

# 7 Grammatical metaphor: academic language development in Latino students in Spanish

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This article describes a particular lexicogrammatical resource that Spanish uses to realize academic language, the resource that Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) refers to as grammatical metaphor (GM). Developed mainly by Halliday (1994), the notion of GM represents an original and innovative contribution that identifies and describes the fact that scientific and academic registers, in writing and in speaking, are functionally oriented to accomplishing 'objectification' and 'abstraction' of their content. They achieve this functional goal through the linguistic means of GM, a resource that condenses information by expressing experiences and events in an incongruent form, as contrasted with the more customary congruent form that prevails in everyday language use. The paper presents three types of GMs as a way of explicating and tracing the development of academic language at the college level in heritage speakers of Spanish: (1) *Ideational GM*, an incongruent representation of experiential meaning; (2) *logical GM*, a way of organizing ideas at the level of discourse in an incongruent manner; and (3) *interpersonal GM*, which presents authorship in the text both implicitly and explicitly.

I have chosen the Spanish heritage learner for several reasons. First, as a consequence of recent demographic trends,<sup>1</sup> Spanish language use has visibly and audibly increased in the United States. As new immigrants interact in the community, in schools, businesses and the workplace, in Spanish with those who have been here for some time or who were born here, Spanish is not only heard with greater frequency in public environments, it is also seen more prominently in the media and in advertising (Carreira 2003). This demographic change and the increasing use of Spanish in public and private settings has important implications for language teachers and students. My home institution, for example, has seen a considerable rise in the number of Latino students who are pursuing Spanish for professional purposes.<sup>2</sup>

Second, although some students are able to develop the desired public and academic registers on their own, primarily through writing and reading, a more adequate theoretical and pedagogical framework than that currently informing academic language development is needed if a greater number of

students is to be successful. In other words, language educators need a way of understanding and teaching how language means in academic contexts. Christie (2002a), Ravelli and Ellis (2004), Schleppegrell (2004) and Unsworth (2000), among others, have emphasized the need to focus explicitly on how language means in academic contexts and have pointed to SFL as a viable educational linguistic framework to address issues of genre and register in the classroom. This is so because there is ample evidence that students, in general, will develop academic-level proficiency primarily through language-based interactions in school settings; this insight is particularly true for Spanish language arts instruction in the context of minority language teaching in the United States.

From the linguistic point of view, studies have shown us that the expansion of bilingual competence in a heritage language, especially at the academic register, helps the development of English as an academic language (Cenoz and Genesee 1998; Cummins 2000; Harley *et al.* 1990; Valdés 2001). Cummins (2000) has studied the bilingual proficiency of heritage students in schools for an extended period of time. He was the first to suggest two categories for bilingual competence: a conversational language capacity (BICS: bilingual interpersonal communicative skills) and a cognitive/academic language capacity (CALP: cognitive academic language proficiency). He suggested that there was a common underlying language proficiency and that linguistic skills could be transferred from one language to the other. As a consequence, he claimed that it is **easier** and **faster** for heritage speakers to develop academic/cognitive skills in their heritage language first and then transfer those skills to the second language. In other words, academic language skills developed in the first language facilitate their development in the second language, especially at advanced literacy levels (Belcher and Connor 2001; Beykont 2002; Schleppegrell and Colombi 2002; Valdés 2001, 2003). Studies have also shown that bilingualism and biliteracy increase the cognitive abilities of students (August and Hakuta 1997, 1998; Cummins 2000).

Although many researchers have emphasized the need to develop the academic/professional register of heritage language speakers to enable them to learn English faster and more easily, few have focused on the linguistic development of Spanish as a heritage language. Of those, the majority have dealt with written language (Acevedo 2003; Colombi 1997, 2000, 2002, 2003; Gibbons 1999; Martínez 2003; Schleppegrell and Colombi 1997); and only a few have analysed oral language (Achugar 2003; Valdés and Geoffrion-Vinci 1998).

In this paper I endeavour to address the concept of GM as a distinctive linguistic characteristic of Spanish academic texts, oral and written. My interest in doing so is this: texts with a high degree of GM tend to be considered prestigious in U.S. culture, and the use of GM is considered an essential marker of academic and professional-level literacy. As Spanish becomes much more present in the public sphere in the United States an explicit pedagogy for Spanish as an academic language becomes a critical

aspect of equity, access and literacy in the public square. To the extent that the analysis presented here supports effective explanations of Spanish academic texts as they are used in school and, furthermore, to the extent that it is possible to specify pedagogies that support the acquisition of key features of such language use, these insights could contribute to setting an agenda for the curriculum in Spanish as a heritage language in the United States, thereby serving different groups of students who are engaged in the acquisition of advanced literacy for a variety of purposes.

### Linguistic features of academic language

In a longitudinal study of Spanish as a heritage language in the United States, I followed students' writing and oral presentations for a period of a year (three academic quarters) in a program of Spanish for Native Speakers (SNS). This program follows an eclectic pedagogical approach, combining a text-based curriculum with a Freirean (problem-posing, peer-tutoring and identity-related activities) with a process-oriented methodology (e.g., multiple version assignments, peer-editing and journals). The first versions of all students' compositions and their oral presentations were collected, transcribed and analysed following an SFL framework.<sup>9</sup> A look at the development of these Latino students' writing in Spanish in an academic context (Colombi 2000, 2002, 2003) shows a progression along a continuum of expressive forms, from what one might, quite generally, refer to as a colloquial register to more academic forms of language use. The characteristics listed in Table 7.1 are useful for defining language use along that continuum.

Because SFL builds on the fundamental interconnectedness of language use (including specific forms of language use) and the social context, a key aspect of an educational approach that uses insights from SFL is to assure that students develop exactly this: an awareness of the fundamentally social nature of language use practices – and that includes literate practices – along with an awareness of how these practices are socially positioned. For that reason, a commonly postulated difference between oral and written modes of language must always be examined in context, in order that one may

**Table 7.1** The oral-written continuum (adapted from Halliday 1985)

Oral	Written
Linguistic characteristics	
➤ dynamic structure	synoptic structure
➤ everyday lexicon	specialized lexicon
➤ non-standard grammar	standard grammar
➤ grammatical complexity	high lexical density

understand the local considerations that motivated specific language choices (see Halliday 1985 and Chafe and Danielewics 1987, among others, for such studies).

Halliday (1998) points to lexical density, nominalization and grammatical metaphor as the main lexicogrammatical characteristics of written (academic) language. Indeed, while the idea of lexical metaphor in a conventional sense is generally available in SFL theory, it is the notion of GM, developed mainly by Halliday (1994), which represents a particularly original and innovative contribution to linguistic theory. Specifically, Halliday (1993) proposes that 'young children's world of meaning is organized congruently', i.e., their language reflects directly their experience of the world. However, as they approach adolescence and adult knowledge, young people begin to reconstrue 'their clausal grammar in a different, nominalized form', what he calls *grammatical metaphor*, a process that is strongly influenced by schooling. Directly related to experiential knowledge, GM nevertheless indicates a shift from commonsense ways of meaning-making, where the lexicogrammatical forms chosen are congruent with the semantics of the event or experience, to uncommon ways of meaning-making through a more metaphorical reconstrual of experience.

Moving into the educational realm, Christie (2002b: 46) explains that it is in secondary instruction that adolescents start handling 'the building of generalizations, abstraction, argument, and reflection on experience that advanced literacy seems to require'. In particular, she suggests that children come to school with an understanding of the kind of grammatical generalization that allows them to interpret and handle common sense and interpersonal language, with grammatical abstraction evolving through schooling in the primary years. However, it is only in schooling at the secondary level that young adults start developing what would count as advanced literacy through the use of grammatical metaphor. Table 7.2 lays out that development.

Inasmuch as GM is a linguistic resource that condenses information that is otherwise expressed in congruent ways, the use of metaphorical forms represents a choice. It signals the value the discourse communities that are engaged in such language use attribute to 'objectification' and 'abstraction', and how they achieve that functional orientation through the use of GM that packs more information into a clause. This choice is particularly prevalent in scientific or academic registers, where the informational density achieved through GM has been particularly well studied for English in the sciences, in

**Table 7.2** Stages of language development (adapted from Halliday 1993 and Christie 2002b)

• Grammatical generalization	→	Interpersonal language (common sense)
• Grammatical abstraction	→	Basic literacy
• Grammatical metaphor	→	Advanced literacy

history and language arts (Eggins *et al.* 1993; Halliday 1998; Martin 1993, 1996; Simon-Vandenberg *et al.* 2003). By contrast, little comparable work exists in Spanish (but see Gibbons 1999; Colombi 2000, 2002).

### Grammatical metaphor as a linguistic resource in academic language use

Accordingly, this paper investigates the use of GM in Spanish in order to begin to address this lacuna in the particular context of academic Spanish. To repeat, the three major types of GM, the ideational, logical and interpersonal GM, occur when the usual or 'congruent' realization of meaning is given a 'non-congruent' or metaphorical expression: ideational GM relates to experiential meaning, logical GM construes textual meanings and interpersonal GM creates interpersonal meanings. In the following, I will explore these three forms at some depth for their various meaning-making potentialities and in terms of their various formal manifestations.

#### Ideational grammatical metaphor

Among the ways of representing experience SFL highlights the following:

##### Example 1: Congruent realization of meaning

En esta novela Poniatowska cuenta la historia de una mujer mexicana ...  
 ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓  
 Circumstance Participant Process (verbal) Thing (Ana 33-01)<sup>4</sup>

By contrast, the sentence below shows a more incongruent form of representing reality through a GM.

##### Example 2: Incongruent realization of meaning: Grammatical metaphor

La liberación femenina no fue un tema que afrontó el pueblo mexicano durante la Revolución.  
 ↓ ↓ ↓  
 Carrier Process (relational) Attribute (Ana 33-01)

Why consider this a metaphorical expression? The answer is predicated on accepting the notion that the congruent form is the unmarked way in which we represent experience and that the alternative or marked realization is a form of metaphor. Thus, in this example a process that would normally be expressed through a verb (*liberar*) has been metaphorically transformed into a fixed object, expressed by a noun (*liberación*). Table 7.3 is an adaptation of Halliday's detailed description of GM in English (1998: 211).

Table 7.4 presents the *metaphorical* change in the grammatical class category and the semantic type. Semantically, the resulting grammatical category (e.g., *liberación*) maintains the characteristics of the noun and of the process. In the ideational GM in Spanish as in English, movement is from left to right, i.e., from the clause complex to the noun.

**Table 7.3** Grammatical metaphor (adapted from Halliday 1998)

relator	circumstance	process	quality	entity	(modifier)
			1 →		
		2 →			
		3 →			
	4 →				
5 →					
Clause complex	→ Clause				Nominal group

**Table 7.4** Class shift (semantic type)

Congruent	Metaphorical
1. Adjective (Qualifier)	Noun (Entity)
2. Verb (Process)	Noun (Entity)
3. Verb (Process)	Adjective (Qualifier)
4. Adverb (Circumstance)	Adjective (Qualifier)
5. Conjunction (Relator)	Prepositional Phrase (Circumstance)

### Nominalization as a central grammatical metaphor

According to Halliday (1994: 352), 'nominalizing is the single most powerful resource for creating GM'.

#### Formal realizations of nominalization

##### Example 3: Nominalization

La **emigración de la época de la Revolución Mexicana** fue de notable importancia para el campo de la literatura, debido a la gran cantidad de intelectuales que pasaron a los Estados Unidos huyendo de la agitación social de México. (M. Martín-Rodríguez, 2001: 227)

Congruent: Verbs (Process)	Incongruent: Nouns (Entity)
(los intelectuales) <b>emigraron</b> durante la época de la Revolución Mexicana	La <b>emigración</b> de la época de la Revolución Mexicana . . .

Illustrating the central feature of GM, nominalization as a GM combines the feature of a 'process' (*emigrar*) with that of an 'entity' in a 'semantic junction'. According to Halliday, this semantic junction combines the meaning

of the semantic type of congruent form (process: *emigrar*) and that of the metaphorical form (entity: *emigración*) into one language form. Furthermore, as in English, GM in Spanish allows for the condensation of information: once the process 'emigrate' has been nominalized it can be expanded considerably. As a result, like its English counterpart, the Spanish nominal group is the most powerful and also the most frequent resource for making meaning in academic texts. Accordingly, my own analysis of Spanish texts finds nominalizations to constitute 70 per cent of all GMs found in the texts. It is thus in line with the findings of Eggins *et al.* (1993), Ravelli (1988) and Jones (1990), who have demonstrated its frequency in English student writing.

The following introductory paragraph from Ana's writing in the third quarter of instruction (i.e., the most advanced course of the SNS series), is a good example of nominalizations:

Example 4: Nominalization – Ana's introductory paragraph after 9 months of instruction

##### Las reformas dentro de la Revolución mexicana (Ana 33–01)<sup>5</sup>

'[Tierra y Libertad] fueron las famosas palabras que gritó Emiliano Zapata que comenzaron la Revolución Mexicana. Antes de que rebeldes, como Zapata, comenzaran a levantar armas **la división de las clases sociales** era visible y las desigualdades no se toleraban más por el pueblo. Sin embargo, hubo ciertos aspectos de la sociedad mexicana que quedaron sin solución a finales de la guerra. Por ejemplo **la liberación femenina** no fue un tema que afrontó el pueblo mexicano durante la Revolución. Por falta de atención a este tema, se incrementó **la división entre los roles de los sexos**. La guerra resultó en **el aumento del machismo y el retraso de los derechos de las mujeres**.

Eggins *et al.* (1993) explain the functions of this type of GM in history texts in English. The same functions are found in the Spanish model texts students read and interacted with in the SNS courses and, consequently, in their essays:

#### Functions of nominalizations

a) A central function of nominalization is to 'remove people', as it were. Numerous functions may be embedded in that 'removal', enabling different interpretations of this particular GM: actors are no longer readily identifiable, they play a minor role, they are irrelevant for the case at hand, the writer is unable or unwilling to identify them or, coming from the other side, the end result of an action is more prominent than the action itself. In the examples I first provide a native speaker's use of this kind of GM, followed by the heritage language student's use.

**Proclamar** el inglés lengua única de los Estados Unidos es una prueba de miedo y soberbia inútiles. (Fuentes 2001: 254)

. . . se incrementó **la división entre los roles de los sexos**. (Ana 33–01)

b) A core characteristic of nominalization as a GM is that it turns actions into things, as is illustrated in the following sentence pair:

**Hablar más de una lengua** no daña a nadie (Fuentes 2001: 254)

La guerra resultó en *el aumento del machismo y el retraso de los derechos de las mujeres*. (Ana 33–01)

c) Nominalizations also give existence to 'things'; in particular, they create conceptual objects:

**El temor de los legisladores norteamericanos** que condicionan la 'estadidad' a la renuncia de la lengua es, desde luego, el miedo de que, si Puerto Rico mantiene el derecho al español, Texas, Arizona o Nuevo México reclamen lo mismo. (Fuentes 2001: 252).

Por ejemplo, *la liberación femenina* no fue un tema que afrontó el pueblo mexicano durante la Revolución. (Ana 33–01)

When such nominalizations remove the agents of actions, they create more distance between the event and the participants. Then, once the actions have been nominalized, they can be talked about in more 'material' terms, as having occurred, as being available for modification and, most importantly, for movement in conceptual space as actors in their own right.

In the students' writing development in academic Spanish just that kind of movement from congruent language into more incongruent language can be observed. More importantly, the exact development is illustrated as well in their oral language development, as shown in Ana's language use in her final oral research presentation:<sup>6</sup>

Excerpt from Ana's oral presentation of her final research project on soap operas (telenovelas) (A33–OP–03):

15. este ... entonces ahora ... este ...

16. ... **comenzamos** a ... a preguntarnos si hay algo más además de entretenimiento en estas ... este ... novelas.

17. Y ...

18. la otra opción verdad que ... dije YO

19. XXX que mi ...

20. mi idea sería que. son,

21. *es una transmisión de valores sociales*,

22. XXX este ... mediante comunicación en masas.

Importantly, the emerging ability to use GM, in this case, nominalization, is not replacive; rather, noncongruence in GM is to be imagined as existing along a continuum. Thus, Ana realizes the verb-process *transmitir* as a noun *transmission*, which can be modified (*de valores sociales*). Later on in her presentation she opts for a more congruent form of this nominalization when she says:

27. Entonces este ...

28. sí es cierto que son ... valores sociales que son *transmitidos* y no ...

29. este ... solamente entretenimiento,

30. este ... ¿qué son los ... qué son los mensajes que están, ahmm ...

31. que les estamos diciendo, a los a los ciuda. tele. videntes ... de las novelas?

Much later in this passage she formulates her thoughts like this:

161. Ah ... en conclusión, rápidamente ... este: ...

162. las la tele, la, la tele. visión no sola ...

163. un medio de comunicación neutro por lo tanto *transmite* contenidos valóricos,

164. este ... creencias y modelos de conducta,

165. que la hacen esencialmente un sistema educativo.<sup>7</sup>

This type of nominalization constitutes the most frequent ideational GM in Spanish, not only in the academic texts to which students are exposed, but also in their own writing. At the same time, as students start using GM in their writing, the lexical density of their texts also increases, reflecting a more condensed and incongruent form of semiosis and, therefore, of language use.

Verbal processes expressed through adjectives used as grammatical metaphors

The second most frequent type of GM is the verb-process functioning as an adjective. The metaphoric transformation of a process to a qualifier represents a shift from meaning 'construed as process' to meaning 'construed as qualifier', from 'verb' to 'adjective', and from a typical function in the clause of process to that of epithet/qualifier in the nominal group. In Spanish, when the verb-process functions as a qualifier (past participle), it agrees in number and gender with the noun modified. In other words, in Spanish the GM has been *grammaticalized*, inasmuch as the past participle agrees in gender and number with the thing modified, thereby becoming a structural unity.

En el caso que aquí nos interesa, las conclusiones de Sánchez son en extremo **productivas** para la concepción de la literatura chicana como literatura de resistencia frente a la cultura y sociedad **dominantes** ... (Martín-Rodríguez 2001: 232)

Congruent: Verbs (Process)	Incongruent: Adjectives (Qualifier)
(las conclusiones) producen (resultados) (esta cultura y sociedad) <b>dominant</b>	(conclusiones) <b>productivas</b> (cultura y sociedad) <b>dominantes</b>

As students progress in their development of Spanish academic language during the year, they make increasingly more use of this GM in their writing. This ideational GM, too, allows for condensation of information in a more incongruent form, i.e., agents are removed and time is not defined. The following student writing samples show students using this kind of GM after the first three months of participating in the writing courses.

Ana's essay (33-01):<sup>8</sup>

En la constitución de 1917, aunque fue muy **progresista**, no se otorgó el derecho de votar a la mujer hasta el año 1954. Carlos Alvear Acevedo, menciona en su artículo 'La Revolución Mexicana' (1993), algunas de las reformas **progresistas** de la constitución: la prohibición de la esclavitud, la libertad de trabajo, el 'juicio de amparo' (405-406) y muchas otras más. Algunos de los planes **mencionados** por Acevedo son El Plan de San Luis, **escrito** por el candidato presidencial Francisco Madero (394), y El Plan de Ayala (399), **escrito** por el rebelde Emiliano Zapata.

Table 7.5 provides a summary of the development of Spanish adjectivization.

In other words, Spanish grammar allows for the semantic junction to be reflected in the grammatical and semantic form of an adjectival GM, conflating the noun and modifier in a unity of meaning and form.

Thus far I have detailed only two types of ideational GMs that have frequent realizations in Spanish: processes remapped as nouns or as adjectives. Table 7.3 above presented the movement from left to right in the realization of the GM, i.e., from more congruent (transparent) language to more incongruent forms. It is important to recognize that relators (or conjunctions) can be construed as a circumstance (i.e., grammaticalized as a preposition, in a prepositional phrase), that a process can be construed as a quality (grammaticalized as an adjective), and, finally, that a process or a quality can be construed as an entity (grammaticalized as a noun), but not the other way around (Halliday 1998: 211).

**Table 7.5** Spanish adjectivization: semantic and grammatical junction

... la constitución fue muy **progresista** (singular – feminine)



las reformas **progresistas** (plural – feminine)



los planes **mencionados** (plural – masculine)



(el plan) **escrito** ... (singular – masculine)



### Logical grammatical metaphor

Logical grammatical metaphor refers to the condensation of meaning in an incongruent way at the level of the organization of the discourse. The most congruent form of joining two ideas is with a conjunction. By contrast, when conjunctions are realized through processes and nouns, allowing for two or more clauses to become one, that realization is referred to as a logical GM. Once more, the following examples of logical GM are taken from Ana's writing.

Las palabras del Arzobispo no **causaban** miedo en la gente pobre salvadoreña, sino agradecimiento de que por fin alguien pensaba en ellos. (Ana-32-03)

La guerra **resultó** en el aumento del machismo y el retraso de los derechos de las mujeres. (Ana 33-01)

Este poema **tiene relevancia** a la situación actual en los Estados Unidos, ya que muchos latinos piensan regresar a sus países de origen después de haber huido por razones políticas. (Ana 32-03)

**El valor** de la obra reside en que la gente no pierde la esperanza de algún día regresar a su 'antigua tierra', que es parte tan importante de su vida. (Ana 32-03)

Lorena's development shows a similar trajectory:

**La consecuencia de esto es que** ahora la economía del país está muy inestable. (Lorena 33-05)

Quizás de todos los **resultados** de la revolución, **el más importante** fue la democracia del país. (Lorena 33-05)

In spoken language, in particular, logico-semantic relations such as cause and effect are more commonly realized by conjunctions. By contrast, this type of metaphor is called 'logical GM' because it involves what Martin (1993) calls 'buried reasoning', or the metaphorical realization of the logico-semantic relations (e.g., cause and effect) that, in a less metaphorical realization, would be expressed by conjunctions. This metaphorical realization of conjunctive relations by processes like 'resultar', 'causar', 'depender de' and nominal groups like 'los efectos', 'los resultados', 'las causas', 'las consecuencias', is particularly frequent in the written (academic) medium and in genres that explain and elaborate, such as the open-question essay and the research paper in the humanities. Explaining just such functionalities of GM, namely as a tool for organizing texts, is essential, so that students learn to handle the challenges presented by abstract text in the humanities and sciences.

In my analysis of the development of academic language in Latino students, the logical GM appear more frequently only after students start using other types of ideational GM. For example, Ana's introductory paragraph (presented above), which was written at the end of the academic year,

presents several nominalizations as well as examples of logical GM. In a more congruent form these logico-semantic relations could have been expressed by means of a conjunction, as in

El machismo aumentó **por** la guerra  
Los derechos de las mujeres se retrasaron **por** la guerra

#### *Interpersonal grammatical metaphor*

The last type of GM is the interpersonal GM. As stated, the main function of the ideational GM is to condense the information by way of packing more lexical items into one clause while deleting participants and the time of the processes; that is, the ideational GM is a more metaphorical way of expressing the meaning at the level of experience. The interpersonal GM, on the other hand, can be described as a metaphorical way to express interpersonal meanings that are congruently represented in mood and modality choices. The use of this kind of GM is especially important in academic language as it allows for a more explicit or implicit presence of the writer/speaker in the discourse. Expressions like 'creo, pienso, estoy convencida, estoy segura', known as 'explicitly subjective' (Martín 1997), express the modal assessment of *probability* in a clause that makes the speaker *explicitly responsible for the assessment*.

*Yo pienso* que toda la pelea fue inútil por que nada se mejoró con la guerra sino que con la comunicación que solo empezó mucho después que aya terminado la violencia. (Rosa 33-05)

En resumen, *yo estoy de la opinión* de que Francisco Villa, Emiliano Zapata y otros no murieron en vano. (Lorena 33-05)

*En mi opinión, yo pienso* que la revolución, aunque hubo muchas muertes de inocentes, sirvió mucho. (Lorena 33-05)

Modalization may also be made **explicitly objective**, through nominalizations of probability and usuality that construe the writer's presence and judgement either as a quality (adjective), 'es posible, probable, cierto, típico,' or as expressing a thing, like 'no hay posibilidad de ...' The following are examples from the students' texts.

Cuando se habla de la Revolución Mexicana, **es importante notar** cuáles fueron los beneficios de la guerra. (Ana 33-01)

**Es claro** que el tema más importante del poema es la vida. (Ana 32-03)

**Además hay que tener en cuenta que** el último verso de cada estrofa contiene la palabra 'nunca' ... (Ana 32-03)

**Es evidente que** desde el principio la autora se identifica con la gente de su país contándole de nuestra tierra. (Ana 32-03).

The use of SFL as a pedagogical framework will call for the explicit

presentation of linguistic features that realize *objectiveness* or *subjectiveness* in the texts. Consequently, a clear understanding of the interpersonal GM is essential for students to become aware of the different lexicogrammatical resources they have to express meaning. Ana's examples of her final research paper (RP) and oral presentation give us an idea of how students start working with these concepts. In the methodology section of the RP Ana, using an explicitly objective GM, writes:

El proyecto actual: Sus intenciones y metodología

**La autora** intentó llegar a una respuesta lacónica por medio de una investigación de 3 telenovelas de cada uno de los países con las más grandes sumas de telenovelas: México y Brasil. **La investigación** se enfocó en las décadas de los 1980s, 1990s y hasta lo más reciente de los años 2000. Casi 4.000 telenovelas fueron televisadas en México y Brasil, desde la década de los 80 hasta el año 2002 (Puga 1986, Cabrujas 2002, Fadul 1993). A principios de esta década, ocurrió una 'epifanía' mundial sobre la telenovela, con el incremento de su exportación como consecuencia de la necesidades de la globalización de los mercados latinoamericanos (Mazziotti 26b, Fonseca & Miranda-Ribiero 98, de Urbina & Lopez, 1999). Por esa razón, **el enfoque de esta investigación** se trató de las telenovelas transmitidas en los últimos 20 años en dos de los más grandes mercados de este género. ... **La autora** reconoce que las telenovelas investigadas no fueron las más populares en los países que fueron transmitidas. Aún así **la investigación** logró acertar resultados concurrentes en las 6 telenovelas: La telenovela latinoamericana sirve para inculcar la idea patriarcal que la meta principal de la mujer es casarse, tener hijos y formar parte de una familia próspera. Además el matrimonio se describe como un ritualismo que no debería tomar lugar sin que las dos personas estén sumamente enamoradas de cada uno. (Ana 33-RP)

In other words, Ana is conveying objectivity by detaching herself from her work, for example, by using 'la autora' to refer to herself as the author of the work submitted. Even though the use of 'la autora' as authorial self-reference in academic register in Spanish in the humanities ultimately turns out not to be common or effective, it is clear that the student is experimenting with the interpersonal GM to present herself in a more objective way. On the other hand, in the oral presentation of her research paper she used subjective interpersonal GM in ways appropriate for the oral medium, showing that she is able to choose among different lexicogrammatical resources in academic Spanish in different environments of use:

**Título:** La influencia de la telenovela en la cultura latinoamericana

1. **Mi presentación** es sobre las telenovelas
2. XXXar porque **tenemos** como diez minutos antes de que se termine la clase.
3. ahm ... XXX
4. **Lo que hice** fue que ... **recu** ... ah ... **hice** una ...
5. una ... investigación,



6. de todas las telenovelas [que salieron en México y Brasil desde 1980 hasta el año 2002].
7. este: fueron como ... *voy a mencionar* un total casi de cuatro mil ... ah ... telenovelas en total [que han salido desde ... en estos veinte años]
8. ah ... y: de esas *escogí* tres novelas de cada país ... *son* XXX al resto de los resultados. (Ana 33-OP-03)

### Conclusions and implications

From an SFL perspective, developing knowledge and understanding of the content area and developing control of the linguistic resources that construct and communicate that knowledge and understanding are essentially the same thing (Hasan 1996). The case of Spanish as language arts and a minority language in the context of education in the United States has its own characteristics and hence entails distinctive literate practices. In this paper I have focused on the use of GM in Spanish as a linguistic resource deployed by Spanish heritage speakers as a way of realizing academic language. Indeed, it is important to emphasize that GM in this context needs to be understood as a linguistic resource, i.e., a mechanism or process of the linguistic system (Derewianka: 2003) and not as a mere component of the language. GM is a way of meaning characteristic of the academy and professional contexts. For that reason students being apprenticed into the professions need to learn how to use language in the way their professional context finds meaningful, which presupposes that they know what ways of positioning are valued in what contexts in society.

There are numerous pedagogical implications of the use of GM in Spanish. Texts with a high degree of GM tend to be considered prestigious in Spanish-speaking cultures, as they are in English-speaking contexts. GM, particularly nominalization, is a typical feature of many types of written (academic) texts and is usually associated with the notions of 'abstraction' and 'distance' in the humanities and social sciences and with technicality in the sciences (Halliday 1993). Knowing how to use GM in academic registers is an essential part of developing academic language. Realizing the similarities and differences between Spanish and English can help bilingual students to transfer these features from one language into the other.

Much more research is needed to identify academic language development, but SFL provides a framework for explaining how lexicogrammatical features mean in the academic context. The analysis discussed here indicates that communicatively effective features of Spanish academic texts are indeed identifiable and amenable to specification. Further research into the nature of the pedagogical effectiveness of a GM-informed approach to texts with different student groups for a variety of purposes could then lead to an informed agenda for the curriculum in Spanish as a heritage language in the United States.

### Notes

- 1 According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanics (the term assigned by the U.S. Census and referring to people of all ethnic backgrounds but whose origin is a Spanish-speaking country) are the fastest growing segment of the population, totalling 37.4 million in March 2002 and the largest minority in the United States. Half of all Latinos live in just two states: California and Texas. Latinos in California accounted for 11.0 million persons and 31 per cent of the Hispanic population in the United States, while Texas has 6.7 million persons, that is, 19 per cent. The number of Latino-owned firms has grown immensely in the last ten years, with a figure of 1,574,159 being reported in the last census.
- 2 With regard to their sociocultural background, most of the Latino students at the University of California, Davis, are second- or third-generation Spanish speakers who are the first in their families to access higher education. This program aims at developing their academic proficiency in oral and written modes. When entering the program, students bring with them the oral features of Spanish of interpersonal communication and informal conversational registers; over the course of the year of instruction they move along the continuum of language, developing some features of academic language.
- 3 The corpus of written and oral texts was studied following a genre/register analysis of genre (text type) and its functional components to identify the appropriateness and effectiveness of the students' texts according to the purpose and context of the situation. Then an SFL clause combining analysis, in combination with lexical density and nominal density, was applied to the corpus to determine the grammatical intricacy and lexical density of the texts. The findings of this analysis help explain students' movement along the continuum of language development in Spanish. For further information on the analysis of the corpus, see Colombi (2002).
- 4 All names are pseudonyms to protect students' identity.
- 5 All examples come from the first version of their multiple version assignments and have been copied literally without editing or correction.
- 6 The oral presentation is a genre that falls within the category of public speech and forms part of a continuum of genres of academic language. It is spoken language, inasmuch as the interlocutors are co-present in the realization of the text; however, it is not spontaneous because students have researched and composed it in writing ahead of the presentation. In the cases analysed, the students presented a written outline on the day of their presentation, followed by the research paper with a total of three versions.
- 7 This segment belongs to the conclusions section of the oral presentation.
- 8 This excerpt comes from the development of Ana's essay, 'Las reformas dentro de la Revolución Mexicana', quoted above.

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