being lives in- past, present and future-.

However, tense refers to the name of the verb which could be in the past, present or future. For instance, in the sentence 'Argentina has succeeded in yesterday's match', the time of the action corresponds to the past- it started in the past- but it also has a consequence in the present. Instead, as regards tense, the name of this verb is Present Perfect. There exists only three names corresponding to time which are past, present and future whereas when it comes to tense there are many more for each time.

Student 6

Time is a universal concept that refers to something that happened in a non-specific point of time. The time can be past, present or future. Tense is a grammatical concept that refers to an specific point of time. That means that it can be present simple referring to the past or to the future.

I keep my dog closed.

Simple present tense → Simple present tense is the time and the time reference is present.

GROUP B (morning)

Student 7

Both the concept of "time" and "tense" are determined or implicit in the finite verb of a clause/sentence. But, while time is a universal concept which is divided into past, present and future, tense is a grammatical concept which varies from language to language and includes the present and the past tenses which show inflection in the verb and the future forms, which are formed with modal auxiliaries in most cases. A sentence can show, for example, future time reference but may have the verb in the present progressive tense: I am going to the beach tomorrow.

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