

VERSIONES AS A COMPLEX LINGUISTIC DEVICE, ACCORDING  
TO THE CONCEPT OF GRAMMARING, AND SOME  
REFLECTIONS ON ITS APPLICABILITY TO THE TEACHING  
OF SPANISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

*This paper presents and describes a complex linguistic device called versiones based mainly on the concept of grammaring, as proposed by Larsen-Freeman. The paper also reflects on the design of these versiones and their application in the Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) class. This device is primarily modal although it is also closely linked to the temporal, and to some semantic and morphosyntactic aspects and is characterised by the possibility of enabling any message to be analyzed systematically from a total of five basic points of view each of which is associated exclusively and permanently with certain Spanish verbal forms. Some examples will also be provided in order to shed some light on the multiple possibilities offered by the approach.*

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KEY WORDS: grammaring, semantics, morphosyntax, temporality, modality, SFL

## RESUMEN

*En este artículo se presenta y se describe un dispositivo lingüístico complejo que se denomina versiones y que parte, entre otros, del concepto de grammaring propuesto por Larsen-Freeman. Asimismo, se reflexiona acerca del diseño de dichas versiones y de su aplicación en las clases de español como lengua extranjera (ELE). Dicho dispositivo posee un carácter primordialmente modal aunque también está estrechamente vinculado con lo temporal, con lo semántico y con ciertos aspectos morfosintácticos, y se caracteriza por permitir el análisis sistemático de cualquier mensaje desde un total de cinco puntos de vista básicos, que, en cada caso, están asociados de forma exclusiva y permanente a determinadas formas verbales del español. Asimismo, se ofrecen algunos ejemplos que arrojan alguna luz sobre las notables posibilidades que, en general, puede ofrecer tal planteamiento.*

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**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *grammaring*, semántica, morfosintaxis, temporalidad, modalidad, ELE

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to propose and to describe a complex linguistic device originally designed for the teaching-learning of Spanish as an L2 and which is derived from certain grammatical characteristics of a modal nature, closely linked to temporal aspects, of this language. In this sense, the aim is, firstly, to explain, from several different perspectives, the strictly and intrinsically linguistic character of this tool, called *versiones*, and, then, to reflect on its configuration and on the reliability and systematicity that it can offer when applied to the academic context of language teaching referred to above. The device constitutes an articulated mechanism which allows any message to be analyzed from five basic points of view associating each of them permanently and unequivocally to certain Spanish verbal forms.

### *Contextualization of the paper*

The general approach applied in this paper is part of a global project that we began to develop several years ago and that we aim to further advance in the future. Hence, we consider it appropriate to provide first a brief summary of this project.

Hinkel (2005: 786) states that the role of strategies in grammar teaching has focused more on the teaching strategies of the teacher than on the grammar learning strategies of the learner. Hence, in order to address this situation, whose description we are of course in complete agreement with, it seemed to us of interest to propose the approach of Larsen-Freeman, who puts forward the concept of *grammaring*, which, in her own words, is the ability to use grammar structures accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately. She also points out that it should be acknowledged that grammar can be productively regarded as a fifth skill, not only as an area of knowledge (2003: 143). And this is precisely the starting point of our project in general and, of course, in the specific case of the *versiones* presented here.

Therefore, the consequence derived directly from this approach is that it is essential to organize the description of the grammar, as regards its teaching, on the basis of the meaningful groupings offered by the structures by virtue of their functional basis. This is the position of numerous researchers: one of the major issues in second language acquisition (SLA) research today is whether L2 knowledge is best characterized in terms of rules which govern the behavior of specific

items –as claimed by many cognitive theories of L2 acquisition and linguistics (Ellis, 1994: 408). It is, indeed, Larsen-Freeman herself who offers a good example in this respect: a formal description of the phrasal verbs in English based on their grammatical configuration and, thus, on their functional capacity and syntagmatic arrangement (1991: 282-283). As far as we are concerned, we have already indicated our position on this matter in Martínez Camino, Pérez Saiz and Labrador Gutiérrez (2005) or in Pérez Saiz (2006). It should also be noted that, subsequently, the confirmation of all this approach on our part took an important step forward with Pérez Saiz (2009).

As for the goals we have set for the immediate future, one of our main interests is focused primarily on developing a thorough pedagogical application of this approach. And all this, to paraphrase Hinkel, so that the teacher's strategies for teaching grammar focus primarily on the student's grammar-learning strategies and not on any other aspect.

#### *A specific case; cuando*

At this point, a specific example is proposed, taken from Spanish grammar, that can help to illustrate the advantages of the proposal described herein. The example is a case in which an independent variable is given in a complex sentence whose subordinate proposition is introduced and articulated through the subordinate conjunction *cundo* ('when'), one of the most commonly used subordinating conjunctions in the Spanish language and, therefore, one of the most frequently discussed in the SFL class, for which reasons it has been chosen as an example for the case in hand.

Regarding the descriptive analysis performed on this subordinate conjunction by a significant sample of Spanish as L2 manuals, they almost all agree that *cundo*, among other temporal conjunctions, introduces the subordinate verb in the indicative for present and past but in the subjunctive for future (Torrens Álvarez, 2001: 106; Castro, 2008: 84-85; Millares & Centellas, 1999: 184; Gelabert *et al.*, 2003: 109; Sánchez Lobato *et al.*, 1998: 101). This point of view is also shared by Medina Montero (2001: 116-117), who, moreover, qualifies his description by associating the indicative result to actions which have already taken place and the subjunctive to those that are yet to be realized.

As for the analysis carried out by specialized grammars with respect to the functioning of *cundo*, the description, as might logically be expected, follows

the same lines as those outlined in the manuals. Both Sastre (1997: 151-153) and Barbero and San Vicente (2006: 349-350) report that *cuando* can be constructed in the indicative or the subjunctive mood: in the first case, according to these authors, it is constructed when experienced or habitual actions in the present or the past are expressed; it is constructed in the subjunctive when future actions or situations are expressed with respect to the moment of speaking.

Borrego *et al.* (1986: 137, 139-140), meanwhile, indicate that temporal clauses that refer to future actions take the subjunctive and that they can even take it in the present, but only when you wish to emphasize the non-specificity of the time reference. Navas Ruiz (1986: 96) states that, if the action is given as real or as having taken place, the verb in the subordinate clause is in the indicative but if the action is given as hypothetical, it is in the subjunctive. In the same vein, Martinell (1985: 48-49) notes that temporal clauses are in the indicative tense while they state real facts which occur in the past, in a present habitual or at the same time of the emission, whereas the subjunctive is used when describing actions pending realization.

In any case, the momentary conclusion that can be reached after this long journey through the manuals and scientific literature is that, from a grammatical point of view, the subordinate verb introduced by *cuando* is generally presented in the indicative, whether in present or past, whereas if the message refers to the future, the verb is offered in the subjunctive; that is, the subjunctive is seen here on the whole as a minority option, somewhat secondary and one could almost say, exceptional.

However, of all the works consulted, there are two that stand out for their detailed analysis of the subject. Matte Bon (1995a: 62), in an ambitious and comprehensive text, conducts a study on the matter at hand which is considerably more thorough than the other references mentioned above since he points out that, in the contexts in which *cuando* is used, there are two situations related with the subjunctive: the present subjunctive must be used for subordinate clauses that define something in the future and, on the other hand, the imperfect subjunctive for those that define something in the future with respect to the time of the utterance if this has a hypothetical nature.

García Santos (1993: 88), meanwhile, states that in cases in which present, past and atemporality are expressed with particles such as *cuando*, *una vez que* or *hasta que*, indicative tenses are used; in contrast, he points out in the case of the expression of the future, subjunctive tenses are used, specifically, *cante*: *Cuando*

vuelva *el año que viene, hablaremos* ‘When you *come back* next year, we will talk’; *cantara: Dijo que, cuando fuera a casa, pasaría por el bar* ‘He said that when he *got* back home, he should drop by at the bar’, and *hubiera cantado: No lo tendría que haber enviado hasta que lo hubieran visto todos* ‘He shouldn’t have sent it until they *had* all *seen* it’.

However, although these two approaches in particular are of great merit, might not another simpler and more systematic and coherent way be found of describing what they describe without having to renounce the objective of thoroughness? Might not an alternative form be found of explaining this type of behavior which is not based solely on abstract concepts such as “the non-specificity of the time reference”, “actions pending realization” or “something in the future with respect to the time of the utterance if this has a hypothetical nature”, or one which were not based on associations so terminologically contradictory as “use the present subjunctive for subordinate clauses that define something in the future”? These questions will be answered in the final part of the paper. First, however, certain steps must be taken in order to reach this conclusion.

## MODALITY

Modality is a grammatical concept whose formal description has always proved rather difficult to tackle. This is due to its slippery and kaleidoscopic nature, which springs from the multiplicity of grammatical aspects with which it is related and from the enormous and heterogeneous number of areas it embraces.

To begin with, it is necessary to establish the differences between modality and verb mood, especially when taking as a fundamental reference the case of the Spanish language. It seems clear that modality is characterized by articulating what has been termed by many authors as the psychic attitude of the speaker, that is, the human nature which, in any of its facets, can be detected in every message. In contrast with this wide-ranging reference, mood appears only as one of many possible grammatical manifestations of modality: mood is merely a grammatical category of verbs (Collentine, 1995: 123) which reacts without surpassing the strict limits of verbal flexion (López Rivera, 2002: 43) by reason of the psychological posture manifested by the subjects that intervene in the communicative process. At the same time, however, on many occasions, the instances of the subjunctive mood, which is the one which shows the greatest contrast with the indicative mood –as

seen in the case of Spanish in the study of *cuando* presented above–, possess a significant syntactic component since it is an essentially dependent mood and lays out its tenses in accordance with the main verb that governs it (Vargas-Barón, 1953: 419).<sup>1</sup> In any case, mood goes nowhere near exhausting the expressive possibilities contemplated by modality since it forms part of the latter but is also largely superseded by it.

Other crucial concepts linked directly to modality are tense and aspect. According to Chung and Timberlake (2007: 202), these are, together with mood, the indispensable categories in a basic utterance that refers to an event: for these authors, the tense locates the time of the event, the aspect characterizes the internal temporal structure of the event and the mood describes the actuality of the event in terms such as possibility, necessity and desirability.

It is all, then, a question of modality and, among other things, of the modal contents defined by Palmer: speculative, deductive or assumptive; reported or sensory; permissive, obligative or commissive and abilitive or volitive (2001: 22). Many are the authors who, following these lines, have linked modality to meanings, behind which are also found attitudes, as varied as ‘desire’, ‘frequency-punctuality’, ‘personal opinion’, ‘certainty’, ‘doubt’, ‘emotion’, ‘necessity’ and ‘obligation’, with which an action occurs, the ‘probability’, ‘possibility’ or ‘impossibility’ in which this action will take place (Lyons, 1971, 1977; Hengeveld, 2004), without forgetting all of the possible structural configurations that each of these might in turn present. In other words, up to this point, modality may be considered as a semantic notion, manifested in all parts-of-speech, a valid cross-language grammatical category that can be the subject of a typological study (Palmer, 2001: 1). In keeping with all of the above, modality can be understood as a concept that takes in all of those realizations that manifest any trace of himself/herself or of the listener that the speaker might leave in a given message.

Modality, in this sense, can be considered equivalent to the *modus* that, in the specific case of Spanish, both for Alarcos (1999: 187) and the Real Academia Española together with the Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española

<sup>1</sup> Of course this does not always occur with the subjunctive: *Quizá esté ahora en el examen* ‘Maybe he’s in the exam now’ (Seco, 1982: 158-159); *No te detengas* ‘Don’t stop’ (Alonso, 1974: 128); however, it is far more commonly found in a context of syntactic dependency (Ridruejo, 1999: 3220; Seco, 1982: 159; Alonso, 1974: 129).

(2009: 3114),<sup>2</sup> to name two representative examples,<sup>3</sup> draw on the classic distinction between *dictum* and *modus*: *dictum* is understood, in both cases, as the content of what is communicated and *modus* is considered as the way in which this content is presented in keeping with the psychic attitude of the one who presents it. Nevertheless, apart from the results obtained by Alarcos concerning moods, in the case of Alarcos, precisely in his zeal to determine the verb moods found in Spanish, to which we will have time and need to return to below, it is clear that *modus* is related here to all those linguistic procedures that allow the *dictum* of the messages to be associated with the expression of contents that show the above mentioned attitude: that which reveals the human and subjective nature of the communicator (RAE & AALE, 2009: 3113).

However, it is essential at this point to set some limits to this vast area which, as has been pointed out, modality occupies on the basis of any of the concepts analyzed so far. This is even truer when considering that the main aim of this paper consists in presenting a device, that of *versiones*, which of course maintains a close relation with this modality but which at the same time, still needs to be specified since, as pointed out above, it is linked closely and directly to the verbal category. In this sense, it would seem appropriate here to turn to certain approaches proposed by various authors who, no doubt offer a wider and more complete perspective on this matter.

One of these is Hengeveld (2004: 1193, 1196-97), who distinguishes various types of modality, though the only one that fits the mentioned conditions is epistemic modality,<sup>4</sup> since this is concerned with what is known about the actual world proposition-oriented modality, which affects the propositional content of an utterance representing the speaker's views and beliefs, and concerns the specification of a degree of commitment of the speaker towards the proposition he is presenting, all of which is susceptible to be expressed through the mentioned verbal morphology. In a similar vein are Chung and Timberlake (2007: 242), who

<sup>2</sup> From this point, RAE & AALE.

<sup>3</sup> The second is representative in view of its institutional standing and requires no further explanation; as for the first, it is of relevance in this context as, in the second half of the 20th century, Alarcos was the one who introduced structuralism in the Spanish linguistics panorama, and this approach is directly related, as will be seen, with some of the basic references proposed forthwith.

<sup>4</sup> It does not seem to be possible to appreciate the conditions mentioned above in the other types of modality distinguished by Hengeveld: facultative, deontic, volitive, and evidential (2004: 1193).



speak of the epistemic mode that characterizes the actuality of an event in terms of alternative possible situations or worlds of an event. According to them, in a point in time, there is an actual world and there is also a number of alternative worlds that might exist in this time: thus, in a certain sense, it may be considered that there is always an infinite number of such worlds. There is also a terminological coincidence and a conceptual proximity noticeable in authors such as Ridruejo (1999: 3213-14) or as the RAE & AALE (2009: 3116), since they all speak of epistemic modality for those cases in Spanish in which degrees of certainty-uncertainty are expressed on the reality of what has been stated which, as indicated above, is the type of values which is susceptible to be considered by means of verbal morphosyntactics.

It is also worth turning here, as will be seen later, to the systemic-functional linguistics of Halliday.<sup>5</sup> The first thing that should be pointed out is that the interpersonal function is the one which, from among those distinguished by the author, is the most directly related to the expression of the *modus* or modality, as it has been understood up to now, a function which defines the different roles that can be assumed by the speaker in the speech and the options that the emitter offers to the listener (Halliday, 1970: 325).

Taking all this into account, Halliday (1985: 75) considers that a message consists of what he terms *mood* and *modality*, proposing the two concepts in a far more specific and restricted manner than the almost unfathomable *modus* or modality that have thus far been described. Mood is, in this context, the combination of a subject element with a finite element, whose function is to anchor the proposition by means of a temporal reference in order to then be able to extend the references argued to it. It means past, present or future at the moment of speaking: it is time relative to 'now'. As for modality, Halliday describes it as a tangible and determinable phenomenon from the grammatical point of view which refers to the area of meaning that lies between yes and no, the intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity. Modality, at the same time, is divided, according to this point of view, into two types: modalisation, which takes in the expressions of probability and usuality, and modulation, which includes obligation and inclination (Halliday, 1985: 335).

<sup>5</sup> This is the reference alluded to earlier with respect to the justification for outlining Alarcos's approach in the paper; this author was, no doubt, a true precursor of SFL.

Naturally, the expression of modality, in the systemic-functional sense, can be articulated quite differently in each language through diverse procedures even though this limits considerably the field of action with respect to what is proposed by other approaches. In the case of Spanish, which is the language under study here, this may be proposed through units of an adverbial nature, which Halliday denominates *modal adjuncts* and which he describes as those which are related specifically to the meaning of the finite verbal operators, expressing probability: Probablemente iremos al zoo ‘We will *probably* go to the zoo’, usuality: Siempre tuvimos una casita de campo ‘We *always* had a cottage in the country’, obligation, inclination or time (1985: 82), that is, words specialized in contextualizing semantically the messages in any of these lines.

However, these same contents can also be articulated through the use of verbs, belonging, in each case, to quite diverse grammatical typologies, loaded semantically with this type of contents, whether in the context of simple sentences: Tengo que ir a la clase de matemáticas (obligation) ‘I have to go to Maths class’; Pepe puede estudiar en esa universidad (possibility)<sup>6</sup> ‘Pepe can study in that university’; Suelo leer un libro por la noche (usuality)<sup>7</sup> ‘I usually read a book at night’; Quiero un helado (inclination) ‘I want an ice-cream’.

As for the expression of this type of contents by means of syntactic complexity, which López Rivera denominates *modal verbs* (2002: 44-47), Halliday himself proposes the concept of the *grammatical metaphor*, which he understands as the mechanism that construes additional layers of meaning and wording and, in order to capture this layering in this grammatical analysis, one or more additional structural layers are added (2004: 626): Puede que tu primo venga esta noche (probability) ‘It is possible that your cousin comes tonight’ or ‘Your cousin might come tonight’; Deseo que haga buen tiempo mañana (inclination)<sup>8</sup> ‘I hope the weather’s nice tomorrow’; Es necesario coger ese autobús (obligation)<sup>9</sup> ‘We

<sup>6</sup> The last two examples represent here the modal verbs of a periphrastic type with verbs in infinitive (Gómez Torrego, 1999: 3377-3378).

<sup>7</sup> It should be clarified here that both *siempre*, in *Siempre tuvimos una casita de campo*, and the expression *soler* + infinitive in the last example, as opposed to what occurs in the Halliday’s SFL, are considered by current Spanish grammars as expressions of an aspectual nature (RAE & AALE, 2009: 2140-2149).

<sup>8</sup> The verbs in *Quiero un helado* and *Deseo que haga buen tiempo mañana* represent those which are not of a periphrastic nature but rather have a syntactic behavior more proper of full verbs.

<sup>9</sup> Both *Puede que tu primo venga esta noche* and the last example, *Es necesario coger ese autobús*,

*have to take this bus*’; Yo creo *que va a llover* (probability)<sup>10</sup> ‘*I think it’s going to rain*’.

### *Verbal deixis*

Nevertheless, it is not possible to proceed without first bringing into play a crucial concept in this reflective process: verbal deixis. The *demonstratio ad oculos*, that is, of the three generic types of deixis distinguished by Bühler, this is the one which is applied when it comes to identifying the space-time context created by the speech act and by the participation of its emitter (1979: 122-126).

In the case of Spanish grammar, for RAE & AALE (2009: 1673-1674), verbal flexion expresses in Spanish number, person, tense and aspect. The first two speak of the subject, the mode in which the attitude of the speaker takes shape and the way of commenting on the message given by him, and the tense is a question of deixis which, in brief, is the location of the events in relation to the moment of speaking. In the case of Rojo and Veiga (1999: 2889), temporal deixis is defined as the origin with respect to which processes expressed verbally are temporally oriented.

For Halliday, deixis is, in general, the expression of a reference point in the “you and me, here, now” of the speech situation –that is, it means that the proposition is deemed as valid relative to that situation (1993: 39-40). Hence, deixis is clearly positioned in the bounds of the interpersonal function as it is proposed as a complex resource, taking in a large number of grammatical aspects, which allows a certain message to be situated in a specific time and place, and all of this in direct relation with the above-mentioned psychic attitude of the speaker. Hence, deixis may be considered as the great catalyst of mood and modality from the point of view of SFL. At this point, however, as has been pointed out, it is necessary to focus specifically on verbal deixis. Moreover, restricting the scope of the options of implementation of modality and all of the contents derived from it to the strictly linguistic level of the verb (which is precisely our aim here), it becomes essential to consider this concept. In this theoretical framework, verbal

illustrate cases of predicative constructions of a non-modal type.

<sup>10</sup> This is an example of what Halliday terms *metaphors of modality*, with which the speaker’s opinion regarding the probability that his observation is valid is coded not as a modal element within the clause but as a separate projecting clause in a hypotatic clause complex (1985: 332).

deixis is either a) modality or b) primary tense (Halliday & James, 1993: 39).<sup>11</sup> As for deixis by primary tense (temporal deixis), “the validity is made relative to the time of speaking, and this is in terms of orientation, past, present or future” (Halliday & James, 1993: 40). In this sense, the primary tense is that which functions as the head, an element of the verbal group which “expresses past, present or future tense in relation to the speech event” (Butler, 2003: 487). In any case, the reference here is to the finite element of the mood seen above which, in combination with a fixed element, anchors the propositions by means of a time reference. And this reference is made because it is here that the deictic force of the verb is centred. When this finite element is applied in a sentence, that is, when it is shown in order to be interpreted by the speaker in a given context, the first function it fulfills is to act as the primary tense, that is, to situate a specific message within one of the basic parameters of the possible points of view from which a message can be proposed. These parameters have, of course, traditionally been organized as present, past and future. However, after this first effect, each verb form, incorporated already into one of these basic viewpoints, will consolidate in each case its own specific references with the specific use which is being made of it from among the possibilities it offers. This is then a case of secondary, tertiary references, etc., references that may be based on the differences that arise, for example, without going beyond the bounds of the past, between *cantaba*, *canté* or *he cantado*, that is, those expressive nuances required in each context in accordance with the communicative needs. In this way, each of these verbal forms will assume, at first, the role of primary tense—in the above example, the past tense—and then, in a second instance, the message will be interpreted by means of the specific information provided by each verb form in each case (usuality for *cantaba*, past action in the case of *canté* and past action before the present for *he cantado*).

Focussing once and for all the analysis of this paper on Spanish grammar, Rojo and Veiga (1999: 2900-2901) speak of straightforward uses for simple form of the indicative, of *indicative 0*; that is of those forms of indicative that do not add any modal shade of meaning of those obtainable by means of a process of dislocation. They also point out that the three simplest realizations of temporal content, those assumed by the straightforward uses, uses which have a direct rela-

<sup>11</sup> A combination in which, in the case of the flexive verbal forms of Spanish, as we have seen above, the morpheme of person must be included.

tion with the primary tenses mentioned above, are those which consist in a simple orientation directly measured from the point of origin; that is the forms *canté*, *canto* and *cantaré* according to the primary temporal orientation directly focused from the centre of the references of the system. From this perspective then, these are the basic realizations of temporal content, expressible by the three simple forms mentioned, realizations which are perfectly recognizable in circumstances of total syntactic independence and without the need therefore for any other type of temporal indicator in the context.

Apparently, a system of three primary tenses

At this point, however, it must be noted that a large part of the semantic values of modality, in the systemic-functional system, mentioned thus far, that is, obligation, inclination, usuality and probability, the real ‘other half’ of primary tenses in verbal deixis, can no longer be expressed linguistically using only the grammatical possibilities of the Spanish verb system. This is the case of modulation as a whole, that is, of obligation and inclination, which, as seen in the proposed examples, can be expressed by means of modal adjuncts or through a certain special type of verbs but never exclusively by means of the verbal morphological system referred to here. Modalisation, on the other hand, paints a quite different picture. As for usuality, this is expressible through strictly morphological means but only through a single specific verb form, *cantaba*; thus, in a message like *Pedro estaba en la universidad* ‘Pedro was at the university’ –as opposed to the sentence originally proposed for the past: *Pedro estuvo en la universidad*–, the idea being expressed is that the action of being, in the past, by Pedro, is habitual and, to express this idea, it is necessary only to propose the verbal form *estaba*.

As regards probability, the other semantic option of modalisation, this is a completely different case since this is susceptible to be expressed by means of primary tenses, that is, through strictly morphological means; without going any further, in the case outlined above, through the form *cantaré*: *Pedro estará en tu fiesta* ‘Pedro will be at your party’. In any case, it has been seen up to now that despite everything, past and future, as basic viewpoints, as primary tenses, are not totally comparable. The present and the past make up what, according to Lyons, can be denominated the points of view of factivity, that is, those that propose systematically communicative situations in which the speaker is committed to

the truth of the proposition (1977: 794), all of this due to the fact that these are the ones that propose actions as being subject to direct experience. In contrast, the future shapes a reality which is always exposed to some degree of uncertainty since it is, by definition, systematically situated in a hypothetical context and thus, also according to several authors, this is a non-factive viewpoint, in which the predicator commits the speaker to neither the truth nor the falsity of the proposition expressed by its complement clause (Lyons, 1977: 795; Hengeveld, 2004: 1196, and, even, Chung & Timberlake, 2007: 242).

In any case, according to this threefold approach and returning to the perspective of SFL, the specific proposal of a message by means of a verb with a mood whose finite element is specified in one of these primary tenses automatically articulates the rest of the information that may revolve around this message, since the above-mentioned primary tenses form a closed system of grammatically coherent opposition. Hence, for example, if we have a message in the present such as this one: *Pedro está en casa* ‘Pedro is at home’, we will be systematically in a position to situate actions prior to this one in the past: *Pedro estuvo en la universidad* ‘Pedro was at the university’, and, similarly, to situate subsequent actions in a future proposed as such from this initially proposed present: *Pedro estará en tu fiesta* ‘Pedro will be at your party’.

It is true that, as indicated above, contributions can be made to this situating of the action through the use of operators such as *ahora*, *ayer* or *mañana* but the morphological capacity of the verbs, in this case *está*, *estuvo* and *estará*, is, in any case, more than sufficient to fulfill this mission in the main part, a mission which is no other than that of proposing themselves as primary tenses.

Apparently, a system of four primary tenses

There are many authors who, like Rojo and Veiga (1999: 2901), on addressing the morphological analysis of *cantaría*, associate it automatically with hypotactic periods linked to conditionality, that is to messages organized on the basis of complex clauses such as: *Iría a tu casa si tú quisieras* ‘I would go to your house if you wanted me to’. Nevertheless, there are other specialists who offer a perspective from which it is perfectly possible to include *cantaría* in the same descriptive dynamic as the three primary tenses which have just been described linking the said verb form to the category of simple clauses. This is the case of Chung and Timber-

lake (2007: 243), who point out that many languages do not distinguish morphologically between future tense and potential (*irrealis* mood), although, in those that do differentiate this, the future is used for events that appear likely to occur and the *irrealis*, for events that are potentially possible but not certain. In keeping with this idea, this degree of uncertainty, that is, the rate of probability of its effective realization may be greater or lesser and this is, in reality, regulated by two future tenses, not by one. The first form expresses probability: *Pedro estará en tu fiesta* ‘Pedro will be at your party’. And, to express only possibility, that is, a lower probability, only the verb form needs to be changed to obtain this other form of the future: *Pedro estaría en tu fiesta* ‘Pedro would be at your party’.

So far, then the momentary situation described might be summarized as follows:

TABLE 1. The system of four primary tenses

POINTS OF VIEW		PRIMARY TENSES	
FACTIVITY	Present		<i>Pedro está en la universidad</i> ‘Pedro is at the university’
	Past		<i>Pedro estuvo/estaba/ha estado en la universidad</i> ‘Pedro was/has been at the university’
NON-FACTIVE	Future	+ Probable	<i>Pedro estará en tu fiesta</i> ‘Pedro will be at your party’
		– Probable	<i>Pedro estaría en tu fiesta</i> ‘Pedro would be at your party’

Hence, the element that separates these two verbal forms is the degree of probability of the fulfillment of the proposed intentions: the former shows greater expectations of realization than the latter (Losada Durán, 2000: 123); that is, the form *cantaría* is susceptible to be used to indicate the verbal content not as something real but as something possible (Alarcos, 1984: 112-113).

Therefore, the verbal deixis of these verb forms *cantaré* and *cantaría* is articulated, on the one hand, by primary tenses, but on the other, according to Halliday, also by modality through modalisation and, more specifically, in its facet of the expression of probability. This means that conjugation can, at this point, accommodate both aspects of grammar or at least is in a position to be able to provide simultaneously information equivalent to both. To describe more specifically the specific situation posed by *cantaré/cantaría* but also that which derives in gen-

eral from the *versiones*, André Martinet's concept of *amalgamation* (1978: 127) can be used; that is, the situation where two meanings that coexist in a statement, on the one hand, verbal form deixis by primary tense and on the other by modality, associate their meanings in such a way that the result cannot be analyzed in successive segments. This would appear to be confirmed by Losada Durán when he states that the futures –referring to *cantaré* and *cantaría*– possess two fundamental components, which he calls time references and modal values (2000: 105). Similarly, this approach clearly illustrates the idea of meaningful groupings articulated through rules of a structural type which control the behavior of a specific grammatical item (Ellis, 1994: 408), without forgetting that of grammaring of Larsen-Freeman (2003: 143), basic ideas which paved the way for the present theoretical development.

Definitively, a system of five primary tenses

Thus, up to this point, it may be stated that, from the broad spectrum of meanings outlined at the beginning of the paper which could be attributed to *modus* or modality, in this widest and most general sense, Spanish verbal conjugation on its own can only express those that are related with certainty, represented here by the primary tenses of the past and the present; frequency/punctuality, assumed by the opposition between certain verb forms only in the past: *cantaba/canté* or *cantaba/he cantado*; probability, expressed through the form *cantaré*; possibility, articulated by means of the form *cantaría*. However, the question is whether there exists a signifier that fits in with these grammatical parameters and which expresses 'impossibility' as opposed to 'probability'. Alarcos states, with respect to this, that there are three different forms in which, in his view, mood (understood here as the grammatical category of verbs in a syntactic aspect of subordination, not as defined in the S-F paradigm) is grammatically configured in Spanish once the idea of *modus* and *dictum* have been applied to the linguistic reality: for this author, either the facts are proposed as real from the point of view of the emitter of the message or they are proposed as feasible provided that certain circumstances are fulfilled or the above-mentioned facts are posed as obviously contrafactual. Hence, he identifies the first type of mood with the indicative, understood as the area covered by the verb forms *cantas*, *cantabas* and *cantaste*; the second with what he denominates the conditioned mood, which includes the verb forms *cantarás* and *cantarías*,



so that he confirms the system of four primary tenses proposed above; finally, he associates the subjunctive with the mood of fiction and unreality (Alarcos, 1999: 192-193). However, the four points of view specified thus far are characterized, as has been pointed out, by being able to arise in the context of the simple statement so that the subjunctive does not serve as a channel for expressing unreality since, in general, except in combination with certain adverbials which make it possible, as outlined at the beginning of this paper, in this syntactic context it is not possible to propose messages with the verb in this mood: \**José tenga un coche azul*.

Hence, the way to manage to configure and describe the fifth version of this complex linguistic tool described thus far will be different and will thus, for reasons which will become clear forthwith, result in certain characteristic realizations of subordinate conditional propositions by means of the conjunction *si*.

Of the three conditional forms that can be introduced by the use of this conjunction, the *Nueva gramática de la lengua española* (RAE & AALE, 2009: 3573) refers to the so-called unreal conditional form, associated with the proposal of a contrafactual inference, that is, with those situations that contradict a given state of events. The example given here is this one: *Si se lo hubieran explicado, lo habrían entendido* 'If they had explained it, they would have understood it' (2009: 1795, 3570-3571, 3573). This hypothetical expression is closely related to the idea seen above of alternative possible situations (Hengeveld, 2004: 1193) and, specially, related to the idea of the infinite number of possible worlds. Similarly, this contrafactual inference offered by the unreal conditional form is related to what Lyons, from his general perspective, calls contra-factive communicative situations, whose proposal commits the speaker not to the truth but to the falsity of the proposition expressed by one or more of its constituent clauses (1977: 795).

It is easy then to reach the conclusion that the verb form *habrían entendido* of the example is providing a totally different viewpoint from the rest of the viewpoints seen so far since, with it, contradiction is encountered between a proven fact, which, continuing with the same example could be translated, in keeping with the context in which it is found, as 'no lo entendieron' (they didn't understand) and the proposal of another hypothesis contrary to these facts: 'lo habrían entendido' (they would have understood). Barbero and San Vicente, in reference to this type of structure, talk of impossible or unrealizable structures and comment that the condition is presented in these as impossible in that it has not been realized in the past and the past cannot be changed (2006: 356). And,

indeed, the question is that with this verb form we have the proposal of a past action posed as an impossible hypothesis and, thus, this action is proposed as a past that did not take place (Pérez Saiz, 2009: 75), which leads to an unreality of the notions expressed in the past (Alarcos, 1999: 474).

At the same time, the intrinsic grammatical value just described for *habría cantado* is perfectly separable from the conditional context and transferable, therefore, to any other, for example, one in which this form contrasts, in the same sentence, with another past tense: *Me habría gustado conocer a Luis pero, al final, no pude* 'I would have liked to have met Luis but in the end I couldn't'. This example shows clearly the prevalence of the grammatical value described for *habría gustado* and, at the same time, the absence of the conditional semantic value. It could even be emitted quite naturally as a simple sentence: *Me habría gustado conocer a Luis* 'I would have liked to meet Luis', which is, in fact, the type of result offered in the shape of an example by RAE & AALE (2009: 1795): *Jamás te habrías entregado a mí* 'You would never have given yourself over to me', in which this form is proposed as the only verb that provides a message which is fully linked to the expression of impossibility. This is because this form constitutes a point of view articulated from a deictic verbal amalgam, as occurs with the other four versions seen above: in this specific case, this is characterised by offering, on the one hand, the semantic value of contrafactive communicative situations, derived, by opposition, from the non-factive in the gradation of modalizing probability; and, on the other hand, at the same time, as a primary tense, it proposes the message from a perspective of the past, even though it is a peculiar past tense because of its underlying unreality.

#### THE FIVE VERSIONES

This reflexive process allows us to develop an idea that we put forward in a previous work from a didactic-descriptive outlook in Pérez Saiz (2009: 59): in Spanish, every utterance, without any other aspects of its meaning being modified except for that of modality, may be proposed systematically from five basic viewpoints. This provision means that we can talk here of a complex linguistic device. Henceforth, we shall refer to each of these views as a *versión*. Thus, the total set of the five *versiones* makes up a single *dictum* but each one forms a different *modus* to the others. Hence, the same message can be presented proposing different points of

view (Pérez Saiz, 2009: 59). Therefore, continuing with one of the above examples, the content that you wish to communicate is always ‘Pepe estar en tu fiesta’ ‘Pepe be at your party’, but this can be presented as *Pepe está en tu fiesta* ‘Pepe is at your party’, *Pepe estuvo en tu fiesta* ‘Pepe was at your party’, *Pepe estará en tu fiesta* ‘Pepe will be at your party’, *Pepe estaría en tu fiesta* ‘Pepe would be at your party’ or as *Pepe habría estado en tu fiesta* ‘Pepe would have been at your party’.

All of these *versiones* have several more characteristics in common, as well as those already mentioned, the most important of which are:

- The fundamental values of the verb forms that articulate these *versiones* can only be described and deduced clearly in the context of the simple sentence because it is there where they fulfill their true potential and their real grammatical qualities without the interference of other distorting factors, as can occur in complex syntax. An illustrative example: the case of the forms *cantaría* and *habría cantado* when these offer their capacity for proposing “a future action with respect to a past one” (Alarcos, 1984: 110; Alcina & Blecua, 1982: 800-801, 804-805) in sentences like this: *Me dijo que vendría pronto a clase* ‘He told me he’d be coming to class soon’, which can only be interpreted in this way when dealing with a complex sentence. If, on the other hand, we are left with the pure action proposed by the originally subordinate verb, its grammatical value changes automatically and it tends automatically towards the expression of the future, the only one possible, as has been indicated: *Vendría pronto a clase* ‘He would be coming to class soon’.
- Despite the above characteristic, all of these *versiones* can be applied, simply and systematically, to sentence subordination environments (*consecutio temporum*) in which the weight of the primary tense of each *versión*, as will be seen below with *cuando*, is assumed by the verb which functions as an independent variable and this is possible thanks to the fact that each version has its own verb forms which are unique and exclusive to that *versión*.
- The flexive system of the verb forms in Spanish can articulate the five *versiones* directly and autonomously and, therefore, it is a clear case of verbal deixis: without losing sight of the context surrounding them, the verb on its own is perfectly capable, in each of these, of proposing the

‘you and me, here and now’ to a greater or lesser extent. In any case, there are other possible forms of expressions which are alternative and compatible but not necessary (adjuncts, metaphorical verbs, etc.).

- Chung and Timberlake (2007: 243) state, in reference to the future item, that this is a semantic category in which time and mood emerge. And this is true but this statement does not take in the whole reality, in keeping with what has been described thus far in this paper. The full package of the *versiones* are the expression of the amalgamated (Martinet, 1978: 127) set of verbal deixis by primary tense and by modality, not just of the future tense.
- The point of view imposed by each of these *versiones* is what allows us to speak, according to the various authors reviewed, of *modus*, epistemic modality, epistemic mode or of modality, within the SFL, since, in fact, the set is proposed as a complex mechanism that articulates, according to Halliday (1985: 335), a gradation that lies between yes and no, within modalisation, of the probability that an action is realized, a global concept which has been summarized, without abandoning the theoretical framework outlined above, in the following table:

TABLE 2. Gradation of the probability from the point of view of *versiones*

INTERPERSONAL FUNCTION		
Verbal deixis		
Primary tenses		Modality: modalisation
		Probability
1: present	<i>canto</i>	'certainty of resolution'
2: past	<i>canté, cantaba...</i>	
3: probable future	<i>cantaré</i>	'low uncertainty'
4: possible future	<i>cantaría</i>	'no-low uncertainty'
5: impossible past	<i>habría cantado</i>	'certainty of no resolution'

The table illustrates aspects such as the reasoning through which it can be stated that *cantaba* is included in the viewpoint of the past but, in contrast, *cantaría* forms part of a different *versión* than that of *cantaré*.

At the same time, without losing sight of this grammatical outlook, it is also possible to explain the results clearly on the basis of questions such as *¿Dónde está Miguel ahora?* ‘Where is Miguel now?’, which might on occasions lead to answers in the future form with *cantaré*: *Estará en el bar* ‘Maybe he is in the bar’. In these cases, thanks to a pragmatic inference, it may be said that this form loses its future value as a primary tense and preserves only the probability value within the modality.

Even so, there are also certain differences between these *versiones* which are those that allow the five distinctions to be articulated and, at the same time, explained:

- The idea of the future (‘low uncertainty’ situations) can consist of two different forms: a probable future (3: ‘low uncertainty’) and a possible future (4: ‘non-low uncertainty’).
- The probable future and the possible future and the impossible past (3:, 4: and 5: respectively in Table 2) articulate, at different levels, the expression of the message in hypothetical terms: the first two through ‘uncertainty’ realizations and the last one through ‘certainty of no resolution’ proposals.
- Moreover, the present (1:) and the factive past (2:), as opposed to the rest, offer the ‘certainty of resolution’ side of the expressive possibilities of the *versiones*.
- Finally, from another point of view, the past offers two options: the past of ‘certainty of resolution’ (2:) and the ‘certainty of no resolution’ past (5:), which is a valued hypothetical option from the point of view of something in the past which did not take place and which, therefore, will not take place but could have taken place.

### *The device*

At this point, it is worthwhile presenting a brief overview of the way in which all of this can be applied in practice. However, it should be pointed out that this is not a didactic application, a possibility which far surpasses the scope of this paper. This is an essential task that must be addressed in the near future within the global

project presented at the beginning of the paper. The only aim here is to illustrate the essence of this complex tool by showing it in movement.

Hence, we shall attribute to each of the five *versiones* a symbol composed of a number and a colon, as already illustrated in Table 2, so that the student might easily interpret that, in these cases, what is being referred to are *versiones* and which *versión* is being discussed in each case. This, of course, will avoid the need to use cumbersome terminological references in the classroom. The specific result of the application of this global idea in the environment of the simple sentence is this:

1: *Raúl* escribe con pluma.

‘Raul *is* writing with a fountain-pen.’

2: *Raúl* escribió/ escribía/ ha escrito/ había escrito con pluma.

‘Raul *wrote/ was writing/ has written/ had written* with a fountain-pen.’

3: *Raúl* escribirá con pluma.

‘Raul *will write* with a fountain-pen.’

4: *Raúl* escribiría con pluma.

‘Raul *would be writing* with a fountain-pen.’

5: *Raúl* habría escrito con pluma.

‘Raul *would have written* with a fountain-pen.’

Without the need to go any further, the great potential of this procedure for practical purposes is already quite clear. Exercises can be proposed simply by giving a message in a specific *versión* for students to transfer it into the rest of *versiones*, obtaining in this case results like those that we can see above in the previous example. In addition, they can also be asked to contrast, *escribió* with *ha escrito*, *había escrito* and with *escribía* without leaving the context of the past, that is, in 2:, a context from which they would have to deduce, therefore, the use and meaning of the aspectual morpheme of some of the verb forms, a grammatical point that the *versiones* do not cover but which they do identify and contextualize. And this is only the beginning; in fact, it may be interesting to see what happens when this schema is applied to two independent clauses coordinated through *pero* (‘but’):

1: *Hoy* yo como a las dos pero tú ya has comido a la una.

‘I eat at two today but you have eaten at one.’

2: *Ayer* yo comí a las dos pero tú ya habías comido a la una.

‘I was eating at two yesterday but you had already eaten at one.’

3: *Mañana* yo comeré a las dos pero tú ya habrás comido a la una.

‘I will eat at two tomorrow but you will already have eaten at one.’

4: *Mañana* yo comería a las dos pero tú ya habrías comido a la una.

‘I would eat at two tomorrow but you would already have eaten at one.’

5: *Ayer* yo habría comido a las dos pero tú ya habrías comido a la una.

‘I would have eaten at two yesterday but you would already have eaten at one.’

It seems clear that this procedure allows certain grammatical aspects of great importance and which are often not easy to explain to be illustrated with great clarity and systematicity: for example, the meaning conferred by the use of compound verb forms as opposed to simple ones or, more specifically that in 4: two verb forms can be found: *comería y habría comido* or, in other words, that the form *habría comido* has two possible values: 4: or 5: depending on the context in which they appear.

The specific case of *cuando*

After all of this theoretical background and after the proposal of the *versiones*, the time has come to return briefly to the case of *cuando* to see how, with the help of the above mentioned device, to present a description of its grammatical behavior which combines a reduction in effort with a maximization of the benefits.

With *cuando* –returning to one of the sentences that has been used as an example: *Cojo un taxi cuando llego*– special attention must be paid to the *versión* used in each case as this is the only criterion that exists to manage the V2 (subordinate verb: *llego*). Thus, as opposed to the V1 (independent variable: *cojo*), which, in this type of context, as has already been said, proposes primary tenses always in indicative through the verb forms unique to each version (Table 3), the first two *versiones* (1: and 2:) present the message as something loaded with ‘certainty of

resolution' and, thus, in these cases, require the presence of a V2 in a normal tense (indicative) or in the present: *llego*, or in the past: *llegué*. The rest of the *versiones* offer this same message but only as something of 'low uncertainty' (3:) or 'no-low uncertainty' (4:) or 'certainty of no resolution' (5:) and, therefore, since it is not 'certainty of resolution' that is expressed but another type of meanings different from this one, require, systematically, a V2 in the subjunctive (Pérez Saiz, 2009: 129),<sup>12</sup> that is in 3: *llegue*, in 4: *llegara*, and in 5: *hubiera llegado*.

TABLE 3. The complete results of *cuando* in agreement with *versiones*

VERSIÓN	V1	PARTICLE	V2	Mood
1:	<i>Cojo un taxi</i>		<i>llego</i>	Indicative
2:	<i>Cogí un taxi</i>	<i>cuando</i>	<i>llegué/llegaba...</i>	
3:	<i>Cogeré un taxi</i>		<i>llegue</i>	Subjunctive
4:	<i>Cogería un taxi</i>		<i>llegara</i>	
5:	<i>Habría cogido...</i>		<i>hubiera llegado</i>	

From this situation, it can be clearly seen that of the five *versiones*, in the context of the use of *cuando*, no fewer than three of them opt for the subjunctive and only two do so for the indicative. This is just the opposite of what is considered to be the usual way, outlined at the beginning of this paper, in which the subjunctive option is presented, in general, almost as an exception. This is the price to be paid for distinguishing only three traditional basic points of view when all of the evidence would seem to indicate that there are substantial grounds for considering the existence of five *versiones*.

## CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Several important conclusions can be drawn from this. If the five *versiones* are not taken into account systematically, the result of the morphosyntactic description of *cuando*, or of any other comparable grammatical point, will be partial and

<sup>12</sup> We already have seen this with García Santos (1993: 88): *cante, cantara, hubiera cantado*, but now we have an important reference: the *versiones*. Hence, now we know that, in this case, it is necessary to use the subjunctive form that corresponds to these three *versiones* systematically when the rules applied demand this mood, as is the case (Pérez Saiz, 2009: 77).



biased, because, among other things, it will not be possible to consider the globality or the totality of the rules that govern the behavior of the item in question (Ellis, 1994). Applying the five *versiones*, in contrast, does make this possible.

Thus, clearly, in the global project described above, the *versiones*, as we have described them during the course of this work, must play a major role. In this sense, we hope that we have shown that these have a coherent and cohesioned linguistic base capable of articulating the points of view contained in verb conjugation in Spanish and, within these points of view, the verb forms that comprise them. As has already been seen, these *versiones*, as a whole, belong to the area of linguistic modality in its laxest sense (*modus*), with the help of concepts as important as epistemic mode or epistemic modality, but also to that of modality in the systemic-functional sense and, within this, to that of modalisation and, specifically, at the heart of the latter, to that of probability. In any case, these *versiones* are proposed as a polyhedric linguistic device that can contribute significantly, in a thorough, harmonic, ordered, logical, clear and predictable way to the construction of the description of the full genetic code of sentence structure in Spanish in the field of the SFL classroom. This is of course in full syntony with the objective of considering, in keeping with Larsen-Freeman, grammar as a fifth skill in the context of learning a second language.

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