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A Corpus Study of the Effects of Information Packaging
on the Position of Siempre and Nunca
in the Spanish Verb Phrase

Rebekah Geddes

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

A Corpus Study of the Effects of Information Packaging on the Position of *Siempre* and *Nunca* in the Spanish Verb Phrase

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Master of Arts

In Spanish, time adverbs show variability in their position with respect to the modified verb. This thesis investigates the effect of information packaging on the position of VP time-adverbs of frequency. Data were drawn from the Davies WEB Dialects Corpus. Two high-frequency verbs (*dar* and *decir*), as well as some of their less frequent near-synonyms (*expresar*, *declarar*, *mencionar* vis-à-vis *decir*, and *ofrecer*, *entregar*, and *regalar* vis-à-vis *dar*) were examined in relation to the adverbs *siempre* and *nunca*. The data show that when VP adverbs are part of sentence focus and do not have any special emphasis, they are found in the preverbal unmarked position. Adverbs in the marked positions receive more emphasis and are either part of the focus or are the new information being communicated.

Keywords: information packaging, time adverbs, *siempre*, *nunca*

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A Corpus Study of the Effects of Information Packaging on the Position of *Siempre* and *Nunca* in the Spanish Verb Phrase

Chapter 1: Introduction

In Spanish, the position of the adverb with respect to the verb it modifies may vary; this is especially the case with verb-phrase (VP) time adverbs. Time adverbs can occur both before and after the verb, and can be separated from the verb by other linguistic material. The scholarly consensus is that the unmarked position for VP time adverbs is postverbal (Zagona, 2002; Mayoral 2004). Mayoral says that the most frequent position for adverbs is anywhere to the right of the verb, and the second most popular position is directly preceding the modified verb. He concludes that more research needs to be done to understand what triggers leftward movement (2004, p. 12).

In a recent corpus study, Geddes (2023) found that the adverbs *siempre* and *nunca* do not tend to appear postverbally. Instead, it is more common for both adverbs to appear in the preverbal position. The following examples from Davies's *Corpus del Español: Web/Dialects* are not a comprehensive list of all the possible positions *siempre* and *nunca* can occupy, but are representative of their positional flexibility within the VP (Davies, 2019). See Table 1 in the appendix for a comprehensive list of all possible word orders involving transitive verbs and VP adverbs.

- (1) Quiero decir, lo que veremos, será lo que *siempre ofrece* Statham, así que si sos su fan, elegirás verla. (Adv + V + Subj)
- (2) Esto indica la generosidad de la autora, *siempre ofrece* cosas al lector para que aprenda... (Adv + V + Obj)

- (3) Como es esperable, no *siempre* su aplicación *da* buenos resultados. (Adv + Subj + V + Obj)
- (4) ...mientras que el conocimiento cotidiano no *ofrece* respuestas satisfactoriamente *siempre*. (Subj + V + Obj + Adv)
- (5) Es curioso que el autor de Hebreos no *menciona nunca* los sacramentos... (Subj + V + Adv)
- (6) El ego negativo *nunca entrega* amor. (Subj + Adv + V + Obj)

The question then arises: is adverbial position random, or does it follow some principle?

Historically, research regarding adverb-verb order has been avoided due to its complexity (Mayoral, 2004), but the position of adverbs contributes in an important way to sentence meaning; therefore, it is important to understand what approaches or factors influence adverb-verb order (Bobkina, 2018). This thesis aims to add to the limited literature regarding adverb position. One lens that might prove promising is to examine the effect of information packaging on the position of the frequency-time adverbs *siempre* and *nunca*.

Information packaging describes how information is organized in discourse. Different word orders are not simply stylistic choices but depend on the content and purpose of utterances. Lambrecht (1994) provides the following definition:

Information structure is formally manifested in aspects of prosody, in special grammatical markers, in the form of syntactic (in particular nominal) constituents, in the position and ordering of such constituents in the sentences, in the form of complex grammatical constructions, and in certain choices between related lexical items (p. 6).

This thesis will focus on how the discourse is organized, what message is being communicated, and how discourse affects the word order of phrases with the frequency-time adverbs *siempre* and *nunca*.

A Typology of VP Time-Adverbs

Adverbs are adjuncts that modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs (in the case of intensifying adverbs), or whole sentences or clauses. According to Kovacci, “el adverbio ha sido considerado la clase de palabras más heterogénea y hasta confusa, difícil de delimitar y clasificar” (1999, p. 722). Three overlapping classifications have been used to categorize adverbs: derived versus non-derived, scope, and semantic content.

Some lexical items belong to the class of adverbs by virtue of their morphological form; examples are *siempre* and *ahora*. It is also common for non-adverbial syntactic categories to function as adverbs; especially common are adverbial noun phrases (*Chávez falleció el martes*), adjective phrases (*hablo muy rápido*), and prepositional phrases (*la noticia nos golpeó con fuerza*). Some adverbs are derived from other word classes, especially from adjectives (*evidente* → *evidentemente*).

Another way of classifying adverbs is scope. Adverbs either have scope over an entire sentence, as in example (7), or over just the VP, as in example (8).

(7) *Obviamente* esto será muy útil cuando el terapeuta esté buscando aplicar un sistema terapéutico definido y muy estructurado.

(8) Bueno, como te dije *ayer*, perseverando [*sic*] un poco terminé por resolver el problema

The adverb *obviamente* in (7) is a sentence adverb, while the adverb *ayer* in (8) is a VP adverb.

Sentence adverbs are often followed by a slight pause or uttered with a marked intonation

pattern, though such nuances are not obligatory. Sentence adverbs also tend to occur before or after the subject, rarely following the auxiliary verb or participle (Zagona, 2002).

Another way of classifying adverbs is by semantic content. One useful classification is given in the Real Academia's grammar in which adverbs are sorted into six types: place (*aquí, allí*), time (*ayer, todavía*), mode (*bien, mejor*), quantity (*nada, mucho*), affirmation (*claro, cierto*), negation (*no, tampoco*), and doubt (*quizás, tal vez*) (NGLE, 2001, p. 2,288). More will be said regarding the semantic classification of adverbs below.

To limit the scope of this thesis, words that are adverbs by function, but not form, are excluded, as well as derived adverbs and sentence adverbs. The adverbs chosen for analysis in this thesis are *siempre* and *nunca*, both of which belong to the grammatical category of adverbs and are non-derived. They are also both time adverbs—more specifically, frequency adverbs (García Fernández, 1999).

An important issue in the study of VP adverbs is their position with respect to the modified verb. VP adverbs can be preverbal or postverbal. Additionally, other linguistic material can separate the adverb from the modified verb. It is mandatory that clitic pronouns directly precede a finite verb, therefore I will not consider them as intervening linguistic material. Intervening linguistic material are things that are not obligatory before the verb, such as overt subjects, direct objects (excluding direct object clitics), indirect objects in the form of prepositional phrases (excluding indirect object clitics), simple adverbs, and adverbial phrases. These words and phrases can occupy other slots in the utterance, so they are considered intervening.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter Two is a review of the literature. In Chapter Three, important terms and concepts related to information packing are discussed.

Chapter Four explains and evaluates the research methods and the data collection process. The results and the effects of information packaging on adverb placement are presented in Chapter Five, which also contains the analysis of various sentences gathered from the *WEB Dialects* corpus. Finally, Chapter Six has a conclusion and suggestions for further research. The examples throughout the thesis have been collected from the *Corpus del Español: Web/Dialects* (Davies, 2019) unless otherwise indicated.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

As previously discussed, the position of VP adverbs is quite flexible. It is not well understood why one word order is sometimes preferred over another, nor what triggers a given position. Different theories and models have attempted to explain the behavior of adverbs and why adverbs may occupy different slots. A handful of studies regarding adverb flexibility conclude that more research needs to be done to understand what other factors trigger the variable position of VP adverbs (Mayoral, 2004; Heidinger, 2013). In this chapter three frameworks on which previous treatments have been based will be summarized: generative grammar, usage-based theory, and information packaging.

Generative Grammar

Generative grammar explains how a language functions by creating formal rules that obey universal principles of natural language. The point of the rules is to demonstrate the possible structures in a language. In the case of adverbs, generative grammar demonstrates the possible word orders in a given language as constrained by universal grammar and language-specific parameters.

Zagona (2002) provided the earliest generative treatment of Spanish adverbs. Her classification of adverbs differed slightly from that of the *Nueva gramática de la lengua española* (NGLE, 2009), but there was some overlap. Both the NGLE and Zagona have employed categories such as place, time, and quantity to classify VP adverbs. However, the NGLE has extended its categorization to include mode, affirmation, negation, and doubt, whereas Zagona focused on categorizing the remaining VP adverbs based on extent/degree and manner.

Zagona focused on the different categories of adverbs and their corresponding positions in the VP. She noted that “VP final adverbs represent the expected order, the position in which adjuncts of all types occur” (2002, p.164). All adverbs (except for adverbs of extent) could

occupy the postverbal position (before or after the object), which, according to Zagona, was the unmarked slot. However, VP adverbs were not limited to the final position; they could occupy slots “before or after the subject, verb, and object of a transitive clause” The slots that each class of adverbs can occupy are as follows (the following examples (9) – (29) and grammatical evaluations are from Zagona, 2002, p. 162-169):

Time adverbs (*ayer, hoy, ahora, mañana, anteaer, frecuentemente, antes, aún, todavía, ya, temprano*) can precede or follow the verb as demonstrated:

- (9) *Adverb-Subject-Verb-Object*: *Ayer/ya* los trabajadores recibieron su sueldo.
- (10) *Subject-Adverb-Verb-Object*: Los trabajadores *ayer/ya* recibieron su sueld.
- (11) *Subject-Verb-Adverb-Object*: Los trabajadores recibieron *ayer/ya* su sueldo.
- (12) *Subject-Verb-Object-Adverb*: Los trabajadores recibieron su sueldo *ayer/ya*.

Place adverbs (*aquí, allí, lejos, cerca, abajo, afuera*) can also occupy any adverb slot. However, there are some instances where the utterance is not as natural, and its acceptability could be disputed by native speakers. This usually occurs when the adverb precedes the object but follows the verb (Zagona, 2002):

- (13) *Adverb-Subject-Verb-Object*: *Allí* Juan conoció a su mejor amigo.
- (14) *Subject-Adverb-Verb-Object*: Juan *allí* conoció a su mejor amigo.
- (15) *Subject-Verb-Object-Adverb*: Juan conoció a su mejor amigo *allí*.
- (16) *Subject-Verb-Adverb-Object*: ?Juan conoció *allí* a su mejor amigo.

Adverbs of extent/degree (*casi, apenas, meramente, solo*) are highly restricted and can only precede the verb:

- (17) *Subject-Adverb-Verb-Object*: Los estudiantes *apenas* terminaron el examen.
- (18) *Adverb-Subject-Verb-Object*: **Apenas* los estudiantes terminaron el examen.
- (19) *Subject-Verb-Adverb-Object*: *Los estudiantes terminaron *apenas* el examen.

(20) Subject-Verb-Object-*Adverb*: *Los estudiantes terminaron el examen *apenas*.

Counterexamples to Zagona's claims that adverbs of extent are only directly preverbal can be found in the Davies Web/Dialects Corpus. The example in (21) shows that adverbs of extent can also appear postverbally.

(21) Isabel, necesitamos tu ayuda, el niño no duerme *casi*, come *poco*,...

Manner adverbs (examples 22-25) (*bien, mal, rápido, quedo, fácilmente*) and quantity adverbs (examples 26-29) (*mucho, poco, demasiado, menos*) can only take the post-verbal position:

(22) Subject-Verb-*Adverb*-Object: María leyó *cuidadosamente* el diario.

(23) Subject-Verb-Object-*Adverb*: María leyó el diario *cuidadosamente*.

(24) Subject-*Adverb*-Verb-Object: *?María *cuidadosamente* leyó el diario.

(25) *Adverb*-Subject-Verb-Object: *?*Cuidadosamente* María leyó el diario.

(26) Subject-Verb-*Adverb*-Object: Susana ama *mucho* a su hija.

(27) Subject-Verb-Object-*Adverb*: Susana ama a su hija *mucho*.

(28) Subject-*Adverb*-Verb-Object: *Susana *mucho* ama a su hija.¹

(29) *Adverb*-Subject-Verb-Object: **Mucho* Susana ama a su hija.

The classification of adverbs is important and facilitates understanding and usage. While the typologies provided by Zagona and the NGLE are useful and important, they do not explain why an adverb may appear preverbally or postverbally. And in general, a generative account cannot explain or predict the variable word order in a particular utterance because structural rules are independent of meaning. The frequency of each position, whichever is most common for each adverbial category, is also not a concern. A variationist linguist has said that “the position

¹ This pattern may not be completely ungrammatical. The following example appears in the corpus: *Lo mismo hace una esposa o mujer casada, que mucho ama a su marido.*

of ... Spanish adverbials constitute a challenge for the linguistic models which claim that adverbial expressions have a fixed position in the syntactic tree... (Mayoral, 2004, p. 2). Non-generative linguists have critiqued the way generative rules deal with adverbs. They argued that adverbs are too variable, the rules that dictate their placement are too broad, and meaning is an important part of word order that the generativist framework does not include (Mayoral, 2004). A model that considers meaning when determining word order, such as usage-based theory or information packaging, however, can predict the adverb placement of individual utterances.

Usage-Based Theory

An alternative framework to the generativist approach is Bybee's usage-based model, according to which constructions and patterns are established through frequency of use. This model holds that usage precedes rules instead of the other way around. As explained by Bybee, "usage-based theory arises from the finding that language usage has an ongoing effect on language structure, leading to the conclusion that knowledge of usage is inseparable from grammar," (2015, p. 1). Repetition is an essential aspect of Bybee's usage-based model. As grammatical constructions are repeated and become more frequent, they form patterns that are cemented into commonly used phrases. Specific constructions are used so frequently that they become fused and form chunks. Due to their frequent sequentiality, these chunks allow the hearer to predict what comes next.

Furthermore, as phrases are chunked together and commonly used, they form high-frequency phrases, in which speakers can insert novel yet related information into flexible slots to create new, unique utterances; this process is called analogy. Usually, analogy is appealed to in explanations of historical change in linguistics. There is a broader application, though, which is synchronic and dynamic. It is a way of forming networks and relationships. Bybee says it this

way: “It is important to note that analogy as a type of historical linguistic change is not separate from analogy as a cognitive processing mechanism” (Bybee, 2010, p. 72). In other words, the same processes behind analogy in the history of a language are also at work at every synchronic stage of the language.

Studies have used the usage-based model to examine analogy and frequency patterns in syntactic constructions, phonological changes, and L1 acquisition. Additionally, usage-based studies must be based on authentic utterances; thus, data for the studies must be taken from a corpus.

Travis and Curnow (2008) specifically examined locational adverbs in a conversational corpus and used Bybee’s usage-based perspective to analyze their data. They discovered frequent combinations of certain adverbs and prepositions that led to fixed constructions. They claimed that their research “demonstrated that the behavior of these adverbs is in part determined by the constructions in which they repeatedly occur, which represent conventionalized ways of saying things” (Travis & Curnow, 2008, p. 87). Instead of adverbs occupying certain slots for no reason, Travis and Curnow’s research showed that something related to usage and fixed constructions was at play. Certain phrases involving a preposition and locational adverb moved as a unit and occupied certain slots in certain communicative contexts. Some of the constructions they noticed were *más acá/allá or para acá/allá*.

(30) no es exactamente allá sino, ***Más*** [*sic*] ***acá***. (p. 77)

(31) Trae pues para la casa de ella, ***Y*** [*sic*] ***para acá*** para la casa de nosotros (p. 79)

While this theory could be used to examine all adverbs, it would be limited in scope because not all adverbs occur in such fixed and standard constructions as location adverbs. Additionally, the researchers did not find any explanation for why the constructions solidified.

Zagona's claim that the unmarked location for adverbs is postverbal and Travis & Curnow's usage-based research is what led Geddes (2023) to investigate the order of adverbs further to see whether the frequency of the verb affected the verb-adverb order of the adverbs *siempre* and *nunca*. Two frequent verbs, *dar* and *decir*, along with less frequent but semantically related verbs *expresar*, *declarar*, and *mencionar* vis-à-vis *decir* and *ofrecer*, *entregar*, and *regalar* vis-à-vis *dar*, were used to examine the behavior of VP-adverbs. The near-synonyms were used to control for the effect of verbal meaning on the position of the adverb. The adverb-verb order of the two highly frequent verbs was compared with those of the less frequent, related verbs.

The data collected by Geddes (2023) showed that both adverbs demonstrated a clear preference for the preverbal slot rather than the postverbal slot, no matter the frequency of the verb. Both high-frequency verbs and low-frequency verbs followed the same word order patterns. These findings suggest that low-frequency verbs mirror the patterns of high-frequency verbs and support Bybee's theory that analogy was at work in the synchronic state of the language. Unfortunately, the data also demonstrated that verb frequency did not predict the position of time adverbs in Spanish.

Studies that utilize the usage-based theory are helpful when word order is in question because data are collected from actual utterances. The previous studies mentioned used oral (Travis & Curnow, 2008) and written (Geddes, 2023) corpora to explain how human language functions. However, when applied to adverb position, concepts from usage-based theory, such as frequency and fixed constructions, do not fully explain why the positions are so flexible.

Information Packing & Word Order

Another perspective that attempts to account for verb-adverb order is information packaging. Information packaging explains word order by considering what the underlying question is and, thus, what is being emphasized. Information packaging holds that word order is essential; flexible constituents are placed intentionally, and their placement affects meaning. The theory is also based on the idea that many factors interact simultaneously to create a particular utterance (Mayoral, 2004). Two researchers (Mayoral, 2004; Heidinger, 2013) take different approaches to describe how Spanish word order is affected by specific features, such as the weight of constituents, overt subjects, and information focus.

One innovative study is Mayoral (2004), which used a variationist approach within the generative framework to explain Spanish adverb flexibility. He suggested that generative grammar could benefit from using less rigid syntactic structures and from including alternative factors (e.g., syntactic weight, the presence of an overt subject, ambiguity avoidance, and old/new information) to explain adverbial movement. He concluded that different constituents present in a sentence affect each other and the word order of the message (Mayoral, 2004, p. 2). Mayoral investigated two specific factors: the weight of flexible constituents and the presence of an overt subject and its surface position relative to the position of frequency adverbs. He found that the presence of an overt subject triggered position alteration. His variationist perspective provided a comprehensive explanation regarding the flexible behavior of adverbs and highlighted how various factors can interact and trigger adverbial movement. Using the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA), he analyzed 760 sentences and coded them for different variables: the position of the adverb, the weight of a co-occurring postverbal XP, the weight of a co-occurring preverbal XP, the argument-hood of a postverbal XP, the argument-

hood of a preverbal XP, as well as which adverb was used (2004, p.5). Using a chi-squared test to determine the effect of the variables on adverb placement, Mayoral determined that syntactic weight has no effect on adverb placement, but the presence of an overt subject does. When the overt subject preceded the verb, the adverb was preverbal 19% of the time, but when the overt subject was in the postverbal position or omitted, the chances of having a preverbal adverb dramatically increased (Mayoral, 2004, p.8).

Heidinger's study concentrated on more than just adverbs; he examined all postverbal constituents. He investigated two possible factors that influence the order of Spanish postverbal constituents: information focus and syntactic weight. His findings suggest that the preferred position for narrowly focused constituents and heavier constituents in Spanish is sentence-final. However, the constituents are not limited to the sentence-final position. They are still flexible and may occupy other postverbal slots (Heidinger, 2013). Although Heidinger did not specifically investigate adverb placement, his research showed that any constituent, focussed or unfocussed, light or heavy, can occupy different postverbal positions. He also explained the impact of word order on meaning, emphasizing the crucial role of focus in determining this order (Heidinger, 2013).

The present study will explore the benefits of applying information packaging to the problem of the flexible word order exhibited by *siempre* and *nunca*. Descriptive grammar and generative grammar are helpful in that they spell out where certain adverbs can appear in a sentence, but they do not explain why adverbs go where they go. A usage-based approach is also helpful in examining authentic utterances, but the main components of the theory do not fully explain why adverbs function the way they do. Information packaging will provide a sound

theoretical framework to further examine the adverb position in the VP. The following chapter will explore the details of the information packaging and explain the theory's essential features.

Chapter 3: Information Packaging

The theoretical framework used in this thesis is information packaging or information structure. The two terms are used synonymously and highlight important aspects of the theory; information refers to the propositional content, while packaging/structure references the syntactic and phonological properties modified based on the intended message (Kroeger, 2021).

Lambrecht, an influential proponent of information structure, wrote *Information Structure and Sentence Form* (1994), a book that “changed the way that linguists look at the interaction of syntax, discourse, and prosody by examining it through the lens of construction-based syntax” (Bourns & Myers, 2014, p. 1). In this book, Lambrecht defines information structure as

that component of sentence grammar in which propositions as conceptual representations of states of affairs are paired with lexicogrammatical structures in accordance with the mental states of interlocutors who use and interpret these structures as units of information in given discourse contexts (1994, p. 5).

This framework will guide the analysis of the data I will examine.

What follows in this chapter is an introductory overview of information packaging. A few of the basic key concepts in this framework are word order, focus/background, topic/comment, given/new, underlying questions, fronting, prosody, and speaker assumptions. These concepts, while interrelated, are independent and play an essential role in governing sentence structure.

The specific linguistic grouping that will be examined in this study is the placement of frequency-time adverbs in relation to the modified verb. The central question addressed in this thesis is the following: How does understanding the fundamental principles of information packaging aid in understanding the placement of the adverb?

Information Packaging and Word Order

Lambrecht explains that “[Information structure is] a determining factor in the formal structuring of sentences” (1994, p.3). Spanish word order is quite flexible, and speakers may include or omit linguistic material or rearrange word order within the limits of Spanish syntax. They can also include unnecessary overt subjects, advance a typically postverbal element to a preverbal slot (or vice versa), or use repetition to highlight certain aspects of the utterance or create contrast. Understanding the relationship between word order and communicated information is an important aspect of information packaging.

As explained by Lambrecht, speakers may create millions of novel and distinct sentences or allosentences (multiple structures expressing the same proposition) to best express themselves (1994). An illustration of this principle is seen in the following sentence pair taken from *NGLE* (2009, p. 2964):

(32) En 1945 terminó la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

(33) La Segunda Guerra Mundial terminó en 1945.

While these two sentences share the same words, they highlight distinct aspects of an event. The focus of the first sentence is on what happened in 1945, while the focus of the second sentence is when World War II ended. The differences in focus can be demonstrated by the different underlying questions that each sentence answers: the first responds to “What ended in 1945?” and the second to “When did World War II end?” The emphasis in the first sentence lies on the event’s timing, while the second emphasizes the conclusion of World War II.

Terminology

A few important terms when discussing information packaging are focus/background, topic/comment, and given/new. *Focus* is the part of an utterance that contributes new or

contrastive information, while *background* is already known or assumed information. *Topic* refers to the theme of the utterance or what is being discussed, and whatever is said about the topic is the *comment*. *Given* refers to information from the discourse that is already known due to common knowledge or because it has been previously introduced into the discourse, and information that is not given is considered *new*. While these terms are interrelated, they represent independent categories that are important when discussing information focus and word order (Lambrecht, 1994). In settings where more than one ordering of words is possible, within the limits of the syntactic system of a language, these concepts account for the order that a speaker chooses. The following subsections will further explain the ins and outs of each pair.

Focus/Background

As previously explained, *focus* is the part of an utterance that contributes new or contrastive information, while *background* is already known or assumed information. The relationship between focus and background is important and depicts both the speaker's and the hearer's "mental world." Vallduví & Engdahl explain this interplay in the following way:

focus-background divides the sentence into a part that anchors the sentence to the previous discourse or the hearer's "mental world" and an informative part that makes some contribution to the discourse or the hearer's 'mental world.' (1996, p. 461).

In the information packaging literature, most attention is given to focus. Focus is an essential component of information packaging and influences what can receive emphasis in a sentence.

A helpful way to identify an assertion's focus is to ask what is the underlying question. Kroeger explains a concept he calls *question-answer congruence* (2021, p. 4). Question-answer congruence is a test to help determine the focus of a sentence. When using this test to determine

the focus, the focus of the question will be the question word (who, what, when, where, etc.), and the focus of the answer will be the information that corresponds to the question word (2021).

According to Lambrecht, there are three different focus types: predicate focus, constituent focus, and sentence focus. Predicate focus is the most common type of focus and occurs in topic-comment sentences, in which everything but the topic phrase is under focus (Kroeger, 2021). Kroeger explains that overt focus markings (focal stress, special word order, focus particles, etc.) are not generally used to distinguish predicate focus or sentence focus, but are prevalent with argument focus (2021, p. 6). The following sentences are examples of the three different types of focus. Each example is the same assertion, but interpreted as different responses to different questions. Example (34) is an utterance with predicate focus.

(34) Assertion: Mi carro se ha estropeado.

(a) [Underlying question] & *answer*, *EMPHASIS*: [what happened to your car?] *My car / it broke DOWN.*

This sentence is a perfect example of the common topic-comment dynamic prevalent in predicate focus. The topic is the car; it is the given/old information. The predicate contains a comment about what happened to the car: it broke down. The focus falls on the predicate because it is the part of the sentence conveying new information. Typically, as is seen in this example, the predicate/comment is considered the focus of the utterance.

Argument focus (also called constituent focus) has an identificational function. The focus generally consists of a single word or phrase, and the assertion aims to create a relationship between a new argument and an already established concept from the discourse. Example (35) demonstrates argument focus:

(35) Assertion: Se ha estropeado mi CARRO.

(a) [Underlying question] & *answer*, *EMPHASIS*: [I heard your motorcycle broke down?] *My CAR broke down.*

In example (35) the speaker is correcting the assumption that it was not his motorcycle that broke down, but rather his car. In this instance, the focused element is the subject. In other cases, different arguments can be the focus, such as verbs, object pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases.

Sentence focus is propositional or interpreted as event reporting. The purpose of assertions with sentence focus is to communicate an idea that is not linked to any established topic. The focus is the entire sentence. Example (36) demonstrates sentence focus:

(36) Assertion: Se ha estropeado mi CARRO.

(a) [Underlying question] & *answer*, *EMPHASIS*: [What happened?] *My CAR broke down.*

Sentence focus, as demonstrated by example (36) communicates new information that may or may not be directly related to a previous utterance. In sentences with sentence focus, everything being communicated is new.

In summary, the three types of focus perform different communicative functions. Predicate focus focuses on a given topic (topic-comment function); argument focus identifies an argument (identificational function); and sentence focus introduces a new discourse referent or reports an event (presentational or event-reporting).

Focus Marking. There are many ways to mark the focus of an utterance in Spanish: prosody, word order, lexical choice –even facial expressions. Prosody refers to the changes in pitch, intonation, or stress patterns in spoken language. Focused elements tend to be more

stressed and pronounced with a higher pitch. Changing word order or restructuring the discourse is a prevalent method to mark focus in spoken and written discourse. The speaker may move the focused element to a more prominent position in the sentence by placing it in a marked slot or using syntactic structures, such as clefting or fronting, as shown in the following examples

(Altiener, 2018, p.70):

- (37) It was a small red convertible that he bought. / *Era un pequeño descapotable rojo que compró.* (It cleft)
- (38) What he bought was a small red convertible. / *Lo que compró fue un pequeño descapotable rojo.* (Wh-cleft)
- (39) Macadamia nuts, I can't afford. (fronting) (Prince, 1981, p. 250)

Word choice, such as repeating a singular word (40) (41) or replacing words that had been frequently used with synonyms (42), is another way to highlight the focused information through lexical choice.

- (40) *Da, da y da. Da siempre lo mejor de ti.*
- (41) Si tienes mucho, *da* mucho; si tienes poco, *da* poco; pero *da* siempre.
- (42) El conocimiento científico *da* mayor satisfacción de las respuestas ofrecidas, mientras que el conocimiento cotidiano no *ofrece* respuestas satisfactoriamente siempre.

Finally, nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions and bodily gestures, are used in spoken communication to mark focus. For instance, a speaker may raise their voice slightly while simultaneously leaning forward to intensify their message and direct attention to a particular aspect of the discussion. Each language's grammatical structure and discourse context affect the focus marking strategies used. The primary purpose of focus markers is to allow the speakers to clearly and effectively emphasize key information. Verbal focus markers (prosody)

and facial expressions are focus markers that will not be included in this analysis due to the fact all the examples have been collected from a written corpus.

Beaver and Clark (2008) explain that certain parts of a sentence are more focus-sensitive than others; quantificational adverbs, like *siempre* and *nunca*, are among them (p. 5). They claim that “focus sensitivity is either lexically encoded or a pragmatically driven epiphenomenon” but not all parts of a sentence can be focus sensitive (Beaver & Clark, 2008, p. 280). Their book *Sense and Sensitivity: How Focus Determines Meaning*, classifies the different groups that can be focus sensitive and discusses how meaning and context affect the focus. In their research, things such as verbal cues and word order are used to explain how to mark focus. In the end, they explain that focus relates to what is being said and what is presupposed (Beaver & Clark, 2008, p. 41).

Fronting. Fronting is an important feature of information structure that refers to the movement of constituents, typically postverbal constituents, into preverbal slots (Batllori & Sitaridou, 2020). Items become fronted for many reasons: to organize information flow, achieve cohesion, express contrast, or help particular elements gain emphasis (Altiner, 2018). Fronting is typically used to guide the reader or listener to specific concepts in the discourse or text, and is accomplished by using marked word order and special focus constructions. “The main goals speakers and writers often use fronting are emphasizing an element, emphasizing a contrast, introducing the topic of an article and introducing a topic shift” (Altiner, 2018, p. 75).

When negative adverbs like *nunca* are fronted, a unique phenomenon occurs and the entire sentence is emphasized (Altiner, 2018). The first two examples, (43a) and (44a), depict a fronted adverb, while (45a) and (46a) are postverbal examples. As the corpus examples are compared to the rephrased versions, (43b), (44b), (45b) and (46b), the focus changes (some of

the rephrased versions are ungrammatical). When *nunca* is in the preverbal position, the sentence as a whole has a more emphatic or exclamatory reading with sentence focus, whereas in the sentences with postverbal *nunca*, the emphasis falls on the verb phrase and is predicate focus.

- (43a) *Nunca se da* la mano con los guantes puestos.
- (43b) **Se da nunca* la mano con los guantes puestos.
- (44a) *Nunca dice* su novia que no quiere que se aprovechen de él.
- (44b) **Dice nunca* su novia que no quiere que se aprovechen de él.
- (45a) Y no se nos reconoce, *no se nos da nunca* un premio nacional.
- (45b) Y no se nos reconoce, *nunca se nos da* un premio nacional.
- (46a) Es curioso que el autor de Hebreos *no menciona nunca* los sacramentos.
- (46b) Es curioso que el autor de Hebreos *nunca menciona* los sacramentos.

Another way to mark focus is to postpone the item in focus. Almost 70 years ago, in his pioneering work on Spanish word order, Bolinger claimed that a general principle of Spanish word order is that elements that follow are emphasized more than elements that precede. This is true of adverbs; usually when they occupy the postverbal slot, they convey new information and are emphasized (examples (47) and (48)), whereas, in the preverbal slot, they are often not the sole focus of the utterance (examples (49) and (50)).

- (47) ¿Por qué *menciona siempre* a Antonio Saca como candidato presidencial?
- (48) El sabio *no dice nunca* todo lo que piensa, pero siempre piensa todo lo que dice.
- (49) En su libro, Darwin *nunca menciona* el origen de la vida.
- (50) la Biblia *nunca declara* que el mundo se acabará

In situations with preverbal adverbs, the new or emphatic information is not how, when, or where, something is being done, but what is being done, thought, experienced, felt, etc. In cases

like this, the verb's meaning is emphasized as new information. Bolinger gives the example of the contrast between *ayer llegó* and *llegó ayer*. In *ayer llegó*, the emphasis is on what happened yesterday (sentence focus), while in *llegó ayer*, the focus is on when the arrival occurred (predicate focus). The underlying question changes from “What did she do yesterday?” to “When did she arrive?” (1991).

Topic/Comment

Topic is often considered “what the utterance is about” or the “matter of current concern” (Kroeger, 2021, p. 6). The *comment* is the new information added to an utterance.

(51) I saw your nephews in town today. —I hope you offered 'em a ride.

(a) Topic: the second speaker's nephew

(b) Comment: seeing the nephew and offering him a ride

A significant contrast between the terminology of information packaging is that a single constituent cannot be both the topic and the focus. Topic and focus are contrastive terms; topic refers to established, common ground, while the purpose of focus elements is to update and modify what is already established. “A single constituent cannot be simultaneously topic and focus of the same sentence, because it cannot be both treated as part of the common ground and intended to update or modify the common ground at the same time” (Kroeger, 2021, p. 8).

Given/New (Old/New)

Given and *new* are terms used to discuss the type of information being communicated. Given information is old, presupposed information. As explained by Prince (1982), new information is not only new; it also adds a purpose to the discourse and tends to be marked with stress or syntactic placement (it-clefts, wh-clefts, or topicalization, i.e. focus-movement).

When communicating with others, speakers take for granted what the addressee already knows. The speaker and the addressee must be on the same page. Clark and Haviland explain that “to ensure reasonably efficient communication, [...] [t]he speaker tries, to the best of his ability, to make the structure of his utterances congruent with his knowledge of the listener's mental world” (1977, p. 5). Therefore, it is the speaker’s responsibility to structure the information in discourse so that it is in accordance with what they believe the hearer understands and thinks.

Prince (1992) uses the terms “discourse old” and “discourse new” when referring to the discourse model. Discourse old information is content that has been explicitly expressed in the discourse, while discourse new has not. Prince also uses the terms “hearer old/new” when referencing the hearer’s frame of mind or the speaker’s beliefs about what is in the hearer’s head. Information is considered unused if it is hearer old and discourse new. However, when the information is hearer new and discourse new, it is brand-new. Information can also be inferable. Inferable information refers to propositions the speakers bring up in the discourse that they assume the hearer can infer the existence of. This information is technically hearer-new and, therefore, discourse-new, but the speaker assumes the addressee is familiar with the information or can infer its existence or meaning based on context and shared experience (Prince, 1992). Furthermore, Lambrecht explains that something can simultaneously be presupposed (old or inferable) and the focus, but not new (1994). The relationship between the terminology of information packaging shows how things like focus and new information overlap but are not synonymous. These comparisons and distinctions are important as the utterances are analyzed in order to determine the focus.

It is easy to determine what information is discourse old. However, when examining other people's speech, it is more complicated to determine whether the information is hearer old or hearer new. Lambrecht proposes a tool he calls a "lie test" to help understand the speaker's beliefs about the hearer's knowledge. The lie test consists of the addressee challenging the speaker's statement by saying, "that's not true." This reply could only be understood as challenging the new information. Lambrecht exemplifies the use of the lie test with the following phrase, "I finally met the woman who lives downstairs." The reply, "that's not true," would challenge the idea of you meeting the person, not the fact that she lives downstairs. In order to challenge that part of the sentence, one would need to say, "I didn't know that you had a new neighbor," or, "What are you talking about, you live in a one-story building." The lie test helps us establish that the speaker assumes the hearer knows (or can infer) that a lady has moved in downstairs, while the new information and the purpose of the utterance is to establish that the speaker finally met his new neighbor. The lie test is a helpful tool for analyzing corpus data within the framework of discourse analysis.

The concepts from information packaging will be used as the utterances selected from the corpus are analyzed. By considering given/new information, using focus markers such as word order, repetition, and the location of constituents, as well as other mechanisms such as the underlying question, and the lie test, I will determine the sentence's focus. These features of information structure will help me better understand what is being communicated and how the placement of frequency-time adverbs impacts the message.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Procedures

I compared the adverb placement of *siempre* and *nunca* with two frequent verbs, *dar* and *decir*. I limited the search to third-person singular indicative forms because of the high number of hits with these verbs. I then compared the adverb placement with some less common near synonyms of *dar* and *decir* in order to control for the effect of verbal meaning on the position of the adverb. I used the verbs *expresar*, *declarar*, and *mencionar* for *decir* and *ofrecer*, *entregar*, and *regalar* for *dar*. To maintain the semantic relationship between the verbs, idiomatic uses of *dar*, such as *dar por sentado*, *darse cuenta*, and *dar a conocer*, were not included. Table 2 (also found in the appendix) depicts the frequency usage of each verb according to *A Frequency Dictionary of Spanish*, with *decir* ranked 31 as the most frequent and *regalar* at 1420 as the group's least frequent.

Table 2:

dar & decir and semantically similar verbs' adverb-verb order tendencies

Verb:	Frequency:	Verb:	Frequency:
<i>Dar</i>	42	<i>Decir</i>	31
<i>Ofrecer</i>	351	<i>Expresar</i>	699
<i>Entregar</i>	625	<i>Declarar</i>	976
<i>Regalar</i>	1420	<i>Mencionar</i>	1102

It has been established that the unmarked position for the adverbs *siempre* and *nunca* is immediately preceding the modified verb (Geddes, 2023). In this position, adverbs tend to contribute new information, but are not newer than other parts of the utterance. In this context, adverbs are considered to be part of sentence focus or predicate focus, depending on the newness of the other constituents. The preverbal, unmarked slot is versatile and can be used to express both kinds of focus.

Because placement and markedness are important focus markers, it is necessary to establish the unmarked and marked positions. The marked positions in the VP for *siempre* and *nunca* are before the modified verb but separated by linguistic material, directly following the modified verb, and following the modified verb but separated by linguistic material. Each of these marked positions exhibits degrees of markedness. Impressionistically, the postverbal slot, separated by linguistic material, seems to be the most marked. Adverbs in this slot receive the most emphasis and can be the focus of the utterance (argument focus). It is hard to distinguish the amount of markedness between the postverbal slot with no intervening linguistic material and the preverbal slot separated by some linguistic material. Both are less marked than the postverbal slot, separated by linguistic material, but are not unmarked. Each position effects the message of the utterance in different ways.

The data that were analyzed had been previously been collected by Geddes (2023) in her research about the relation between verb frequency and adverb position. All the data came from the Davies WEB Dialects Corpus and were made up of sentences with either *siempre* or *nunca* modifying *dar* and *decir*, as well as their common near synonyms. Geddes (2023) used the collocate function of the Davies Corpus to include sentences in which the adverb and modified verb were separated by linguistic material (this function allows words to be separated by up to 9

other words). Geddes (2023) limited her search to the default, which was 4 words. Each sentence taken from the corpus was sorted into different categories based on the position of the adverb in relation to the verb (adverb-intervening linguistic material-verb, adverb-verb, verb-intervening linguistic material-adverb, and verb-adverb). Once each of the sentences were accounted for and organized, I selected 17 representative example sentences from each unmarked and marked category from the corpus for analysis. I selected examples that most clearly demonstrated how the principles of information packaging interact and affect meaning.

The utterances were analyzed by considering the following questions:

1. Is the adverb in a marked position? How would changing the position affect the meaning of the sentence?
2. What information has been established as background earlier in the discourse? Are any particular ideas being compared or contrasted throughout the discourse?
3. Do tools such as the lie test and determining the underlying question help identify focus, topic, and the type of information being discussed (old/new/unused, etc.)?
4. What focus markers are being used? Word order, word choice, repetition, fronting, etc.?

Research Questions

1. How does information packaging affect adverb placement?
2. When adverbs are the focus of the utterance or provide new information, is it most common for them to be in a marked slot?
3. Can adverbs be the focus of an utterance and be in the unmarked slot?

The following research questions guided the analysis:

Chapter 5: Results

Analysis

As the data from the corpus were analyzed, a few patterns were noted. First, when the adverb is in the unmarked preverbal position, it tends not to be the sole focus of the utterance, but rather part of sentence focus or predicate focus. Adverbs in the marked positions, on the other hand, are also commonly part of sentence focus or predicate focus, and in some cases argument focus. Adverbs in the marked slot are also much more likely to be considered discourse new or hearer new and receive extra emphasis than adverbs in the unmarked slot.

Unmarked slot; preverbal

In the following examples, *siempre* and *nunca* are in the unmarked preverbal slot. In each sentence, the adverb is part of the predicate focus or sentence focus. The adverbs alone do not introduce new information into the discourse. Instead, they are considered just as new as the rest of the sentence or the predicate. This section contains examples with analyzes that explain what type of focus present in each utterance with adverbs in the unmarked slot.

In example (52) *siempre* is in the unmarked, preverbal slot. The information that has been previously established in the discourse is that Lino is a good friend.

- (52) Lino es un amigo antes que cualquier cosa, *siempre* nos *regala* su buen humor y nosotros los jugadores estamos agradecidos con él...

This is an example of predicate focus: everything is under focus except for the topic (topic: Lino is a good friend; comment: what Lino does to be considered a good friend– he has a good disposition). Identifying the underlying question also helps determine what type of focus is present. In the context of this utterance, a possible underlying question could be, “What makes Lino a good friend?” The answer to the question is *siempre nos regala su buen humor*, which

corroborates that predicate focus is present in this example. The things mentioned that make Lino a good friend can be considered presupposed information because it is a fair assumption that making friends is a universal experience, and it is expected that people understand what characteristics make a good friend. Although the idea expressed in the predicate could be presupposed, its relation to Lino is hearer new. The lie test highlights this: “That’s not true, Lino isn’t always a good friend, he does not always have a good humor.”

In the next example (53), all the information presented is discourse new because it is the first sentence of a paragraph introducing a new topic; no singular word or phrase is newer than the rest of the utterance. While the information being shared may or may not be presupposed, depending on the hearers’ previous knowledge, in the contextual setting it is discourse new, making it a case of sentence focus. *Siempre* is also in the unmarked slot, a common position for sentence focus.

(53) *Siempre se menciona* que el cuerpo humano está compuesto en su mayoría por agua...

Example (54) is found at the end of a paragraph that discusses what the Bible does and does not teach about salvation. The purpose of the sentence is to summarize the main argument of the writer, namely, that we are not saved by remembering the past. Consequently, the sentence is discourse old information.

(54) Esto no es bíblico. La Biblia *nunca dice* que es salvo por algo que recuerde del pasado. At first blush, it seems that the information is discourse old and hearer old and the sentence is an example of predicate focus. Even when both the topic and the comment are discourse old, predicate focus is still possible because of the topic-comment dynamic. The topic in this example are the incorrect ideas and beliefs regarding salvation. The comment is that the incorrect ideas and beliefs are not found in the Bible. On this interpretation, the focus is the comment, *La Biblia*

nunca dice. However, when we apply the lie test, it appears that *nunca* could be considered new information, or at least the newest and most prominent element of the utterance. If one were to say, “That’s not true” in response to the analyzed sentence, an appropriate response would be something along the lines of “Yes it is, the Bible NEVER says anything like that”, where emphasis falls on *never / nunca*. So while negating the erroneous ideas regarding salvation is not necessarily brand new, it is an important part of the utterance that needs to be emphasized, along with the predicate that is under focus.

The word order and position of *nunca* in the next example (55) is also in the unmarked slot but does not receive extra emphasis. This example comes from an article discussing the relationship of a certain couple. This sentence is explaining a dynamic that is at play in the couples’ relationship. In both contexts, *nunca* is not conveying anything newer than the rest of the sentence, making it part of sentence focus. A possible underlying question could be, “How are things going for Maritza and Pedro?”, to which (55) would be an appropriate response.

(55) *Nunca* le pide que la ayude... y él *nunca* ofrece.

Unmarked Slot; preverbal with extra emphasis

There are times when adverbs are in the unmarked slot but receive extra emphasis; on rare occasions they can even be the focus of the utterance (argument focus). In the following two examples, *nunca* is in the preverbal slot and does not provide any newer information than the rest of the VP; neither is *nunca* the sole focus. But *nunca* does receive extra emphasis because it is repeated and because of typographic prominence (capitalization).

(56) El verdadero varón *NUNCA*, *NUNCA* dice no a un trago.

- (57) Pero *NUNCA, NUNCA, NUNCA* se *dice* de los cientos de millones que mueren de cáncer tratándose con medicina convencional, que la medicina convencional los mató...

In these phrases, the topic is the behavior of real men (56) and acceptable ideas regarding cancer (57). The comment for both is what should not be said. In both examples, the predicates comment on the already established topics and exhibits the classic topic-comment dynamic; thus, they are under predicate focus. Furthermore, the focus of the statements is not just the idea of never, but rather the entire predicate: whatever it is you should never say. While *nunca* is part of the collective predicate focus, the writer utilizes two focus markers, repetition and capitalization, to emphasize *nunca* more than the rest of the phrase.

Repetition is also seen in example (58), but here with a different effect.

- (58) *Siempre, siempre, siempre* lo dice.

Example (58) differs from (56) and (57) in that the adverb is the focus of the sentence. In (58) *siempre* is the only word in the sentence conveying new information; in fact, communicating the notion of *siempre* is the main purpose of (58). The previous sentences in the paragraph concern the many compliments a man regularly tells his girlfriend. Example (58) uses the direct object pronoun *lo* to refer to a specific, previously discussed compliment. Although *siempre* is in the unmarked position, it is the focus and new information communicated in the utterance due to the repetition and the expression of discourse old information.

Marked Slot; preverbal

When adverbs are in the preverbal marked slot (preceding the modified verb, separated by some linguistic material) they still tend to be either predicate or sentence focus. One difference between adverbs in the unmarked slot and adverbs in the marked preverbal slot is that

adverbs in marked preverbal slots are more likely to receive extra emphasis. The following are examples of adverbs in the marked preverbal slot.

Example (59) comes from a paragraph that discusses a literary work of José Angel Agejas. The literary themes are quickly apparent and are maintained throughout the discourse.

- (59) El caso Agustín en sus múltiples variantes es y seguirá siendo una constante histórica. Una observación para el lector crítico de las ideas: *no siempre* una obra literaria - - lo mismo que una obra teatral o cinematográfica - *pretende* asentar una tesis a través de los personajes creados; *no siempre* el autor *ofrece* soluciones a problemas humanos: cuenta historias reales o inventadas, o entreveradas.

In addition, the notion that authors establish arguments through their characters and plots as well as provide solutions to human issues is presupposed. It is reasonable to suppose that the previous ideas are expected to be commonly understood because of the way *no siempre* contradicts the ideas, as if they were common knowledge. Therefore, *no siempre* is given prominence because it contrasts with the common assumptions about authors and literary works and is the newest information being provided. (The ideas regarding literary works providing arguments and offering solutions is presupposed). The lie test also highlights the newness of *no siempre*. “That’s not true.” “– Yes it is. Literary works don’t ALWAYS present arguments or solve issues.” Another reason why *no siempre* is emphasized is word order, a common focus marker. In this example, the adverb is in the marked preverbal position: adverb - subject - verb.

The next example (60) presents contrasting ideas about the need for an escape. The example is taken from an online blog post and comment.

- (60) [Original post] Pues en días acelerados como estos donde todos me parecen lunes ... aun sigo esperando que alguien me habra [*sic*] una ventana, así sea al simple sur, así

sea al olvidado norte, pero una ventana por donde escaparme, si... eso, ojalá llegara alguien y me abriera una ventana de escape.

[Comment] No es necesario escapar, *siempre* la vida te *ofrece* la oportunidad de mejorar, cambiar y avanzar, aunque en algunos momentos retrocedamos, las ventanas y las puertas te las da el alma.

The commenter's response revolves around the established topic of the desire for escape. Initially, they challenge the original writer's longing to escape by asserting that it is unnecessary (*No es necesario escapar*; topic-comment; predicate focus). Subsequently, they introduce their reasoning for their original comment; life always presents opportunities for improvement and change. This second clause contains new ideas that have not been discussed previously in the discourse, making it new information. The second clause is considered to be under sentence focus because none of its singular words or phrases are newer than the others. A plausible underlying question that could help highlight the sentence focus is "Why is escape not necessary?" The most likely answer would include the entire clause being discussed.

Example (61) is taken from a paragraph delving into the familial relationships of Jesus and the debate over whether Mary had other children, thus potentially making Jesus a brother. The writer firmly asserts the viewpoint that the Bible does not evade this question—he insists that Jesus did not have siblings. According to this perspective, Mary bore no other children; otherwise, they would have been referenced in narratives such as the wedding at Cana or the journey to Jerusalem, including the episode of finding Jesus in the temple. The preceding context of the paragraph clearly establishes the writer's perspective. Therefore, the statement containing *nunca* serves as a concise summary of the previously discussed viewpoints, reiterating background information, and stressing the absence of any indication in the Bible that Jesus had siblings who were Mary's biological children.

- (61) Es que no existe ningún hermano carnal de Jesús. Fijense bien: *Nunca* la Biblia *dice* que los hermanos de Jesús fueran hijos de María.

Like example (54), sentence (61) is made up of discourse old and hearer old information, but information is still being communicated; thus, something has to be under focus. The preceding phrase *Fíjense bien* indicates that what is going to be said next is important, and one could argue that the phrase could indicate that the following clause will be under sentence focus.

Determining the underlying question also suggests that sentence focus is at play in this sentence. A reasonable underlying question could be, “Why should one believe this?” Although the entire clause is the focus, *nunca* is given a bit of extra emphasis or salience due to its position in the marked slot.

In example (62) the preverbal adverb is separated from the modified verb by a prepositional phrase. The presence of an adverb, a prepositional phrase, and a direct object allows the sentence to be reordered in several ways to demonstrate how meaning and emphasis are affected by word order.

(62) el hermano Sergio Enriquez [*sic*] casi *siempre* en sus pedicas [*sic*] *menciona* al Hno. Otto.

Some of the alternative orderings are as follows (with normalized spelling):

- (a) Original: el hermano Sergio Enríquez casi **siempre** en sus prédicas **menciona** al Hno. Otto.
- (b) el hermano Sergio Enríquez casi **siempre menciona** al Hno. Otto en sus prédicas.
- (c) el hermano Sergio Enríquez en sus prédicas **menciona** casi **siempre** al Hno. Otto.
- (d) el hermano Sergio Enríquez **menciona** casi **siempre** al Hno. Otto en sus prédicas.
- (e) el hermano Sergio Enríquez **menciona** al Hno. Otto en sus prédicas casi **siempre**.
- (f) el hermano Sergio Enríquez en sus prédicas **menciona** al Hno. Otto casi **siempre**.

When the underlying questions and the lie test are applied, each of these sentences highlights different parts of the message in terms of new information and focus. When *casi siempre* is found at the end of an utterance, the underlying question is solely focused on the frequency with which Hno. Otto is mentioned, and therefore a case of argument focus; focus on *siempre*. But when *siempre* is in the preverbal unmarked slot it is part of predicate focus because it does not provide any exceptionally new information—instead the main focus is on often Hno. Otto is mentioned (the entire predicate included).

The variable position of the prepositional phrase is also interesting. The most natural, unmarked position for the prepositional phrase seems to be after the verb + direct object complex. This order seems the most natural because it is the least interrupting and requires the least amount of effort to follow the order of the utterance. But when the prepositional phrase is preverbal, it seems to carry more emphasis and importance in the sentence. *Hno. Otto* is the constant part of the focus. He is at the center of the new information being shared; what varies with the different orderings is whether he is the whole focus or sharing the focus with other pieces of information. When the other parts of the sentences are postverbal *Hno. Otto* seems to be part of a shared focus with other parts of the sentence, depending on their locations. Finally, the placement of the prepositional phrase in the original sentence is fronted and in a marked position. This fronting of the prepositional phrase displaces the adverbial phrase from its typical position directly preceding the modified verb, causing it to appear in a marked location. It is unclear whether both constituents were intended to be in marked slots, or if the prepositional phrase's placement affected the placement of the adverb and forced it to occupy the preverbal marked slot.

Marked Slot; postverbal

When adverbs are in the marked postverbal slot, two focus markers are at play. First, they are positioned in a marked position, and second, “elements that follow are emphasized” (Bolinger, 1991). Due to the influence of these focus markers, adverbs in the postverbal marked slot may be part of sentence, predicate, or argument focus, and also receive extra emphasis.

Example (63) illustrates how different focus markers interact and influence the meaning of the utterance.

- (63) El conocimiento científico da mayor satisfacción de las respuestas ofrecidas, mientras que el conocimiento cotidiano no *ofrece* respuestas satisfactoriamente *siempre*.

Earlier in the paragraph, the discourse establishes the topic of the discourse by repeatedly making comparisons *el conocimiento científico* and *el conocimiento cotidiano*. Furthermore, earlier in this particular sentence, the concept of providing satisfactory answers is introduced, rendering it discourse old information when it is reused later. Another important detail is the change of word choice, another focus marker. Earlier in the discourse, the speaker used the verb *dar* repeatedly, but in the analyzed sentence the verb is changed from *dar* to *ofrecer*. This subtle change indicates that the act of offering or giving is somewhat important. Finally, *siempre* is in the perceptibly most marked postverbal slot (the postverbal slot, separated by linguistic material). All these factors converge to underscore that *siempre* emerges as the focus of the utterance, and is the newest information being conveyed, thus making it the argument focus.

Both the lie test and the underlying questions support the above explanation regarding *siempre*. To defend its self from the lie test, one would have to respond, “It’s not a lie, SOMETIMES daily knowledge gives good answers.” And a plausible underlying question could be, “How often do you get good answers from daily knowledge?”

The next example, (64), is a copy of a customer service online chat:

- (64) por favor hola, he intentado instalarlo varias veces tanto el autocad 2013 (de esta web) como el 14 para 32 bits con windows xp y me *da error siempre*. no soporta xp?tiene q estar desconectado internet o el antivirus durante la instalacion?no sé que mas hacer...

What stands out in this example is the exasperation that is expressed and the contrast between *varias veces* and *siempre*. During the chat, the individual expressing the installation problem explains that no matter how many times she has tried to install auto cad 2013, she ALWAYS receives an error message. Contrast is an important part of information packaging, and in this example its effect on focus and emphasis is easily observed. A reasonable underlying question is, “What happens when you install it?” which would undoubtedly be answered with something similar to the clause *me da error siempre*. The underlying question-answer combo indicates that the clause is under sentence focus. Using the lie test also shows that the new information aligns with what is under focus. “That’s not true... it does not always give me an error, but most of the time it does.” The alignment of focus and new information cause the entire clause to be emphasized, but due to the placement of *siempre* in a marked slot, and its contrast with *varias veces*, it could be reasonably assumed that when read out loud *siempre* may receive a little more emphasis than the rest of the sentence.

Example (65) is a religious devotional, and the adverb is in the marked, postverbal slot.

- (65) Tienes que juntarte con gente que crea que Dios pueda hacer funcionar eso que no estaba funcionando, el parálitico no podía hacer nada solo, necesitaba que alguien lo llevara. El trabajo en equipo nos *da resultados siempre* y más cuando trabajamos con gente de fe.

The lie test clearly highlights what part of the sentence is hearer new: *siempre*. Imagine if someone responded to the speaker/writer by saying, “That’s not true!” The speaker would then have to clarify and say something along the lines of, “Yes it is, we always get good results when we work as a team,” or, “You’re right, team work isn’t always successful.” No matter the response, positive or negative, what becomes highlighted is how often they get (or don’t get) results when working in teams. The rest of the information being communicated in the sentence: getting good results and working in teams, is connected to previous ideas in the discourse, and it is presupposed that working in teams is beneficial. A possible underlying question that could be used to identify the focus of the sentence being analyzed is, “How often do you get results? — always”. Because the focus is on a singular argument, the adverb *siempre*, is argument focus. This is another example of the focus and new information aligning, except this time it is a singular argument. Due to the alignment of focus and new information on a singular argument, it seems apparent that *siempre* would be notably emphasized when vocalized.

Example (66) is similar to the previous sentence, but comes from someone’s personal blog:

- (66) La persona sincera *dice* la verdad *siempre*, en todo momento, aunque le cueste, sin temor al que dirán...

Siempre is postverbal, and when the lie test is used, it highlights how often a sincere person tells the truth. The prepositional phrase *en todo momento* that follows the main clause also emphasizes how frequently the truth is shared, further emphasizing that frequency is the new information being communicated. Furthermore, earlier in the passage the writer establishes that telling the truth is an important part of relationships, making the idea of telling the truth discourse old and hearer old information. They also explain that sincere people are kind and

conscious of others' feelings but do not let their friends cause harm to others. Therefore, the end of sentence (66) also contains discourse old and hearer old information. After the author establishes the two previous ideas, the above sentence is said, reiterating the main ideas (sincere people are kind and considerate and tell the truth) while emphasizing the importance of always telling the truth, no matter the circumstances or with whom you are talking. We have established that *siempre, en todo momento* is the new information being communicated. We can also determine the underlying question to identify the type of focus in this example. A reasonable underlying question could be, "So how often should I be telling the truth if I want to be a kind person? –Always". This is another example in which the focus and new information align, and it can be reasonably assumed *siempre* has extra emphasis.

Example (67) is interesting because *nunca* is not part of the focus, but still receives emphasis. The entire clause *que algo esté más evolucionado que otra cosa* is the focus of this sentence, making it sentence focus. Earlier in the text of example (67), the writer addresses genetics and intelligence and how they are connected. He continues to explore the connection and explains how there are genetic differences between ethnicities. Later, he connects these two ideas and hesitantly proposes that this could mean ethnicities have differing intelligence levels. He quickly adds that there are other factors that affect intelligence, but it is possible genetics is one. The writer includes the following sentence to clarify what he is NOT saying.

(67) Finalmente: a nivel internacional, ya no se *dice NUNCA* que algo esté más evolucionado que otra cosa.

Here, *nunca* receives emphasis, but the focus and new information being communicated is that one should not say, *que algo esté más evolucionado que otra cosa*. Due to *nunca*'s marked placement (postverbal) and being written in capital letters, it is logical to presume that when this

sentence is read aloud *nunca* it would receive more stress than the other parts of the sentence by means of an elevated pitch level. Another interesting feature of this sentence is that although *nunca* is in the marked postverbal slot, there is nowhere else for it to go. The phrase *ya no* solidifies the word order, forcing the adverb to be postverbal. Additionally, *nunca* is actually redundant. Earlier in the sentence, it is established through *ya no* that something no longer happens, or that people should never say certain things. *Nunca* emphasizes the negation, implying that something was never said anymore. The redundancy coupled with the position and capitalization of *nunca* gives it extra emphasis in this sentence.

In example (68) *nunca* is in the preverbal slot directly following the verb. This example comes from a blog post with advice for improving blogging websites.

(68) No *da nunca* una buena impresión un sitio abandonado, la información pierde frescura y confianza

At the beginning of the post, the author provides advice for what to do to improve your website if you have a blog; thus in the clause being analyzed, the reference to websites is discourse old information. The lie test highlights the entire predicate as the new information; “That’s not true, abandoned sites don’t always give impressions” and the underlying question indicates that predicate focus is present in this utterance; “What message does a bad website send? – It never gives a good impression.” This another example of the new information also being the focus.

Observing the patterns of adverbs in different positions, it appears that adverbs placed in marked slots receive greater emphasis compared to adverbs in the unmarked slot. Additionally, when an adverb is deemed new information and the focus in postverbal marked slots, the adverb tends to receive additional emphasis.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Limitations

This thesis specifically analyzed the effect of information packaging on the frequency-time adverbs *siempre* and *nunca*. The effect of information packaging on adverb position could be further studied by analyzing different types of adverbs, such as deictic time adverbs, adverbs of place, *-mente* adverbs etc., to determine whether the information packaging model is able to account for all frequency-time adverbs.

Another major limitation was the subjectivity of the theory that was used. When using tools such as the lie test and underlying question to help determine new information and the focus of the sentence, it is important to acknowledge that it is not always straightforward, and there can be multiple interpretations or perspectives. Different individuals may propose that the lie test highlights different parts of the utterance or a different question better illustrates what type of focus being used, based on their understanding of the context, discourse, and linguistic features present in the utterance. The answers to the lie tests, as well as the underlying questions I propose, represent what I perceive as the most reasonable interpretations of the text. However, it's important to acknowledge that others may interpret the texts differently. Tools such as the lie test, and underlying questions were crucial for the analysis of the data, but the assumptions of the author were not compared against native speaker intuition. It would be helpful to have a group of native speakers evaluate the analysis of the author to determine whether the assumptions reflect an accurate interpretation of the utterances being analyzed.

This study was also limited to written discourse. Using a corpus made up of verbal discourse, like Travis & Curnow, would allow prosody and stress, two important focus markers, to be analyzed as well. Although there are various limitations, this thesis highlights how the

information structure model can be used to describe and interpret the behavior of frequency-time adverbs, but more research can be done to determine the effect of information packaging on meaning and word order in relation to other adverbs and flexible constituents.

Furthermore, the corpus used includes any type of Spanish found on the internet. There is no way to know whether the writers are native speakers or second language learners. There is also no way to know the writers' education levels. Using a corpus is helpful because it allows researchers to analyze Spanish in real life scenarios, but there is no way to ensure where the Spanish comes from.

Conclusion

Through a meticulous examination of adverb placement in different linguistic contexts, the study has shed light on the nuanced relationship between adverb positioning and the focus of utterances. The research has established that the unmarked, preverbal position is the most common placement for the adverbs *siempre* and *nunca*, and where adverbs typically function as part of sentence focus or predicate focus without receiving undue emphasis. In contrast, marked positions within the verb phrase tend to either highlight the adverbs and make them the argument focus, or they are part of a sentence with predicate focus. In contexts when the adverb is part of sentence focus or predicate focus, it can also be considered new information. When whatever the new information is, be that the adverb, the predicate, or the entire sentence, it seems that adverbs in those setting are more salient, or emphasized. These distinctions in adverb placement reflect the speaker's intention to emphasize certain elements of the discourse and convey specific meanings. Furthermore, there are unique cases in which adverbs in the unmarked slot are the sole focus or receive extra emphasis, or adverbs in the marked slots are not part of the focus. In these cases, other focus markers and information packaging strategies are used to highlight the focus.

This study contributes to our comprehension of information packaging and emphasis in Spanish discourse. The findings underscore the importance of considering word order and its implications for communication when analyzing adverb positioning. Overall, this research provides valuable insights into the interplay between adverb placement, information structure, and discourse focus in Spanish linguistics.

Appendix

Table 1:*Possible Subj + Obj + Adv + V word orders*

No expressed subject: 6 possibilities	Expressed subject: 24 possibilities
Obj + Adv + V	Subj + Obj + Adv + V
Obj + V + Adv	Subj + Obj + V + Adv
Adv + V + Obj	Subj + V + Obj + Adv
Adv + Obj + V	Subj + V + Adv + Obj
V + Adv + Obj	Subj + Adv + V + Obj
V + Obj + Adv	Subj + Adv + Obj + V
	Obj + Subj + Adv + V
	Obj + Subj + V + Adv
	Obj + V + Subj + Adv
	Obj + V + Adv + Subj
	Obj + Adv + V + Subj
	Obj + Adv + Subj + V
	V + Obj + Adv + Sub
	V + Obj + Sub + Adv
	V + Subj + Adv + Obj
	V + Subj + Obj + Adv
	V + Adv + Obj + Sub
	V + Adv + Sub + Obj
	Adv + Obj + Sub + V
	Adv + Obj + V + Sub
	Adv + Subj + Obj + V

No expressed subject: 6 possibilities	Expressed subject: 24 possibilities
	Adv + Subj + V + Obj
	Adv + V + Obj + Sub
	Adv + V + Sub + Obj

Table 2:

dar & decir and semantically similar verbs' adverb-verb order tendencies

Verb:	Frequency:	Verb:	Frequency:
<i>Dar</i>	42	<i>Decir</i>	31
<i>Ofrecer</i>	351	<i>Expresar</i>	699
<i>Entregar</i>	625	<i>Declarar</i>	976
<i>Regalar</i>	1420	<i>Mencionar</i>	1102

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