

44988

National Library  
of CanadaBibliothèque nationale  
du CanadaCANADIAN THESES  
ON MICROFICHETHÈSES CANADIENNES  
SUR MICROFICHE

NAME OF AUTHOR/NOM DE L'AUTEUR Germán F. Westphal

TITLE OF THESIS/TITRE DE LA THÈSE Subjects and Pseudo-Subjects in Spanish. The Verb Agreement Question in the Impersonal SE Construction.

UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSITÉ SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED/  
GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE Master of Arts

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE DEGRÉ 1979

NAME OF SUPERVISOR/NOM DU DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE Dr. D. R. J. Knowles

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

*L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.*

*L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.*

DATED/DATE January 19, 1979 SIGNED/SIGNÉ \_\_\_\_\_

PERMANENT ADDRESS/RÉSIDENCE FIXÉE



National Library of Canada  
Collections Development Branch

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada  
Direction du développement des collections

Canadian Theses on  
Microfiche Service

Service des thèses canadiennes  
sur microfiche

## NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us a poor photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

**THIS DISSERTATION  
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED  
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED**

## AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de mauvaise qualité.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ  
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE  
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE**

SUBJECTS AND PSEUDO-SUBJECTS IN SPANISH  
THE VERB AGREEMENT QUESTION IN THE IMPERSONAL 'SE' CONSTRUCTION

by

German F. Westphal

Bachiller en Humanidades, Universidad de Chile, 1963  
Profesor de Ingles, Universidad Austral de Chile, 1974

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS  
in the Department  
of

Languages, Literatures and Linguistics

© German F. Westphal 1978  
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

December 1978

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be  
reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy  
or other means, without permission of the author.

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis or dissertation (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Dissertation:

Subjects and Pseudo-Subjects in Spanish. The Verb Agreement  
Question in the Impersonal SE Construction.

Author: Germán F. Westphal

(signature)

(name)

January 17, 1979

(date)

A P P R O V A L

NAME: Germán F. Westphal  
DEGREE: Master of Arts  
TITLE OF THESIS: Subjects and Pseudo-Subjects in Spanish.  
The Verb Agreement Question in the  
Impersonal SE Construction.

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Chairman: Edward R. Colhoun

---

D. R. J. Knowles  
Senior Supervisor

---

Richard C. DeArmond

---

Heles Contreras  
External Examiner  
Professor  
Department of Linguistics  
University of Washington

Date approved: Dec 11, 1978

## A B S T R A C T

---

This study deals with two aspects of a classical problem in Spanish linguistics: (i) The grammatical function of the NP that triggers verb agreement in examples such as (a) *Se abrieron las puertas* - 'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors', and (ii) The grammatical status of the agreement exhibited by the verb in the same instance.

The construction exemplified in (a) co-exists in the grammar of Spanish with two other constructions that also involve the particle *SE*: (b) *Se abrió las puertas* - 'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors', and (c) *Las puertas se abrieron* - 'The doors opened-3rd.p.pl.'

Besides the lexical similarities and the word order differences exhibited by these examples, they have some other significant differences and similarities: (i) examples (a) and (b) have the same meaning, and both imply the existence of a human agent, whereas (c) does not imply the existence of an agent at all, and (ii) The verb of examples (a) and (c) agrees in person and number with its associated NP, whereas that of (b) is third person singular, although the corresponding NP might be plural.

In order to account for these differences and similarities, the following analyses have been thus far proposed:

(i) Examples such as (a) and (c) are the same in deep and derived structure, and the NP that triggers verb agreement is the subject at both levels of analysis.

(ii) Examples such as (a) are the same as (b) at the deep structure level, where the corresponding NP is the object of the verb, but they are different at the surface level, where the NP associated with the verb in (a) has become the surface subject.

(iii) Examples such as (a) and (b) share the same deep and derived structure, where the NP associated with the verb is in object position, but (a) has undergone an 'agrammatical' but acceptable process of verb agreement.

These three analyses are discussed in Chapters I, II and III, along with the approach defended in this thesis, which is basically centered around the following claims:

(i) The NP associated with the verb in examples such as (a) is not the surface subject of the verb, but rather its object, and sentences such as (a) and (b) are the same at the deep and the surface structure level, except for the object-verb agreement observed in the former.

(ii) The object verb agreement observed in examples such as (a) is to be accounted for by a rule of grammar, which is optional in its application.

(iii) The third person singular verb ending is the unmarked verb ending in Spanish, and it is to be assigned to the tensed verb of a sentence that has not undergone agreement--as in the case of example (b)--, by a general convention that finds ample justification on universal grounds.

In particular, Chapter I is devoted to a detailed discussion of the approach that considers sentences (a) and (c) the same, both at the deep and surface level of analysis, and it is shown that this analysis cannot be maintained.

In Chapter II, it is shown that the NP that triggers verb agreement in (a) is not the surface subject of the verb, but rather its object. The evidence presented is mainly based on a series of syntactic tests for subjecthood available in the language.



Finally, in Chapter III, it is argued that the verb agreement exhibited by sentences such as (a) is to be accounted for by a rule of grammar, which is different from the subject-verb agreement rule, and that the tensed verb of a sentence that has not undergone agreement is assigned the third person singular ending by a general convention. The existence of the object-verb agreement rule and its associated convention are justified both on theoretical and external grounds.

The framework is that of Generative Transformational Grammar.

A mis compañeras  
en la buena y en la mala,  
en la patria y en el exilio:

Jovita,

Sandra,

Vicky

y

Claudia.

También,

a mi padre y a mi madre,  
que nada supieron de esto,

y al amigo

Joel,

que tanto contribuyó a ello,

sin saber

que era parte de esta trilogía trágica.

"... y así digo, que es grandísimo el riesgo a que se pone el que imprime un libro, siendo de toda imposibilidad imposible componerle tal que satisfaga y contente a todos los que le leyeren."

Sansón.

"Pero no importa, yo sé que no he dicho muchas necedades en lo que he dicho..."

Sancho.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

I am indebted to

- Dr. Guillermo Araya-Goubet, the exiled Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, Universidad Austral de Chile, from whom I learned how to spell 'linguística'.
- Dr. Phillip Klein, my Supervisor while I was a qualifying student at S.F.U., who introduced me to the world of Anglo-American Linguistics.
- Dr. Alfredo Hurtado, my first Professor of Linguistics at S.F.U., for his unforgettable lectures.
- Dr. Edward Colhoun, my first Senior Supervisor at S.F.U., who let me do what I wanted to do, and under whose supervision this work was initiated.
- Dr. John Knowles, my Senior Supervisor, for his many useful suggestions, his advice, and encouragement.

- Dr. Richard DeArmond, Chairman of Graduate Studies and member of my Supervisory Committee, for the many hours of interesting debate.
- Dr. Joel Hust, who--though not a member of my Committee--I could always count on for critical assistance.
- Dr. Heles Contreras, my external examiner, who honoured me by accepting this role.
- the Spanish and Linguistics Divisions, for the Teaching Assistantships that made my stay at S.F.U. possible.
- ✓  
- my fellow-students Amrita, Hilda, Jay, Nestor, Pepe and Terencio, for their everyday encouragement.

To all of them,  
my sincere thanks.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

APPROVAL:.....	ii
ABSTRACT:.....	iii
DEDICATION:.....	vii
QUOTATION:.....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS:.....	xi
INTRODUCTION:.....	1
Footnotes.....	6
CHAPTER I:	
The Two-Source Analysis of Impersonal SE Sentences.....	8
1.1. A- and B-Type Sentences in the Two-Source Analysis....	13
1.2. The Arguments against the One-Source Analysis.....	25
1.3. Semantic Considerations.....	48
1.4. The Impersonal SE: Three Sources or One?.....	53
1.5. Conclusions.....	59
Footnotes.....	61
CHAPTER II:	
Subjects and Pseudo-Subjects.....	63
2.1. Verb Agreement.....	69
2.2. Word Order Considerations.....	73
2.3. Subject-to-Subject Raising.....	79

2.4. Subject-to-Object Raising.....	85
2.5. Equi-NP Deletion.....	90
2.6. Left Dislocation from Subject Position.....	94
2.7. The 'POR SI MISMOS' Phrase.....	97
2.8. SE Deletion in Infinitival Complements to Causative Verbs.....	101
2.9. Optional Agreement Across the Personal 'A'.....	104
2.10. Optional Agreement with NP lacking Argumental Relationship to the Tensed Verb of a Sentence.....	105
2.11. Conclusions.....	107
Footnotes.....	109
CHAPTER III:	
The Verb Agreement Question.....	113
3.1. Obligatory Agreement: A Tentative Solution.....	115
3.2. Optional Agreement: A First Approximation.....	117
3.3. Optional Agreement and Clause Reduction.....	140
3.4. Conclusions.....	166
Footnotes.....	169
FINAL CONCLUSIONS:.....	173
BIBLIOGRAPHY:.....	177

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

---

This study deals with two directly related aspects of a classical problem in Spanish linguistics:

(i) The grammatical relation holding between the verb and its associated NP in examples such as

(0/1) Se abrieron las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors.'

and,

(ii) The grammatical status of the agreement exhibited by the verb in the same instance.

The construction exemplified in (0/1) co-exists in the grammar of Spanish with two other constructions that also involve the particle SE: [fn.0/1]



(0/2) Se abrió las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors.'

(0/3) Las puertas se abrieron.

'The doors opened-3rd.p.pl.'

Besides the lexical similarities and the word order differences exhibited by examples (0/1), (0/2) and (0/3), they have some other significant differences and similarities:

(i) Examples (0/1) and (0/2) have the same meaning, and both imply the existence of a human agent, whereas (0/3) does not imply the existence of an agent at all, and

(ii) The verb of examples (0/1) and (0/3) agrees in person and number with its associated NP, whereas that of (0/2) is third person singular, although the corresponding NP might be plural, as in the particular example under consideration.

In order to account for these differences and similarities, the following analyses have been thus far proposed:

(i) Examples such as (0/1) and (0/3) are the same in deep and derived structure, and the NP that triggers agreement is the subject of the verb at both levels of analysis.

This is the position assumed by Knowles (1974 and 1975). According to him, the difference in meaning between (0/1) and (0/3) is a matter of lexical interpretation of the verb.

(ii) Examples such as (0/1) have the same deep structure as (0/2), and there is a late subjectivalization rule that places the direct object in subject position.

This is the position of Contreras (1973), slightly modified in Contreras (1974) to fit within a case grammar model, and definitely abandoned in Contreras (1976), although the basic claim made in Contreras (1973) is still maintained in the latter, namely that the NP associated with the verb in examples such as (0/1) is the surface structure subject.

(iii) Examples such as (0/1) and (0/2) share the same deep and derived structure, where the NP associated to the verb is its object.

This is the position taken by Otero (1972, 1973, and 1976). According to Otero, examples such as (0/1) exhibit an acceptable, but 'agrammatical' agreement.

The three analyses summarily presented here will be discussed in Chapters I, II and III, along with my own approach to the problem, which is basically centered around the following claims:

(i) The NP associated with the verb in examples such as (0/1) is not the surface subject of the verb, but rather its object, and sentences (0/1) and (0/2) are the same at the deep and the surface structure level, except for the object-verb agreement observed in the former. [fn.0/2]

(ii) The object-verb agreement observed in sentences such as (0/1) is to be accounted for by a rule of grammar which is optional in its application and can be easily stated using the formalism suggested by Chomsky (1965, pp.174-176).

(iii) The third person singular verb ending is the unmarked verb ending in Spanish, and it is to be assigned to the tensed verb of a sentence that has not undergone agreement--as in the case of example (0/2)--, by a general convention that finds ample justification on universal grounds.

The existence of the optional object-verb agreement rule and its associated convention will be justified both on theoretical and external grounds. The framework is that of Generative Transformational Grammar.

# FOOTNOTES : INTRODUCTION

[0/1] Sentences (0/1), (0/2) and (0/3) exemplify the three unique uses of SE distinguished by DeFazio (1971), i.e. 'Passive SE', 'Indefinite SE', and 'Intransitive SE'. By 'unique', DeFazio means that these uses of SE are not shared by any of the members of the set ME, TE, SE, NOS, et cetera.

[0/2] Some grammarians use the term 'passive' to refer to sentences such as (0/1): "oraciones pasivas reflejas con SE" (Gili y Gaya 1961, p.73); "Se-Passive" (Hadlich 1971, pp.33-34), "pasiva con el pronombre SE" and "oración segunda de pasiva" (Real Academia Española -1931, pp.254-255), among others. All these labels, including that of DeFazio (1971), are highly misleading because they suggest that the NP that triggers agreement in (0/1) is the subject of the verb, which is not the case as I show in Chapter II of this study.

Sentences such as (0/2) are currently identified as 'impersonal' because the clitic SE is always interpreted as an unspecified human agent: "oraciones impersonales con SE [emparentadas histórica y psicológicamente con las de pasiva refleja]" (Gili y Gaya 1961, p.76); "Impersonal SE" (Hadlich 1971, pp.35-36) and

(Knowles 1975); "impersonal transitiva con SE" (Real Academia Española 1931, pp.259-260). Since this is also the case of SE in examples such as (0/1), I will henceforth refer to both of them as Impersonal SE Sentences or the Impersonal SE Construction.

Examples such as (0/3) have a direct equivalent in the English Middle Voice, as characterised by Professor DeArmond in the course of his lectures on Grammatical Relations (Spring 1978, S.F.U.): Las puertas se abrieron = The doors opened. No agent is understood in this construction, and the function of SE is clearly that of an intransitiviser. Following DeFazio (1971), I will henceforth identify this type of sentences as Intransitive SE Sentences or the Intransitive SE Construction.

## CHAPTER I:

THE TWO SOURCE ANALYSIS OF IMPERSONAL SE SENTENCES.

---

Consider the following examples:

(1/1) Se abrió las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors.'

(Somebody opened the doors.)

(1/2) Se abrieron las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors.'

(Somebody opened the doors.)

(1/3) Las puertas se abrieron.

'The doors opened-3rd.p.pl.'

(The doors opened.)

Otero (1972, 1973 and 1976) has consistently argued that examples such as (1/1) and (1/2) are the same in deep and derived structure, except for the 'agrammatical' but acceptable agreement exhibited by the verb in (1/2). According to him,

examples such as (1/1) and (1/2) have a PRO subject NP at the deep structure level, whereas the NP associated with the verb in examples such as (1/3) is the subject of the verb, both in deep and surface structure. As I shall show in this study, Otero's analysis is basically correct, except for his claim in relation to the grammatical status of the verb agreement observed in (1/2). (See Chapter III.)

Nevertheless, Knowles (1974 and 1975) has proposed a competing analysis that deserves all our attention because of the substantially different claim he makes. In Knowles' approach, examples such as (1/2) and (1/3) are the ones that are the same in deep and derived structure, not (1/1) and (1/2). He has also claimed that the difference in meaning between (1/2) and (1/3) is a matter of lexical interpretation of the verb, that examples such as (1/1) have a PRO subject NP that provides the condition for SE INSERTION, and that the verb always agrees with its subject.

The following chart summarizes the difference in approach between the proposal that Knowles has made, and that of Otero:



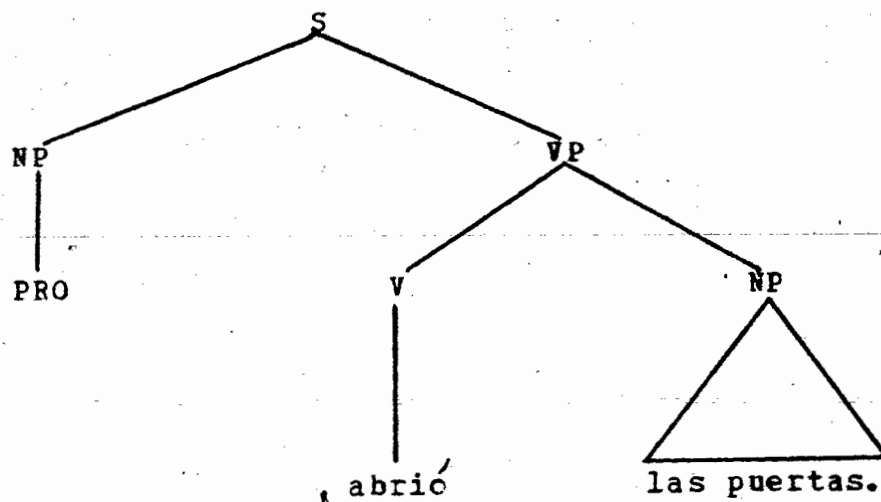
(1/4)

KNOWLES	SURFACE LEVEL DISTINCTION	OTERO
TYPE  A        B	{ a. [+Agent, -Agreement]: Se abrió las puertas. } { b. [+Agent, +Agreement]: Se abrieron las puertas. } { c. [-Agent, +Agreement]: Las puertas se abrieron. }	TYPE        A        B

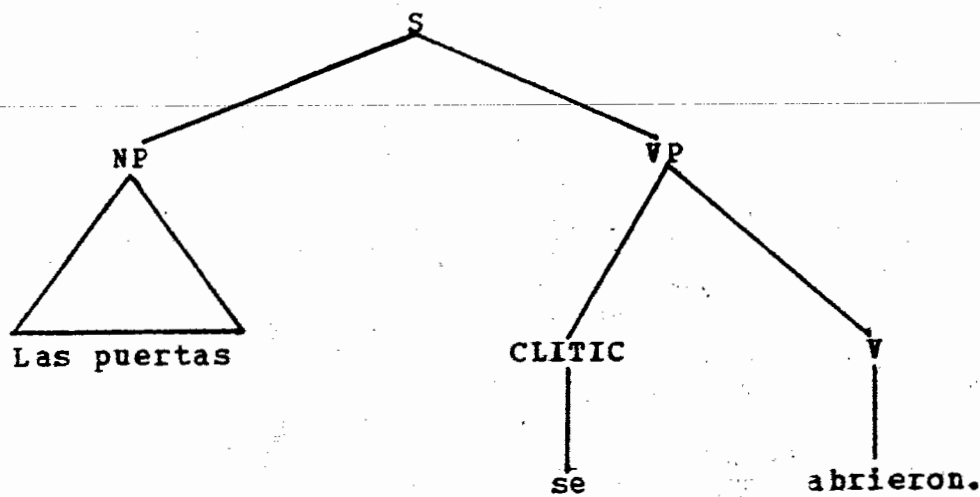
where types A and B have different deep and surface structures in each proposal.

According to Knowles (1975, p.12), his A- and E-type sentences have the following deep structures:

(1/5) a.



b.



"These structures require the following assumptions:

a. Insert SE if the subject of the sentence is a noun phrase that is [+PRO, +human, +3rd.person, +indefinite] (and--presumably--[+singular], G.W.).

b. There is a set of transitive verbs generally subcategorized for human subjects that become intransitive with inanimate subjects provided that the clitic SE is added." (Knowles 1975, p.12)

As Knowles (1975) has pointed out, assumption (a) is barely controversial [fn.1/1], and assumption (b) is the innovative part of the analysis he proposes. Although Knowles' derivation of examples such as (1/3) is in principle as good as that proposed by Otero for sentences constructed with 'pronominal verbs', "where pronominal means essentially intransitive paradigmatically reflexive" (1973, pp.553-556), I will show that this is not the source of sentences such as (1/2), contrary to what Knowles has claimed. This whole Chapter is devoted to a critique of Knowles 1975.

### 1.1. A- AND E-TYPE SENTENCES IN THE TWO SOURCE ANALYSIS.

Let us first look into Knowles' characterization of his A- and B-type sentences at the surface level. Consider the following statement quoted from Knowles (1975, p.9):

"There is often a clear difference in meaning between A-type and B-type sentences, which has not infrequently been pointed out in the literature. Consider the following sentences quoted by Otero (1973):

(1/6) a. Se difundió las noticias.

'PRO spread-3rd.p.sg. the news-pl.'

b. Se difundieron las noticias.

'The news-pl. spread-3rd.p.pl.'

[(1/6a) and (1/6b)] do not mean the same thing, as is clearly indicated by the fact that both may occur in a sentence such as (1/7), where the (a) sentence may be negated without producing any contradiction":

(1/7) No se difundió las noticias, (cf. (6a))

pero las noticias se difundieron.

'PRO did not spread-3rd.p.sg. the news-pl.,

but the news-pl. did spread-3rd.p.pl.'

(Nobody spread the news,

but the news did spread.)

Observe, however, that (1/7) is not a combination of (1/6a) and (1/6b), but of (1/6a) and the corresponding Intransitive SE Sentence, which is different from (1/6b). In fact, there are two problems with example (1/6b):

(i) Although its gloss is not incorrect, it is certainly misleading, as I will show below.

(ii) Its word order has been modified in (1/7) in such a way that it is no longer the same sentence.

Note that if the word order of (1/6b) had not been modified, a semantically ill-formed combination would have resulted:

(1/8) #No se difundió las noticias,

pero se difundieron las noticias.

'PRO did not spread-3rd.p.sg. the news,

but PRO did spread-3rd.p.pl. the news.'

(#Nobody spread the news,

but somebody spread the news.)

Furthermore, if sentence (1/6b) is combined with the corresponding Intransitive SE Sentence, it may be negated as well as (1/6) in (1/7), without producing any contradiction:  
[fn.1/2]

(1/9) No se difundieron las noticias,

pero las noticias se difundieron.

'PRO did not spread-3rd.p.pl. the news-pl.,

but the news-pl. did spread-3rd.p.pl.'

(Nobody spread the news,

but the news did spread.)

A more appropriate gloss for (1/6b) is, therefore, the same as that of (1/6a), not the one given in Otero's example quoted by Knowles (1975). These are the data, and these data show that sentences (1/6a) and (1/6b) are synonymous, and not different in meaning as Knowles and Otero have claimed.

Nevertheless, the facts underlying these examples are far more complex: the sentences combined in (1/9) are actually ambiguous. Let us consider them separately:

(1/10) Se difundieron las noticias.

- a. Somebody spread the news.
- b. The news spread.

(1/11) Las noticias se difundieron.

- a. The news spread.
- b. Somebody spread the news.

According to all my native consultants [fn.1/3], the most likely, natural and normal interpretation of each of the examples above is the one given under (a). That of (b) is definitely marginal. The fact that none of them was able to reconcile the internal contradiction of (1/12) and (1/13) speaks for itself:

(1/12) #No se difundieron las noticias,

pero se difundieron las noticias.

'PRO did not spread-3rd.p.pl. the news-pl.,

but PRO did spread-3rd.p.pl. the news-pl.'

(#Nobody spread the news,

but somebody spread the news.)

- (1/13) #Las noticias no se difundieron,  
 pero las noticias se difundieron.  
 'The news-pl. did not spread-3rd.p.pl.,  
 but the news-pl. did spread-3rd.p.pl.'  
 (#The news did not spread,  
 but the news did spread.)

Thus, Impersonal SE Sentences that exhibit verb agreement and Intransitive SE Sentences have a different preferred word order, which is SE + VERB + NP in the former, and NP + SE + VERB in the latter. I will come back to this question in Chapter II.

Having clarified this point, let us now proceed to examine the two tests that Knowles (1975) proposed to distinguish between his A- and B-type sentences at the surface level. Consider the following two claims made in Knowles (1975, p.9):

"All A-type sentences have a near (though not always perfect) paraphrase with UNO...", e.g.

- (1/14) a. Se abrió las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors.'

=

- b. Uno abrió las puertas.

'One opened the doors.'



"Not all [B-type] sentences can be paraphrased by UNO sentences", e.g.

(1/15) a. Las puertas se abrieron.

'The doors opened-3rd.p.pl.'

≠

b. Uno abrió las puertas.

'One opened the doors.'

BUT,

(1/16) a. Se abrieron las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors.'

=

b. Uno abrió las puertas.

'One opened the doors.'

This raises the question of whether the UNO test is of any real use for the particular distinction that Knowles is trying to justify. The fact that there are certain B-type sentences in Knowles' approach that also have a near--though not always perfect--paraphrase with UNO, such as example (1/16a), which in turn can be paraphrased with an A-type sentence as in (1/17) below, gives a rather negative answer to this question:

(1/17) a. Se abrieron las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors.'

=

b. Se abrió las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors.'

=

c. Uno abrió las puertas.

'One opened the doors.'

Indeed, what Knowles has done by proposing the UNO test is to set up the basis for establishing a clear distinction, not between his A- and B-type sentences, but those of Otero. (See (1/4) above.)

Knowles (1975, p.9) has also claimed that

"[A-type sentences] may not occur with a POR SI MISMOS (or POR SI SOLOS ('by themselves')) phrase in the plural", e.g.

(1/18) \*Se abrió las puertas {por sí mismas/por sí solas}.

'PRO opened the doors by themselves.'

"If the noun phrase following the verb is plural, then there can often be a POR SI MISMOS phrase in the plural [in B-type sentences]", e.g.

(1/19) Se abrieron las puertas {por sí mismas/por sí solas}.

Nevertheless, according to all my native consultants and my own grammatical judgement, example (1/19) should be starred. In fact, the POR SI MISMOS (or ~~POR SI~~ SOLOS) phrase can only occur in Intransitive SE Sentences, which exhibit a different word order from Impersonal SE Sentences, as I have already shown in this Section:

(1/20) Las puertas se abrieron {por sí mismas/por sí solas}.

'The doors opened-3rd.p.pl. by themselves.'

Note that in Knowles' discussion of his example (5) (i.e. Se alquilaron los apartamentos por sí mismos.), which is parallel to (\*1/19) above and which should also be starred, he included the following footnote:

"2. Often native speakers have difficulty in accepting cases of verb + POR SI MISMOS. Example (5), though quoted from Otero 1972, is considered unacceptable by some speakers. However, that there are sentences that occur with POR SI MISMOS (note: in the plural) is beyond dispute. Roldan 1971 gives the example: Esos problemas hay que dejarlos que se resuelvan por sí solos..."

First of all, Knowles' example (5) is not an accurate quotation of Otero 1972. In fact, Otero's example is an Intransitive SE Sentence: Los apartamentos se alquilan por sí mismos (1972, p.248, example (15a)). As I have already shown, Intransitive SE Sentences exhibit a different word order from Impersonal SE Sentences.

Secondly, Roldan's example reproduced in Knowles' footnote is derived from Hay que dejar [que [esos problemas se resuelvan por sí solos]], whose complement sentence in brackets is an instance of the Intransitive SE Construction, not the Impersonal SE Construction. This is why Knowles found that "often native speakers have difficulty in accepting [examples such as (5)]", which in fact is ungrammatical. Obviously Knowles as well as

Otero in example (1/7) above has been misled in the analysis of these examples by a lack of attention to word order considerations that are crucial.

Nevertheless, even if it is granted that example (1/20) is grammatical, Knowles' POR SI MISMO test fails to make a clear distinction between his A- and B-type sentences. This is explicitly recognised at the end of Knowles' footnote partially reproduced above:

"... The claim being made in this paper is not that POR SI MISMO phrases will occur compatibly in all cases of B-type sentences, but rather if the phrase does occur, the sentence will be B-type, i.e. the verb will also be plural." (Knowles 1975, p.14, fn.2)

This obviously implies that in Knowles' approach there are certain B-type sentences that are incompatible with a POR SI MISMO phrase in the plural, although the verb is plural, e.g. (\*1/19).

Observe that those B-type sentences that in Knowles' approach are incompatible with a POR SI MISMO phrase in the plural are the same B-type sentences that can be paraphrased with UNO sentences and, therefore, equated with his A-type sentences:

(1/21) a. Se abrieron las puertas (\*por sí mismas).

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors (\*by themselves).'

=

b. Se abrió las puertas (\*por sí mismas).

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors (\*by themselves).'

=

c. Uno abrió las puertas (\*por sí mismas).

'One opened the doors (\*by themselves).'

Also observe that those B-type sentences that are compatible with a POR SI MISMO phrase in the plural are the very ones that cannot be paraphrased with UNO sentences:

(1/22) a. Las puertas se abrieron por sí mismas.

'The doors opened-3rd.p.pl. by themselves.'

/

b. Uno abrió las puertas.

'One opened the doors.'

Again, what Knowles (1975) has done by proposing the POR SI MISMO test is to trace a clear-cut distinction between Otero's A- and B-type sentences, not his own. I will come back to the discussion of the POR SI MISMO test in Chapter II.

The only syntactic trait that really differentiates A- and B-type sentences at the surface level in Knowles' approach is agreement:

"[In A-type sentences] the verb remains singular even when the noun phrase is plural...", and

"[In B-type sentences] the verb is plural if the associated NP is plural." (Knowles 1975, p.9)

This, I will argue in Chapter III of this study, is to be accounted for by an optional rule of object-verb agreement in the case of the Impersonal SE Construction, and the regular subject-verb agreement rule in the case of the Intransitive SE Construction.

## 1.2. THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE ONE SOURCE ANALYSIS.

Let us now discuss Knowles' arguments against the one source analysis of examples such as (1/1) and (1/2) reproduced below:

(1/23) a. Se abrió las puertas. (cf. (1/1))

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors.'

b. Se abrieron las puertas. (cf. (1/2))

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors.'

According to Knowles (1975, p.10), neither of the following assumptions existing in the literature on the topic can be maintained: [fn.1/4]

"ASSUMPTION 1: Both [...] sentences are the same in deep and derived structure (except for the superficial verb-plural morpheme in [example (1/23a)]", and

"ASSUMPTION 2: Both sentences have the same deep structure." (Knowles 1975, p.10)



Indeed, what he has claimed in relation to Assumption 1 is:

"One corollary of the assumption that two strings are the same in deep and derived structure is that they will reveal the same syntactic properties. Evidence that they differ in their syntactic properties and transformational potential is provided by their behaviour in clitic crossover phenomena and in conditional clauses." (Knowles 1975, p.10)

In his discussion of clitic crossover and conditional clauses, Knowles (1975) confines the application of these tests to sentences such as (1/23b), and a subset of his A-type sentences: those constructed with intransitive and copular verbs, not (1/23a), which is actually the sentence that he claims is different from (1/23b). This, I believe, is what vitiates Knowles' argument. I will return to this point in my discussion of examples (1/34)-(1/41).

The type of examples constructed with intransitive and copular verbs considered by Knowles (1975) in his discussion of clitic crossover and conditional clauses is illustrated below:

(1/24) Se vive para servir al rey.

'PRO lives to serve the king.'

(1/25) Si se está enfadado, no se puede pensar.

'If PRO is angry, PRO cannot think.'

Knowles' first argument against Assumption 1 is based on clitic crossover, i.e.

"In cases where there is a two-verb VP, the clitic [SE] may occur BEFORE the leftmost verb or AFTER the rightmost." (Knowles 1975, p.10)

According to him, this is a property of examples such as (23b) only:

(1/26) a. SE están alquilando los apartamentos.

=

b. Están alquilándose los apartamentos.

'PRO be-3rd.p.pl. renting the apartments.'

Indeed, he has claimed, whenever the verb is intransitive or the copula, the clitic SE cannot appear after the rightmost verb:

- (1/27) a. En esta casa, ya no SE puede vivir sin pelear.  
 . b. \*En esta casa, ya no puede vivirSE sin pelear.  
 'In this house, PRO can no longer live without  
 arguing.'
- (1/28) a. Nunca SE puede estar en más de una parte a la vez.  
 b. \*Nunca puede estarSE en más de una parte a la vez.  
 'PRO can never be in more than one place at a time.'
- (1/29) a. No SE puede ser moro y cristiano a la vez.  
 b. \*NO puede serSE moro y cristiano a la vez.  
 'PRO cannot be moro and christian at the same time.'
- (1/30) a. Ya SE comenzó a diseñar los planos  
 para la nueva fábrica.  
 b. \*Ya comenzó a diseñarse los planos  
 para la nueva fábrica.  
 'PRO already started-3rd.p.sg. to design  
 the blue-prints for the new factory.'

Examples (1/27)-(1/29) are constructed with an intransitive and copular verbs: vivir ('to-live'), ser ('to-be'), and estar ('to-be-locative'). Example (1/30) is A-type in Knowles

approach because the verb is singular, although its associated NP is plural. [fn.1/5]

The second piece of evidence presented by Knowles (1975, p.10) against Assumption 1 comes from

"the particular form of the protasis of a conditional sentence expressed by the preposition A or DE",

as in the examples below:

(1/31) a. Si no se hubieran alquilado los pisos,  
habríamos tenido que trabajar.

=

b. Si no se hubiera alquilado los pisos,  
habríamos tenido que trabajar.

=

c. De no haberSE alquilado los pisos,  
habríamos tenido que trabajar.

d. \*De no haber~~SE~~ alquilado los pisos,  
habríamos tenido que trabajar.

'If PRO had not rented the apartments,  
we would have had to work.'

Knowles (1975) is very careful in pointing out that although example (1/31d) is starred, it does have a grammatical reading (i.e. 'If we had not rented the apartments, we would have had to work'), but not the reading that corresponds to (1/31a). He does not include example (1/31b) in his data, although it is crucial, as I shall show below.

According to him, the clitic SE cannot be deleted in the prepositional protasis corresponding to B-type sentences, but it must be deleted in that corresponding to A-type sentences. In his view, example (1/31c) is related to (1/31a)--which is B-type because its verb is plural--, but he fails to see that this is not a necessary condition since (1/31c) can also be related to (1/31b)--which is A-type because its verb is singular although its associated NP is plural--. This is the first flaw in this particular argument of Knowles 1975.

Furthermore, the following example, which is A-type because it is constructed with an intransitive verb, clearly shows that Knowles' claim about SE deletion in the prepositional protasis of conditional sentences cannot be maintained:

- (1/32) a. Si no se ladrara tanto al discutir,  
           Juan no estaría tan deprimido.
- b. De no ladrarSE tanto al discutir,  
           Juan no estaría tan deprimido.
- c. \*De no ladrar tanto al discutir,  
           Juan no estaría tan deprimido.
- 'If PRO did not bark so much when arguing,  
   Juan wouldn't be so depressed.'

As Knowles (1975) did in relation to example (1/31d), I must also point out that example (1/32c) has a grammatical reading (i.e. 'If Juan did not bark so much when arguing, Juan wouldn't be so depressed'), but not the reading that corresponds to the (a) example. If Knowles' assumption about SE deletion were correct, example (1/32c) would be grammatical in the impersonal reading, but it is not.

It should also be pointed out here that although examples (1/27b), (1/28b), (1/29b) and (1/30b) are unacceptable [fn.2/5], Knowles' arguments against Assumption 1 still cannot be maintained. Indeed, as he clearly says at the beginning of his discussion on clitic crossover and conditional clauses, he restricted the application of these two tests to sentences such

as (1/23b) and a subset of his A-type sentences (i.e. those constructed with intransitive and copular verbs). The reason for this is given in Knowles 1975, fn. 3:

"3. One of the great problems in discussing the types of Impersonal SE Sentences, and particularly when attempting to manipulate them in heuristic tests, is that of distinguishing between them at all stages, since in certain contexts THEY SEEM TO MERGE BOTH SEMANTICALLY AND SYNTACTICALLY..." (Emphasis mine, G.W.)

Of course, this is an explicit acknowledgement of the fact that sentences such as (1/23a) and (1/23b) have many traits in common, as I show in Chapter II of this study.

Knowles' footnote continues:

"... However, by recognising a class of verbs that can occur in only one construction, i.e. the intransitives and the copulars, we can go a long way towards solving the problem." (Knowles 1975, fn.3)

Thus, Knowles' approach to the problem can be summarized in the following outline:

(1/33) - A-TYPE SENTENCES: The verb is always singular.

a': Ss constructed with intransitive and copular verbs:

(1/33a') Se vive bien en España.

'PRO lives well in Spain.'

a'': Ss constructed with transitive verbs:

(1/33a'') Se abrió las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors.'

- B-TYPE SENTENCES: The verb is plural if its associated NP is plural. (Transitive verbs only.)

(1/33b) Se abrieron las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors.'

His argument goes as follows: If a' sentences exhibit a different syntactic behaviour from B-type sentences, it can be assumed that the former are the same in deep and derived structure as a'' sentences because these are also singular.



Nevertheless, since

"One corollary of the assumption that two strings are the same in deep and derived structure is that they will reveal the same syntactic properties." (Knowles 1975, p.10),

one would expect that a' sentences and a'' sentences reveal the same syntactic behaviour with respect to the two tests proposed. Evidence that this is not the case is provided by the examples below:

#### CLITIC CROSSOVER:

##### (1/34) a'-sentences:

a. No SE puede ser ~~moro~~ y cristiano al mismo tiempo.

b. \*No puede serSE ~~moro~~ y cristiano al mismo tiempo.

'PRO cannot be ~~moro~~ and christian at the same time.'

##### (1/35) a''-sentences:

a. No SE puede decir que esto no sea verdad.

=

b. No puede decirSE que esto no sea verdad.

'PRO cannot-3rd.p.sg. say that this is not true.'

## CONDITIONAL CLAUSES:

## (1/36) a'-sentences:

- a. Si no SE es español, no se puede entrar.
  - b. \*De no serSE español, no se puede entrar.
- 'If PRO is not Spanish, PRO cannot enter.'

## (1/37) a''-sentences:

- a. Si no SE hubiera reconocido que estos ejemplos son buenos, no tendría argumento.
  - =
  - b. De no haberSE reconocido que estos ejemplos son buenos, no tendría argumento.
- 'If PRO had not recognized that these examples are good, (I) wouldn't have had an argument.'

Furthermore, a'' sentences observe the same syntactic behaviour as B-type sentences with respect to the two tests proposed by Knowles 1975:

## CLITIC CROSSOVER:

## (1/38) a''-sentences:

- a. No SE puede decir que esto no sea verdad.
  - =
  - b. No puede decirSE que esto no sea verdad.
- 'PRO cannot-3rd.p.sg. say that this not true.'

(1/39) B-type:

a. No SE deben decir esas cosas.

=

b. No deben decirSE esas cosas.

'PRO must-3rd.p.pl. not say those things.'

# CONDITIONAL CLAUSES:

(1/40) a''-sentences:

a. Si no SE hubiera reconocido que estos ejemplos son buenos, no tendría argumento.

=

b. De no haberse reconocido que estos ejemplos son buenos, no tendría argumento.

'If PRO had not recognized that these examples are good, (I) whouldn't have had an argument.'

(1/41) B-type (according to Knowles 1975, p.10):

a. Si no SE hubieran alquilado los pisos, habríamos tenido que trabajar.

=

b. De no haberSE alquilado los pisos, habríamos tenido que trabajar.

'If PRO had-3rd.p.pl. not rented the apartments, we should have had to work.'

In light of this data, Knowles would be compelled to re-approach the problem in terms of two different types of Impersonal SE Sentences:

(i) Those constructed with intransitive and copular verbs; and

(ii) Those constructed with transitive verbs.

As stated now, it becomes clear that the problem posed by the particular behaviour of the clitic SE with respect to clitic crossover and conditional clauses does not have anything to do with the syntactic properties of Impersonal SE Sentences in general, but rather with whether the verb is intransitive or not.

Consequently, Knowles' observations regarding clitic crossover and conditional sentences are to remain confined to the sub-type of A sentences constructed with intransitive and copular verbs, and the following claim cannot be maintained:

"... A- and B-type sentences differ quite markedly in their syntactic behaviour at the level at which these rules apply." (Knowles 1975, pp.10-11)

Let us now examine Knowles' arguments against Assumption 2, i.e. that examples (1/1) and (1/2) reproduced below have the same deep structure:

(1/42) a. Se abrió las puertas. (cf. (1/1))

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors.'

b. Se abrieron las puertas. (cf. (1/2))

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors.'

According to him, the strict subcategorization conditions are different for A- and B-type sentences. In fact, he has claimed, "direct objects do not occur in B-type sentences." (Knowles 1975, p.11)

(1/43) a. Los apartamentos, se los alquila sólo en verano.

'The apartments, PRO D.O.Cl.[them] rent-3rd.p.sg. only in summer.'

b. \*Los apartamentos, se los alquilan sólo en verano.

'The apartments, PRO D.O.Cl.[them] rent-3rd.p.pl. only in summer.'

(1/44) a. Se vió a todos los soldados.

'PRO saw-3rd.p.sg. to all-pl. the soldiers.'

b. \*Se vieron a todos los soldados.

'PRO saw-3rd.p.pl. to all-pl. the soldiers.'

Observe that in the case of example (1/43), the NP associated with the verb has been left-dislocated, i.e. 'moved out' of the boundaries of S to TOP position. Since verb-agreement is a rule that operates within the boundaries of S, the verb cannot be expected to agree with such an NP. Furthermore, since verb agreement is a process that establishes a certain harmony between the verb and its associated NP with respect to person and number, the verb cannot be expected to agree with the pronominal form 'left behind' because such PRO is not an NP, but a clitic. (See Chapter III for the details of this argument.)

In the case of examples such as (1/44), it should be pointed out that there are certain dialects where agreement across the so-called 'personal a', which marks object NPs that are [+animate, +specific], is perfectly possible. In fact, according to the Real Academia Española (1931, pp.261-262), Andres Bello reported the existence of examples such as:

(1/45) Se azotaron a los delincuentes.

'PRO whipped-3rd.p.pl. to the delinquents.'

Since most educated native speakers of Spanish will deny grammaticality to examples such as (1/45), it is worth quoting here the comment made by the Real Academia Española:

"Tambien es CENSURABLE el barbarismo (!) [emphasis and exclamation mark mine, G.W.] en que, segun nota el gramatico Bello, incurren en algunas regiones de America, donde colocan el verbo plural concertandolo con el acusativo complemento directo, diciendo Se azotaron a los delincuentes., en vez de Se azoto a los delincuentes." (Real Academia Española 1931, pp.261-262)

Although I emphasized the prescriptive part of the quote, what is important in a scientific approach is that examples such as (1/45) do exist and that they are to be generated by the grammar of Spanish. The prescriptive part only explains why educated speakers reject them as 'ungrammatical'.

The existence of examples such as (1/45) constitutes evidence against the claim that direct objects do not occur in B-type sentences. I will return to the problem posed by examples such as (1/45) in Chapter III of this study.

The other piece of evidence presented by Knowles against the assumption that sentences such as (23a) and (23b) are the same at the deep structure level is based on an example quoted from

Lozano (1970), who considers (1/46) acceptable, and examples such as (1/47) unacceptable:

(1/46) Se vendieron los coches por el dueño.

'PRO sold-3rd.p.pl. the cars by the owner.'

(1/47) Entonces, se hirió a los toros por el picador.

'Then, PRO wounded-3rd.p.sg. to the bulls  
by the picador.'

Here, I would say, the judgments are somewhat questionable. Some native speakers reject both, some accept both, and others--as reported by Lozano--only accept (1/46). Thus, it seems to me that (1/47) can only be questioned, but not starred, and as DeMello has pointed out

"Unfortunately, no one, to my knowledge, has stated exactly what does make such constructions acceptable. As Anthony Lozano correctly asserts, 'We need further evidence to describe completely the occurrence of agent in Las pirámides se edificaron por esclavos'. Hadlich also points out this fact: 'The circumstances under which passive agents may be expressed with the SE, passive sentences have not yet been clearly described.



Inasmuch as there exist some conditions under which its use is admissible, our grammar is inaccurate'."

(DeMello 1978, p.324)

Nevertheless, after the publication of DeMello's article cited above, the fact that sentences such as (1/47) do exist is beyond dispute. Consider the following examples quoted by DeMello (1978):

(1/48) Se vigilaba a los prisioneros por negros. (Lenz)  
 (The prisoners were guarded {by/through the use of} Blacks.)

(1/49) Así se arruina a la nación  
 por los malos gobernantes. (Benot)  
 (Thus is a nation ruined {by/through} bad rulers.)

(1/50) Aquí sólo nos toca hablar de lo que se hizo entonces  
 por los valerosos portugueses. (Alarcón)  
 (Here, we must only speak about what was done  
 by the brave Portuguese.)

Examples (1/48), (1/49) and (1/50) "have clearly not been artificially produced by grammarians in an attempt to substantiate a point of grammar" (DeMello 1978, p.325), and all of them are A-type according to Knowles' initial criterion because the corresponding verb is third person singular.

Finally, Knowles (1975, p.11) points out that

"Despite some erosion of the requirement that sentences with common deep structures be identical in meaning, the fact that their meaning is NOT identical is sufficient to demonstrate that the sentences are derived from distinct deep structures, unless the meaning difference is of the type for which we have reason to believe surface structure is relevant, e.g. scope and reference." (1975, p.11),

and the examples he presents strongly support this view:

(1/51) Se me rompió las gafas.

'PRO broke my glasses.'

(1/52) Se me rompieron las gafas.

'My glasses broke on me [for me].'

But example (1/52) is an Intransitive SE Sentence, not only different in meaning from (1/51), but also from (1/53):

(1/53) Se me rompieron las gafas.

'PRO broke my glasses.'

In fact, to speakers of those dialects where (1/51) is unacceptable, examples such as (1/52) are ambiguous. I have already discussed this ambiguity with respect to word order in Section One of this Chapter, and I have claimed that the unmarked word order of Intransitive SE Sentences is NP + SE + VERB. Examples such as (1/52) seem to contradict this assumption. Nevertheless, observe that 'new information' normally appears in sentence final position in Spanish. So, to the questions in (a), the normal answers are generally (b), not (c):

(1/54) a. Qué hizo la señora Méndez?

'What did señora Méndez do?'

b. La señora Méndez llamó.

'Señora Méndez phoned.'

c. #Llamó la señora Méndez.

'Phoned señora Méndez.'

(1/55) a. Quién llamó?

'Who phoned?'

b. Llamó la señora Méndez.

'Phoned señora Méndez.'

c. #La señora Méndez llamó.

'Señora Méndez phoned.'

Observe that this same pattern is followed by examples such as (1/52). To the questions in (a), the normal answers are those of (b), not (c):

(1/56) a. Qué se te rompió?

'What did-break-3rd.p.sg. on you?'

b. Se me rompieron las gafas. (cf. (1/52))

'My glasses broke on me.'

c. #Las gafas se me rompieron.

'My glasses broke on me.'

(1/57) a. Cómo se te rompieron las gafas?

'How did your glasses break on you?'

b. Las gafas se me rompieron solas.

'My glasses broke on me by themselves.'

c. #Se me rompieron solas las gafas.

OR,

\*Se me rompieron las gafas solas.

'Broke on me the glasses by themselves.'

Thus, the word order of examples such as (1/52) is perfectly explainable in terms of 'new information' or focus, and it does not constitute counter-evidence to the claim made in this study that the word order of Intransitive SE Sentences is NP + SE + VERB. The ungrammaticality of the second example under (1/57c) is due to the word order restrictions already discussed in relation to (\*1/19) above.

Consequently, it must be concluded that none of the arguments presented in Knowles (1975) against the assumption that examples such as (1/1) and (1/2) are the same in deep and derived structure really hold. Indeed, I have presented factual evidence contradicting Knowles' claim that these sentences exhibit different syntactic behaviour with respect to clitic crossover phenomena and the particular form of the protasis of conditional sentences expressed by the infinitive preceded by the prepositions 'a' and 'de'. Further, I have also pointed out that even if the grammaticality of the counter-examples here presented is questioned, Knowles' claim cannot be maintained because neither clitic crossover nor conditional clauses trace a clear-cut distinction between his A- and B-type sentences, but only between a particular sub-set of A and his B-type.

Moreover, I have examined Knowles' claim that objects do not occur in his B-type sentences and have advanced a feasible explanation for the lack of verb agreement observed in those examples where the NP associated with the verb has been left-dislocated. I have also presented some factual evidence against the currently accepted assumption that verb agreement is not possible across the so called 'personal a', and discussed the appearance of the agentive prepositional phrase in the sentences under analysis, pointing out that native speakers' judgments of grammaticality are contradictory with respect to examples containing such a phrase, although there is clear evidence that such examples are perfectly acceptable under certain conditions that still remain to be described.

Finally, I have advanced a tentative solution to the problem posed by the word order exhibited by some Intransitive SE Sentences in terms of focus or 'new information', and concluded that this cannot be considered counter-evidence to the claim made in this study that the unmarked word order of this type of sentences is NP + SE + VERB.

### 1.3. SEMANTIC CONSIDERATIONS.

Knowles (1975, p.13) observed that one group of his B-type sentences "seem to imply an indefinite human subject". According to him,

"The explanation for this appears to be that certain verbs, because of their lexical meaning, necessarily imply a human agent, e.g. soñar ('to dream'), as opposed to romper ('to break'). The result is that in B-type constructions the necessary implications of the two verbs are different:

(1/58) Se han soñado muchos sueños en esa cama.

'Many dreams have been dreamt in that bed.'

(1/59) Se han roto muchas ventanas en esa casa.

'Many windows have got broken in that house.'

"Clearly, [(1/58)], because of the very meaning of soñar, must imply a human or animate agent, since dreams are never dreamt in vacuo, while [(1/59)] is neutral in terms of the implication of an agent."

(Knowles 1975, p.13)

Thus, he has claimed, the difference in meaning between examples such as (1/2) and (1/3) reproduced below is a question of lexical interpretation of the verb:

(1/60) Se abrieron las puertas. (cf. (1/2))

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors.'

(1/61) Las puertas se abrieron. (cf. (1/3))

'The doors opened-3rd.p.pl.'

Nevertheless, Impersonal SE Sentences systematically imply the existence of a human agent, regardless of whether the verb agrees with its associated NP or not, and "even when the verb is one normally associated with a non-human animal" (Contreras 1974, p.3):

(1/62) a. No se rumia las comidas.

'Neg. PRO ruminate-3rd.p.sg. the meals.'

b. No se rumian las comidas.

'Neg. PRO ruminate-3rd.p.pl. the meals.'

If Knowles' assumptions about the interpretation of his B-type sentences were correct, a sentence such as (1/62b) should never be interpreted as an Impersonal SE Sentence because the verb



rumiar ('to ruminate') does not imply a human agent. On the contrary, it implies the existence of a ruminant animal. Nevertheless, the impersonal interpretation is the only possible interpretation here. In fact, observe that the following example is ungrammatical:

(1/63) \*Las comidas se rumian por sí solas.

'\*The meals get ruminated by themselves.'

The ungrammaticality of (1/63) is due to the fact that rumiar ('to ruminate') does not become intransitive when the clitic SE is added, i.e. it is not a middle verb according to DeArmond's characterization mentioned in fn.0/2 above.

Consequently, the impersonal interpretation of (1/62b) cannot be attributed to a lexical interpretation of the verb as Knowles (1975) has proposed, nor to an interpretation imposed by the clitic SE alone--which is morphologically the same as the SE of the Intransitive SE Construction--. Rather, it must be attributed to a specific structural configuration, where the NP that triggers agreement must appear in object position. Further, since examples (1/62a) and (1/62b) have the same interpretation, they must be structurally equivalent.

Further evidence to support this view is provided by the distribution of 'agent-oriented adverbs'. Observe that an adverb such as deliberadamente ('deliberately') may occur in preverbal position in the Impersonal SE Construction, but not in the Intransitive SE Construction:

(1/64) a. Deliberadamente se rompió las ventanas.

'Deliberately PRO broke-3rd.p.sg. the windows.'

b. Deliberadamente se rompieron las ventanas.

'Deliberately PRO broke-3rd.p.pl. the windows.'

(1/65) \*Las ventanas deliberadamente se rompieron.

(\*The windows broke deliberately.)

If Knowles' assumption about the neutrality of verbs such as romper ('to break') with respect to the implication of an agent was correct, example (1/65) should be grammatical in the impersonal reading, but it is not.

That 'agent-oriented adverbs' may occur in pre-verbal position in Spanish is attested by the following example:

(1/66) (Ellos) deliberadamente rompieron las ventanas.

'(They) deliberately broke the windows.'

Consequently, Knowles' assumptions about the interpretation of sentences such as (1/2) and (1/3) in the one-source analysis cannot be maintained either.

#### 1.4. THE IMPERSONAL 'SE': THREE SOURCES OR ONE?

In this section, I will argue that Knowles' derivation of Impersonal SE Sentences whose verbs exhibit agreement with their associated NPs--which he claims have the same deep and derived structure as Intransitive SE Sentences--is empirically inadequate, regardless of the following factors:

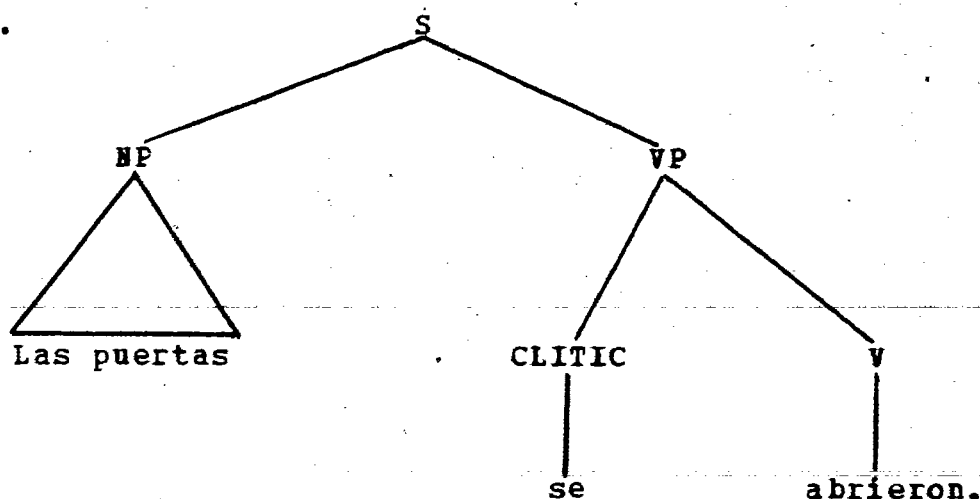
(i) The validity of the criteria proposed in Knowles (1975) to distinguish between his A- and B-type sentences, which I have questioned in Section One of this Chapter;

(ii) The validity of his arguments against the one source analysis, which was discussed in Section Two; and

(iii) The validity of his assumptions about the interpretation of Impersonal SE Sentences that exhibit verb agreement, which was questioned in the last section.

Let us first consider the terms of Knowles' solution:

(1/67) a.



- b. "There is a set of transitive verbs generally subcategorised for human subjects that become intransitive with inanimate subjects provided the clitic SE is added." (Knowles 1975, p.12)

Stated in these terms--the question of the position of the clitic aside--Knowles' solution would systematically block the generation of sentences such as the following:

(1/68) Se van a exterminar las ratas.

'PRO are going to exterminate the rats.'

where the head of the NP associated with the verb is [+animate].

Another possibility would be to claim that there is a third source for the Impersonal SE, namely that of reflexive or reciprocal sentences, and that the impersonal reading is a question of surface level interpretation. This view would be supported by the fact that (1/68) is at least four ways ambiguous:

(1/69):

- a. 'PRO are going to exterminate the rats.' [IMPERSONAL]
- b. 'The rats are going to get exterminated.' [INTRANSITIVE]
- c. 'The rats are going to exterminate themselves.' [REFLEXIVE]
- d. 'The rats are going to exterminate each other.' [RECIPROCAL]

This solution is certainly not very appealing.

An alternative solution would be to modify in the following way the above-quoted assumption:

There is a set of transitive verbs generally subcategorised for human subjects that become intransitive with non-human subjects provided the clitic SE is added.

But again, this would preclude the generation of some other sentences such as

(1/70) Mañana se fusilan los criminales.

'Tomorrow PRO will execute the criminals.'

where the head of the NP associated with the verb is [+human].

Apparently, the only way to remedy Knowles' proposal is as follows:

There is a set of transitive verbs generally subcategorised for human subjects that become intransitive with subjects that satisfy the selectional restrictions of their objects provided the clitic SE is added.

In principle, this seems to be a good solution for the derivation of Intransitive SE Sentences, perhaps at the lexical level and involving the type of lexical redundancy rules proposed in Hust (1978)[fn.1/6], but it is not an adequate solution for the derivation of Impersonal SE Sentences whose verbs exhibit agreement. In fact, there are certain instances

of the latter where the verb agrees in person and number with an NP that does not have any argumental relationship to that verb. Consider the following example:

(1/71) Se comenzaron a diseñar los planos.

'PRO started to design the blue-prints.'

In this particular instance, the NP los planos ('the blue-prints') is the object of diseñar ('to design'), not of comenzar ('to start'). Nevertheless, the tensed verb of the sentence still may agree with it. Thus, it must be concluded that Impersonal SE Sentences whose verbs exhibit agreement cannot be derived from the same source as Intransitive SE Sentences.

A further inadequacy of Knowles' proposal is that of the basic word order his analysis imposes on this type of Impersonal SE Sentences. As noted in the first section of this Chapter, Intransitive SE Sentences have a different word order from Impersonal SE Sentences: the former have NP + SE + VERB, and the latter SE + VERB + NP. Thus, Knowles' analysis requires a special rule that would move the NP associated with the verb from pre-verbal position to post-verbal position.



Consequently, it must be concluded that

(i) The two source analysis fails to account for the existence of examples such as (1/71) even if the formulation of the original proposal made in Knowles 1975 is improved in the terms here discussed.

(ii) Such analysis requires an extra movement rule that would re-order the constituents of the sentence in order to obtain the unmarked word order of Impersonal SE Sentences.

### 1.5. CONCLUSIONS.

In this Chapter I have shown that

(i) The tests proposed by Knowles (1975) to distinguish between his A- and B-type sentences at the surface level do not actually establish a clear-cut distinction between his types, but rather, between those considered by Otero (1972, 1973 and 1976).

(ii) None of the arguments presented in Knowles (1975) against the assumption that Indefinite SE Sentences and Impersonal SE Sentences that exhibit verb agreement are the same in deep and derived structure really hold.

(iii) The difference in meaning between Intransitive SE Sentences and Impersonal SE Sentences that exhibit verb agreement is not due to the lexical interpretation of the verb, but rather to a structural difference.

(iv) The two-source analysis of Impersonal SE Sentences is empirically inadequate because it fails to account for the relevant data.

Consequently, it must be concluded that the two-source analysis of Impersonal SE Sentences, as presented in Knowles (1975), cannot be maintained.

In the following Chapter, I will present further evidence showing that the NP that triggers optional verb agreement in the Impersonal SE Construction is not the subject of the verb, but very likely its object, confirming the claim made in Otero (1972, 1973 and 1976).

## FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER ONE

[1/1] See Rivas (1977) and Strozer (1976) for a non-transformational derivation of clitics.

[1/2] Some native speakers still find (1/9) contradictory, but they clearly see the difference in meaning between the sentences in question in examples such as the following: No se difundieron las noticias, pero -sin embargo- las noticias se difundieron (solas). - (PRO did not spread the news, but--nevertheless--the news did spread (by themselves)).

[1/3] They include speakers from Colombia (Nelson and Marjeli Onzaga), Chile (Jovita Belmar and Pablo Dobud), México (Margarita Gorrison and José Lema), Spain (Rev. Claudio Llopis and Encarnación Bayón-Ruiz), Uruguay (Nellie Villegas), and Venezuela (Nestor and Mary Barillas). I am much indebted to all of them for their assistance.

[1/4] I will not discuss here Knowles arguments against the assumption that there is a subjectivalization rule that places the direct object in subject position made in Contreras 1973 and

1974 since Chapter II of this study is fully devoted to the question of whether the NP that triggers agreement in the Impersonal SE Construction is actually the subject or not.

[1/5] Although examples (b) in (1/27)-(1/30) are all starred, some native speakers do accept (1/27b), (1/28b) and (1/30b). Since the native speakers' judgements are contradictory, it is my contention that no strong case can be made on the basis of this data. Clitic crossover phenomena certainly deserve full attention in any study dealing with clitic movements, which this thesis is not.

[1/6] Probably something like

$$[X + SE] \rightarrow [- \text{NP}, \alpha[f]] \setminus [+ \text{NP}, \alpha[f]],$$

where X is a middle verb, i.e. a transitive verb that becomes intransitive provided that the clitic SE is added. The rule ensures that the verb in question, which is otherwise strictly subcategorized for an object with the selectional restriction specified by the value  $\alpha$ [feature], take no object but a subject that satisfies the same value  $\alpha$ [feature].

## CHAPTER II:

### SUBJECTS AND PSEUDO-SUBJECTS.

---

Contreras (1976, p.128) has recently claimed that

"the only reason an argument must be identified as subject [at the surface level in Spanish] is so the verb may agree with it".

This makes the definition of 'subject of' in Spanish strictly dependent on the agreement exhibited by the verb, which as noted by Keenan (1976, p.316) "fails to be a necessary condition on subjecthood" in many languages of the world.

Moreover, Contreras' claim lacks theoretical significance because it cannot be falsified: since in Contreras' view every argument that agrees with the verb in Spanish is its subject at the surface level, no evidence can be presented to the contrary. In fact, no surface subject ever fails to agree with the verb in Spanish, but this does not necessarily imply that every argument

that agrees with the verb is its subject at that level. The fallacy of Contreras' statement quoted above rests precisely on this point.

Furthermore, no significant generalization can be made on the basis of that definition. Indeed, it only explains verb agreement, but it leaves unexplained some other syntactic processes such as Subject-to-Subject Raising, Subject-to-Object Raising, Equi-NP Deletion, and others that need to identify a certain NP as the subject of a certain sentence in a given string of constituents. [fn. 2/1]

Finally, Contreras' approach to subjecthood fails to give a principled explanation to the fact that there are certain constructions such as the following, where the verb may or may not agree with its associated NP:

(i) Impersonal SE Sentences:

(2/1) a. Se abrieron las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors.'

b. Se abrió las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors.'

(Somebody opened the doors.)

(ii) Sentences with Meteorological Verbs:

(2/2) a. Llovieron monedas.

'Rained-3rd.p.pl. coins.'

b. Llovió monedas.

'Rained-3rd.p.sg. coins.'

(It rained coins.)

(iii) Existential Sentences:

(2/3) a. Habían muchas personas.

'There-were many persons.'

b. Había muchas personas.

'There-was many persons.'

(There were many persons.)

As is clear from the English translations provided in parenthesis, there is no known difference in the interpretation of examples (a) and (b) above.

Contreras' approach to subjecthood in Spanish is formalized in the two following rules: [fn.2/2]



(2/4) Subject Selection (OBLIGATORY):

- Assign the feature [+subject],
  - a. in a structure with a patient and an identifier,
    - (i) if one argument is [+third person] and the other [-third person], to the latter;
    - (ii) if they differ in number, to the argument marked [+plural];
  - b. in other structures, to the highest ranking argument in the following hierarchy: agent, instrument, experiencer, patient, identifier.

(2/5) The verb agrees in person and number with the argument having the feature [+subject].

In order to accommodate examples such as (2/1) and maintain his definition of subject, Contreras (1976, p.142) requires the following additional rule:

(2/6) The Subject-Selection hierarchy may be optionally altered when the highest ranking argument is indeterminate.

The optional verb agreement observed in examples such as (2/2) and (2/3) is accounted for by a lexical feature, which

"allows the optional assignment of the feature [+subject] to the patient of llover ('to rain') and haber ('there-to-be')." (Contreras 1976, p.128)

Assuming that all this machinery works [fn.2/3], it would eventually generate the correct out-puts, but it definitely leaves the basic question unanswered: Why is verb agreement optional in the case of examples such as (2/1), (2/2) and (2/3)?

The answer is because the corresponding NPs are not subjects, in spite of the agreement exhibited by the verb.

In this Chapter I will argue that only surface subject NPs trigger obligatory verb agreement in Spanish. The evidence I will present is mainly based on word order considerations and a series of correlated syntactic tests such as Subject-to-Subject Raising, Subject-to-Object Raising, Equi-NP Deletion, Left Dislocation from Subject Position, and some other tests applicable to those NPs that trigger optional verb agreement. In particular, I will examine the syntactic behaviour of the NP associated with the verb in the Intransitive SE Construction vis-a-vis that of the Impersonal SE Construction, with respect to the tests for subjecthood available in the language, and I

will show that only the former is sensitive to these tests, whereas the latter is not. No claim will be made in relation to the internal mechanics of the syntactic processes used as evidence to support the argumentation.

## 2.1. VERB AGREEMENT.

Observe that the tensed verb of a sentence in Spanish obligatorily agrees in person and number with its surface subject:

### (i) Copular Sentences:

(2/7) Juan y María {son/\*es} estudiantes.

'Juan and María {are/\*is} students.'

(2/8) Tú y tu madre {son/\*es/\*eres} el problema.

'You and your mother {are/\*is/\*be-2ndp.sg.} the problem.'

(2/9) Juan y María {están/\*está} cansados.

'Juan and María {are-loc./\*is-loc.} tired.'

### (ii) Intransitive Sentences:

(2/10) Juan y María {hablan/\*habla} mucho.

'Juan and María {speak/\*speaks} a lot.'

(iii) Intransitive SE Sentences:

(2/11) Las puertas se {abrieron/\*abrió} por sí solas.

'The doors opened{-3rd.p.pl./\*-3rd.p.sg.} by  
themselves.'

(iv) Active Sentences:

(2/12) Juan y María {estudiaron/\*estudió} el argumento.

'Juan and María studied{-3rd.p.pl./\*-3rd.p.sg.}  
the argument.'

(v) Passive Sentences:

(2/13) Los argumentos {fueron/\*fue} estudiados (por Juan).

'The arguments {were/\*was} studied (by Juan).'

(vi) Subject-to-Subject Raising:

(2/14) a. Parece que Juan y María {están/\*está} enamorados.

'Seems that Juan and María {are/\*is} in love.'

=====>

b. Juan y María {parecen/\*parece} estar enamorados.

'Juan and María {seem/\*seems} to-be in love.'

(vii) 'Tough Movement':

(2/15) a. Es muy difícil (de) complacer a los estudiantes.

'Is very difficult (of) to-please to[D.O.marker]  
the students.'

=====>

b. Los estudiantes {son/\*es} muy difíciles de  
complacer.

'The students {are/\*is} very difficult of  
to-please.'

Also observe that subject-verb agreement is obligatory regardless of the position of the subject in the sentence. In fact, the subject provided in parenthesis after the example below may appear in pre-verbal position, post-verbal position, between the direct object and the indirect object, or at the end of the sentence. Subject-verb agreement remains invariable.  
[fn.2/4]

(2/16) Entonces, \_\_\_\_\_ le {entregaron/\*entregó} \_\_\_\_\_

el libro \_\_\_\_\_ a María \_\_(?). (LOS ALUMNOS)

'Then, \_\_\_\_\_ I.O.Cl. handed-in(-3rd.p.pl./\*-3rd.p.sg.)

\_\_\_\_\_ the book \_\_\_\_\_ to María \_\_(?). (THE STUDENTS)

Nevertheless, as we have already observed in examples (2/1)-(2/3), verb agreement is optional in the case of the Impersonal SE Construction, certain sentences constructed with meteorological verbs, and certain others constructed with the existential haber ('there-to-be').

In light of the nature of the verb agreement exhibited throughout examples (2/1)-(2/3) and (2/7)-(2/16), we are in a position to advance the following hypothesis:

(2/17) Only surface subject NPs trigger obligatory verb agreement in Spanish.

As is well known, transformational grammar defines the subject of a sentence as the NP directly dominated by S (Chomsky 1965, p.71). If (2/17) is correct, this structural definition of subject is perfectly well satisfied by the data presented throughout examples (2/7)-(2/15). That the subject may appear in some other positions, as in example (2/16), is probably due to stylistic movements, as I shall show below.

## 2.2. WORD ORDER CONSIDERATIONS.

The unmarked word order of Spanish affirmative simple sentences is NP VERB (NP), where the NP that precedes the verb is its subject, and the one that follows, its object:

(2/18) a. Juan y María estudiaron el argumento.

'Juan and María studied the argument.'

b. Estudiaron Juan y María el argumento. (Yes/No Question)

c. Estudiaron el argumento Juan y María. (Yes/No Question)

d. El argumento estudiaron Juan y María. (Topicalization)

e. ??Juan y María el argumento estudiaron.

f. ??El argumento Juan y María estudiaron.

Also observe that when the TOP node is filled, the subject may appear in post-verbal or sentence-final position: [fn.2/5]

(2/19) a. Ayer, estudiaron Juan y María el argumento.

b. Ayer, estudiaron el argumento Juan y María.

'Yesterday, Juan and María studied the argument.'

Furthermore, as we pointed out in relation to example (2/16), the subject may appear almost anywhere in the sentence. This relatively free word order is only explainable in terms of



stylistic movements, which according to Banfield--as cited in Emonds 1976, p.9: "follow all other syntactic rules, including agreement [...]", and "appear to be subject to some version of Chomsky's 'up-to-ambiguity' principle (1965, pp.126-127)".

Chomsky's 'up-to-ambiguity' principle seems to be particularly relevant here. In fact, observe that when the subject NP cannot be identified as such because verb agreement has been neutralized by the presence of an object NP that has the same features of person and number as the subject, pre-verbal position is mandatory for the subject, and so is post-verbal position for the object:

(2/18) a. Entonces, el papel dañó la máquina.

'Then, the paper-3rd.p.sg. messed-up-3rd.p.sg.  
the machine-3rd.p.sg.'

b. \*Entonces, dañó el papel la máquina.

c. \*Entonces, dañó la máquina el papel.

(2/19) a. Entonces, la máquina dañó el papel.

'Then, the machine-3rd.p.sg. messed-up-3rd.p.sg.  
the paper-3rd.p.sg.'

b. \*Entonces, dañó la máquina el papel.

c. \*Entonces, dañó el papel la máquina.



Since the SVO order is obligatory in Spanish when the subject cannot be identified on the basis of verb agreement, this constitutes evidence to support the claim made in this section that the unmarked word order of affirmative sentences in Spanish is NP VERB (NP), where the NP that precedes the verb is its subject, and the one that follows, its object.

As was pointed out in the First Section of Chapter I, observe that the word order of Intransitive SE Sentences is NP + SE + VERB, whereas that of Impersonal SE Sentences is SE + VERB + NP:

(i) Intransitive SE Construction:

(2/20) Las puertas se abrieron (por sí solas).

'The doors opened-3rd.p.pl. (by themselves).'

(ii) Impersonal SE Construction:

(2/21) a. Se abrieron las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors.'

b. Se abrió las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors.'

Furthermore, observe that sentences constructed with meteorological verbs and the existential haber ('there-to-be') have the same basic word order as Impersonal SE Sentences:

(iii) Sentences with meteorological verbs:

(2/22) a. Llovieron monedas del cielo.

'Rained-3rd.p.pl. coins from the sky.'

b. Llovió monedas del cielo.

'Rained-3rd.p.sg. coins from the sky.'

(2/23) a. \*Monedas llovieron del cielo.

'Coins rained-3rd.p.pl. from the sky.'

b. \*Monedas llovió del cielo.

'Coins rained-3rd.p.sg. from the sky.'

(iv) Existential Sentences:

(2/24) a. Habían muchas personas en la fiesta.

'There-were many persons at the party.'

b. Había muchas personas en la fiesta..

'There-was many persons at the party.'

(2/25) a. \*Muchas personas habían en la fiesta.

'Many persons there-were at the party.'

b. \*Muchas personas había en la fiesta.

'Many persons there-was at the party.'

Of course, examples such as (2/23) and (2/25) are perfectly acceptable if the constituent in TOP position is assigned emphatic stress, which in turn calls for comma intonation:

(2/26) a. MONEDAS, llovieron del cielo. (cf. (2/23a))

b. MONEDAS, llovió del cielo. (cf. (2/23b))

(2/27) a. MUCHAS PERSONAS, habían en la fiesta. (cf. (2/25a))

b. MUCHAS PERSONAS, había en la fiesta. (cf. (2/25b))

Comma intonation marks topicalization. Consequently, although the corresponding NPs appear in pre-verbal position in examples (2/26) and (2/27), they are not in subject position. [fn.2/6]

Furthermore, observe that the NP that triggers obligatory verb agreement in the Intransitive SE Construction, as in (2/20), appears to the left of the verb, whereas the one that triggers optional verb agreement in the Impersonal SE Construction, as in

(2/21), appears to the right of the verb. Thus, the relative positions of the corresponding NPs with respect to the verb are directly correlated to obligatory and optional verb agreement.

This correlation supports the claim being made in this study, namely that only surface subject NPs trigger obligatory verb agreement in Spanish.

### 2.3. SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT RAISING.

Observe that in Spanish, both deep structure subjects and derived subjects are sensitive to Subject-to-Subject Raising. Also observe that the raised subject cannot remain in its original position.

#### (i) Active Sentences:

(2/28) a. Parece que Juan y María están estudiando  
el argumento.

'Seems that Juan and María are studying  
the argument.'

=====>

b. Juan y María parecen estar estudiando  
el argumento.

'Juan and María seem to-be studying  
the argument.'

BUT,

c. \*Parecen Juan y María estar estudiando  
el argumento.

'Seem Juan and María to-be studying  
the argument.'

## (ii) Passive Sentences:

(2/29) a. Parece que los argumentos están siendo estudiados.

'Seems that the arguments are being studied.'

=====&gt;

b. Los argumentos parecen estar siendo estudiados.

'The arguments seem to-be being studied.'

BUT,

c. \*Parecen los argumentos estar siendo estudiados.

'Seem the arguments to-be being studied.'

Let us now compare the syntactic behaviour exhibited by the NP associated with the verb in the Intransitive SE Construction, and that of the Impersonal SE Construction.

## (i) Intransitive SE Construction:

(2/30) a. Parece que estas puertas se han abierto solas.

'Seems that these doors got opened by themselves.'

=====&gt;

b. Estas puertas parecen haberSE abierto solas.

'These doors seem to-have opened by themselves.'

BUT,

c. \*Parecen estas puertas haberSE abierto solas.

'Seem these doors to-have opened by themselves.'

(ii) Impersonal SE Construction:

(2/31) a. Parece que se le {entregaron/entregó}  
los libros a María.

'Seems that PRO I.O.Cl. gave{-3rd.p.pl./  
-3rd.p.sg.} the books to María.'

=====>

b. \*Los libros parecen haberSEle entregado a María.

'The books seem to-have-PRO-I.O.Cl. given  
to María.'

BUT,

c. LOS LIBROS, parece(n) haberSEle entregado  
a María.

'The books, seem to-have-PRO-I.O.Cl. given  
to María.'

AND,

d. Parece(n) haberSEle entregado los libros  
a María.'

'Seem to-have-PRO-I.O.Cl. given the books  
to María.'



First of all, observe that in the case of the Intransitive SE Construction, the NP that triggers obligatory verb agreement is sensitive to Subject-to-Subject Raising, and that it cannot remain in its original position, just as the other NPs sensitive to this same process in examples (2/28) and (2/29).

Second, observe that this is not the case of the NP associated with the verb in the Impersonal SE Construction, as is shown in examples (2/31b), (2/31c), and (2/31d). Also observe that verb agreement is optional in (2/31c) and (2/31d), that the NP that triggers optional agreement in (2/31c) is not in subject, but in TOP position, and that such an NP can remain in its original position, between the verb and the corresponding Indirect Object, as in (2/31d). All these facts clearly suggest that the optional verb agreement observed in examples (2/31c) and (2/31d) is not due to Subject-to-Subject Raising, but rather to a process of backwards agreement, in the terms already discussed in relation to example (1/71), Chapter I. I will come back to this question in Section Ten of this Chapter. The terms of the corresponding agreement rule are fully discussed in Chapter III.

Furthermore, observe that the NPs associated with the verb in sentences constructed with meteorological verbs and the existential haber ('there-to-be') exhibit the same syntactic behaviour as that of the NP of the Impersonal SE Construction:

## (i) Sentences with meteorological verbs:

(2/32) a. Parece que {están/esta} lloviendo monedas.

'Seems that {are/is} raining coins.'

=====&gt;

b. \*Monedas parecen estar lloviendo.

'Coins seem to-be raining.'

BUT,

c. MONEDAS, parece(n) estar lloviendo.

'coins, {seems/seen} to-be raining.'

AND,

d. Parece(n) estar lloviendo monedas.

'{Seems/Seen} to-be raining coins.'

## (ii) Existential Sentences:

(2/33) a. Parece que habían muchas personas en la fiesta.

'Seems that there-were many persons at the party.'

=====&gt;

b. \*Muchas personas parecían haber en la fiesta.

'Many persons seemed there-to-be at the party.'

BUT,

c. MUCHAS PERSONAS, parecía(n) haber en la fiesta.

'Many persons, seemed[-3rd.p.sg/-3rd.p.pl.]

there-to-be at the party.'

AND,

d. Parecía(n) haber muchas personas en la fiesta.

'Seemed{-3rd.p.sg./-3rd.p.pl.} there-to-be

many persons at the party.'

Consequently, it must be concluded that only NPs that trigger obligatory verb agreement are sensitive to Subject-to-Subject raising, whereas those that trigger optional verb agreement are not.

#### 2.4. SUBJECT-TO-OBJECT RAISING.

Subject-to-Object Raising in Spanish is restricted to subjects of sentences that are complement to verbs of perception, such as the following: ver ('see'), oir ('hear'), escuchar ('listen'), notar ('notice'), and contemplar ('contemplate').  
[fn.2/7]

The following examples illustrate this process:

##### (i) Active Sentences:

(2/34) a. Yo ví que [Juan y María] estudiaban

el argumento.

'I saw that [Juan and María] studied-3rd.p.pl.  
the argument.'

=====

b. Yo ví [a Juan y María]<sub>i</sub> que [∅]<sub>i</sub> estudiaban

el argumento.

'I saw [Juan and María]<sub>i</sub> that [∅]<sub>i</sub> studied

-3rd.p.pl. the argument.'

OR,

c. Yo [los]<sub>i</sub> vi que [Ø]<sub>i</sub> estudiaban el argumentc.

'I [them]<sub>i</sub> saw that [Ø]<sub>i</sub> studied-3rd.p.pl.  
the argument.'

(ii) Passive Sentences:

(2/35) a. Yo ví que [las fábricas]<sub>i</sub> fueron destruídas.

'I saw that [the factories]<sub>i</sub> were destroyed.'

=====>

b. Yo [las]<sub>i</sub> vi que [Ø]<sub>i</sub> fueron destruídas.

'I [D.O.Cl.(them)]<sub>i</sub> saw that [Ø]<sub>i</sub> were  
destroyed.'

Consider now the syntactic behaviour of Intransitive SE and  
Impersonal SE Sentences:

(i) Intransitive SE Construction:

(2/36) a. Yo ví que [las puertas] se abrieron.

'I saw that [the doors] opened-3rd.p.pl.'

=====>

b. Yo [las]<sub>i</sub> ví que [Ø]<sub>i</sub> se abrieron.

'I [D.O.Cl.(them)]<sub>i</sub> saw that [Ø]<sub>i</sub> opened-3rd.p.pl.'

## (ii) Impersonal SE Construction:

(2/37) a. Yo vi que se le {entregaron/entregó}  
[ los libros] a María.

'I saw that PRO I.O.Cl. gave{-3rd.p.pl./  
-3rd.p.sg} [the books] to María.'

=====>

b. \*Yo [los]<sub>i</sub> vi que se le {entregaron/entregó}  
[ $\emptyset$ ]<sub>i</sub> a María.

'I [ D.O.Cl. (them) ]<sub>i</sub> saw that PRO I.O.Cl. gave  
{-3rd.p.pl./-3rd.p.sg} [ $\emptyset$ ]<sub>i</sub> to María.'

The grammaticality of example (2/36b) shows that the NP associated with the verb in the Intransitive SE Construction is sensitive to Subject-to-Object Raising, whereas the ungrammaticality of (2/37b) shows that that of the Impersonal SE Construction is not sensitive to this process.

Moreover, observe that sentences constructed with meteorological verbs and the existential haber ('there-to-be') exhibit the same behaviour as Impersonal SE Sentences with respect to Subject-to-Object Raising:

## (i) Sentences with meteorological verbs:

(2/38) a. Yo escuché que {llovieron/llovió} [los aplausos] .

'I heard that rained{-3rd.p.pl./-3rd.p.sg}  
[the applauds] .'

=====>

b. \*Yo [los]<sub>i</sub> escuché que {llovieron/llovió} [Ø]<sub>i</sub> .

'I [D.O.Cl. (them)]<sub>i</sub> heard that rained{-3rd.p.pl./  
-3rd.p.sg.} [Ø]<sub>i</sub> .'

## (ii) Existential Sentences:

(2/39) a. Yo ví que {habían/había} [muchas personas] .

'I saw that {there-were/there-was}  
[many persons] .

=====>

b. \*Yo [las]<sub>i</sub> ví que {habían/había} [Ø]<sub>i</sub> .

'I [D.O.Cl. (them)]<sub>i</sub> saw that  
[there-were/there-was] [Ø]<sub>i</sub> .'

Consequently, Subject-to-Object Raising clearly shows that only NPs that trigger obligatory agreement are subjects, whereas those that trigger optional agreement are not. [fn.2/8]

Since this process may affect subjects of tensed complement sentences to verbs of perception, and the verbs of those complement sentences must agree in person and number with the corresponding surface subject as is shown in examples (2/34), (2/35) and (2/36), Subject-to-Object Raising constitutes strong evidence in support of the claim being made in this Chapter, namely that only NPs that trigger obligatory agreement are subjects at the surface level in Spanish.



## 2.5. EQUI-NP DELETION.

According to Keenan (1976, p.316), "the most likely NPs to undergo Equi-NP deletion include basic subjects".

Consider the following example:

- (2/40) a. Juan y María querer [Juan y María cantar].  
 'Juan and María to-want [Juan and María to-sing].  
 =====>  
 b. Juan y María quieren  $\emptyset$  cantar.  
 'Juan and María want-3rd.p.pl.  $\emptyset$  to-sing.'

Observe that the NP associated with the verb in the Intransitive SE Construction is sensitive to Equi-NP Deletion in Spanish, whereas that of the Impersonal SE Construction is not:

### (i) Intransitive SE Construction:

- (2/41) a. Las puertas del ascensor no querer  
 [las puertas del ascensor cerrarse].  
 'The doors of the elevator NEG. to-want  
 [the doors of the elevator to-get-closed].  
 =====>

b. Las puertas del ascensor no quieren cerrarSE.

'The doors of the elevator don't want to-get-closed.'

(ii) Impersonal SE Construction:

(2/42) a. Las puertas del ascensor no querer

[PRO cerrar las puertas del ascensor].

'The doors of the elevator NEG. to-want

[PRO to-close the doors of the elevator].'

=====>

b. \*Las puertas del ascensor no quieren cerrarSE.

'The doors of the elevator don't want PRO to-close.'

Although metaphorical and contextually constrained, example (2/41b) is perfectly acceptable, whereas example (2/42b) is unacceptable in the impersonal SE reading. This fact shows that the NP that triggers optional verb agreement in the Impersonal SE Construction is not the subject of the sentence.

Nevertheless, observe that the NP that triggers optional agreement with meteorological verbs, may optionally trigger the same type of agreement with an equi verb:

(2/43) Quiere(n) llover monedas.

'Want {-3rd.p.sg./-3rd.p.pl.} to-rain ccins.'

But again, the fact that the NP monedas ('coins') may optionally agree with the equi verb does not necessarily imply that such an NP is its subject. Observe that (2/44) is grammatical, whereas (2/45) is not:

(2/44) Lo que Juan y María quieren es cantar. (cf. (2/40))

'What Juan and María want is to-sing.'

(2/45) \*Lo que las monedas quieren es llover. (cf. (2/43))

'What the coins want is to-rain.'

Of course, it could be argued, example (2/45) is ungrammatical because the NP las monedas ('the coins') does not satisfy the selectional restrictions of the verb querer ('to-want'). Since this is a fact, how is it possible then to claim that such an NP is the subject in the case of example (2/43)?

The solution to the problem is that such an NP is not the subject, and that the optional verb agreement exhibited by (2/43) is another case of backwards agreement, parallel to that already observed in example (2/31d).

Finally, let us consider the behaviour of existential sentences with respect to Equi-NP Deletion:

(2/46) a. \*Muchas personas querían haber.

'Many persons wanted there-to-be.'

b. \*Querían haber muchas personas.

'Wanted there-to-be many persons.'

Contrary to the case of example (2/45), no selectional restriction has been violated in (2/46a) and (2/46b). If the NP muchas personas ('many persons') were the subject of the existential haber ('there-to-be'), at least (2/46a) should be grammatical, but it is not.

Thus, it must be concluded that the NPs that trigger optional agreement in Spanish fail to be sensitive to Equi-NP Deletion, which is one of the tests for subjecthood available in the language.

## 2.6. LEFT DISLOCATION FROM SUBJECT POSITION:

Lexically filled subject NPs may be 'moved out' of the sentence to TOP position leaving a subject pronoun behind. [fn.2/9]

The following examples illustrate left dislocation from subject position in Spanish:

### (i) Active Sentences:

(2/47) [JUAN Y MARIA], [ellos] estudiaron el argumento.

'[Juan and María], [they] studied the argument.'

### (ii) Passive Sentences:

(2/48) [LOS ARGUMENTOS], [ellos] fueron estudiados;

no los ejemplos!

'[The arguments], [they] were studied;

not the examples!

Observe that the NP associated with the verb in the Intransitive SE Construction may be left-dislocated, whereas that of the Impersonal SE Construction may not:

## (i) Intransitive SE Construction:

(2/49) [ESTOS COCHES], [ellos] se venden (por sí solos).

'[These cars], [they] get-sold (by themselves).

## (ii) Impersonal SE Construction:

(2/50) \*[ESTOS COCHES], se vende(n) [ellos].

'[These cars], PRO sell{-3rd.p.sg/-3rd.p.pl} [they].

Although some of my consultants found examples such as (2/48) and (2/49) marginal, all of them agreed that (2/50) is definitely unacceptable. [fn.2/10]

The ungrammaticality of (2/50) clearly indicates that the NP *los coches* ('the cars') is not the subject of the sentence.

Let us now consider the syntactic behavior of existential sentences and sentences constructed with meteorological verbs.

Since only definite NPs may be replaced by subject pronouns, left-dislocation cannot apply in the case of existential sentences. In fact, since (2/51) is ungrammatical, there is no reason to expect that (2/52) be grammatical:

## (i) Existential Sentences:

(2/51) \*Había(n) las personas.

'There{-was/-were} the persons.'

(2/52) \*[LAS PERSONAS], [ellas] habían.

'[The persons], [they] there-were.'

In the case of sentences constructed with meteorological verbs, this test is applicable only to a few examples such as the following:

## (ii) Sentences with meteorological verbs:

(2/53) a. Los aplausos llovieron por todas partes.

'The applausds rained everywhere.'

=====&gt;

b. \*[LOS APLAUSOS], [ellos] llovieron

por todas partes.

'[The applausds], [they] rained  
everywhere.'

Consequently, Left Dislocation from Subject Position suggests that the NPs that trigger optional verb agreement are not subjects in Spanish.

## 2.7. THE 'POR SI MISMOS' PHRASE:

Observe that in Spanish, the prepositional phrase por si mismos ('by themselves') may refer back to the subject of sentences constructed with non-stative verbs only:

### (i) Intransitive Sentences:

- (2/54) [Juan y María]<sub>i</sub> vinieron [por sí mismos]<sub>i</sub>.  
 '[Juan and María]<sub>i</sub> came [by themselves]<sub>i</sub>.'

### (ii) Active Sentences:

- (2/55) a. [Juan y María]<sub>i</sub> prepararon el almuerzo  
 [por sí mismos]<sub>i</sub>.  
 '[Juan and María]<sub>i</sub> prepared lunch  
 [by themselves]<sub>i</sub>.'

- b. \*Juan y María prepararon [el almuerzo]<sub>i</sub>  
 [por sí mismo]<sub>i</sub>.  
 'Juan and Maria prepared [lunch]<sub>i</sub> [by itself]<sub>i</sub>.'



## (iii) Copular Sentences:

(2/56) a. \*Juan y María son estudiantes por sí mismos.

'Juan and María are students by themselves.'

b. \*Juan y María están cansados por sí mismos.

'Juan and María are tired by themselves.'

Consequently, this test is not applicable in the case of existential sentences, but--in principle--there is no reason to expect that this test would fail in the case of sentences constructed with meteorological verbs. Indeed, if the NP that triggers optional verb agreement in this type of sentences was the subject, these sentences should be compatible with the presence of a *por si mismos* phrase. Nevertheless, the example below shows that this is not the case:

(2/57) \*{Llovieron/Llovió} [flores],[por si mismas].

'Rained{-3rd.p.pl./-3rd.p.sg} [flowers],[by themselves].'

As we already observed in the First Section of Chapter I, the *por si mismos* phrase is compatible with Intransitive SE Sentences, but not with Impersonal SE Sentences:

(i) Intransitive SE Sentences:

(2/58) Las puertas se abrieron por sí mismas. (cf. (1/22))

'The doors opened-3rd.p.pl. by themselves.'

(ii) Impersonal SE Sentences:

(2/59) a. Se abrieron las puertas (\*por sí mismas).

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors (by themselves).'

b. Se abrió las puertas (\*por sí mismas).

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors (by themselves).'

(cf. (1/23))

Consequently, the por sí mismos test--originally proposed by Knowles 1975 to support his claim that sentences such as (2/59a) and (2/59b) are structurally different--provides an additional criterion to support the view here sustained, i.e. NPs that trigger optional verb agreement are not subjects in Spanish.

It is to be noted that in the case of example (2/59a), where the verb agrees with its associated NP, the intransitive reading is not possible when the por sí mismos phrase is present. The sentence is definitely ungrammatical. Since the different interpretation of sentences (2/58) and (2/59) crucially depends

on word order, as I have already shown in the First Section of Chapter I, the possibility of occurrence of the por sí mismos phrase in (2/58) constitutes further evidence in support of the view here assumed in relation to the position of subjects with respect to the verb, i.e. subjects precede the verb in affirmative sentences in Spanish.

## 2.8. SE DELETION IN INFINITIVAL COMPLEMENTS TO CAUSATIVE VERBS.

The particle SE of Intransitive SE Sentences cannot be deleted in infinitival complements to causative verbs, whereas that of Impersonal SE Sentences must be deleted: [2/11]

### (i) Intransitive SE Construction:

(2/60) a. Merlín hizo que las puertas se abrieran solas.

'Merlín made that the doors get-open  
by themselves.'

=====>

b. Merlín hizo abrir{se/\*Ø} solas las puertas.

'Merlín made the doors to-get-open by themselves.'

### (ii) Impersonal SE Construction:

(2/61) a. La patrulla hizo que se evacuara{Ø/n}  
los edificios.

'The squad made that PRO vacate{-3rd.p.sg./  
-3rd.p.pl.} the buildings.'

=====>

b. La patrulla hizo evacuar{ $\emptyset$ / $\ast$ se} los edificios.

'The squad made PRO to-vacate the buildings.'

Furthermore, observe that reflexives, which according to Keenan (1974, p.305) are universally controlled by subjects, cannot be deleted under similar conditions:

(2/62) a. María hizo que [sus hermanos]<sub>i</sub> [se]<sub>i</sub> lavaran.

'María made that [her brothers]<sub>i</sub> [themselves]<sub>i</sub> wash.'

=====>

b. María hizo lavar{se/ $\ast\emptyset$ } a sus hermanos.

'María made to-wash{[themselves] / $\ast\emptyset$ }

to [her brothers] .'

Thus, the particle SE of the Intransitive SE Construction must be considered reflexive in nature and controlled by the NP associated with the verb, which in turn must be the subject of the sentence.

By the same token, since the particle SE of the Impersonal SE Construction must be obligatorily deleted, as shown in example (2/61), it cannot be considered reflexive in nature. Consequently, it follows that the NP associated with the verb in

Impersonal SE Sentences is not the subject of those sentences because if it were, it would be controlling the corresponding particle SE, which is not the case, as is shown by example (2/61b) above.

## 2.9. OPTIONAL AGREEMENT ACROSS THE PERSONAL 'A'.

As was pointed out in the Second Section of Chapter I, Bello reported the existence of certain examples of Impersonal SE Sentences that exhibit verb agreement across the so-called personal 'a', which marks object NPs which are [+animate, +specific]:

(2/63) Se azotaron a los delincuentes. (cf. (1/45))

'PRO whipped-3rd.p.pl. to the delinquents.'

Observe that subjects never take the preposition 'a', regardless of their position in the sentence:

(2/64) a. \*A Juan y María estudiaron el argumento.

'To Juan and María studied the argument.'

b. \*El argumento, estudiaron a/Juan y María.

'The argument, studied to Juan and María.'

Consequently, the presence of the preposition 'a' in example (2/63) constitutes clear evidence that the NP that triggers optional verb agreement in the Impersonal SE Construction is not the subject of the verb, but rather its object.

2.10. OPTIONAL AGREEMENT WITH NP LACKING ARGUMENTAL  
RELATIONSHIP TO THE TENSED VERB OF A SENTENCE.

As we have already observed in relation to examples (1/71), (2/31d), (2/32d) and (2/33d), which are reproduced below, the tensed verb of a sentence may optionally agree with an NP that has no argumental relationship to that verb:

(2/65) Se {comenzó/ccmenzaron} a diseñar los planos.

'PRC started{-3rd.p.sg./-3rd.p.pl.} to design  
the blue-prints.' (cf. (1/71))

(2/66) Parece{Ø/n} haberSEle entregado los libros a María.

'Seen{-3rd.p.sg./-3rd.p.pl.} to-have-PRC-I.O.Cl.  
given the books to María.' (cf. (2/31d))

(2/67) Parece{Ø/n} estar lloviendo monedas.

'Seen {-3rd.p.sg./-3rd.p.pl.} to-be raining coins.'  
(cf. (2/32d))

(2/68) Parecía{0/n} haber muchas personas en la fiesta.

'Seemed{-3rd.p.sg./-3rd.p.pl.} there-to-be many  
persons at the party.' (cf. (2/33d))



As I have shown in Section Three of this Chapter, the optional verb agreement exhibited by examples (2/66)-(2/68) is not due to Subject-to-Subject Raising. Furthermore, example (2/65) clearly shows that this type of agreement is not restricted to raising verbs. Example (2/65) is an Impersonal SE Sentence. In fact, observe that the intransitive reading is not even possible, as is shown below:

(2/69) \*Los planos comenzaron a diseñarse (por sí solos).

'The blue-prints started to design (by themselves).'

In fact, the NP los planos ('the blue-prints') is neither the subject, nor the object of comenzar ('to start'), but the object of diseñar ('to design'), and still the tensed verb of the matrix sentence may agree with such an NP. Thus, no matter how well Contreras fixes his Subject Selection Rule (see (2/4), (2/5) and (2/6) above), which is based on a hierarchy dependent on the arguments a verb may subcategorize, he shall systematically fail to account for the optional agreement exhibited by the verb in examples (2/65)-(2/68).

Consequently, it must be concluded that examples (2/65)-(2/68) strongly suggest that the NPs that trigger optional agreement are not subjects. The problem posed by the examples presented in this section will be fully discussed in Chapter III of this study.

## 2.11. CONCLUSIONS.

In this Chapter, I have examined the syntactic behaviour of those NPs that trigger obligatory and optional verb agreement in Spanish, and I have found that the former are sensitive to the tests for subjecthood available in the language, whereas the latter are not.

In particular, I have shown that there is a fairly strict and consistent correlation amongst the following factors and processes:

- (i) Obligatory Verb Agreement.
- (ii) Word Order of Simple Sentences:  
 NP + VERB + (+NP)  
 1        2        3 ,  
 where 1 = subject, and 3 = object.
- (iii) Subject-to-Subject Raising.
- (iv) Subject-to-Object Raising.
- (v) Equi-NP Deletion.
- (vi) Left Dislocation from Subject Position.
- (vii) Distribution of the 'por si mismos' phrase.
- (viii) 'SE Deletion'.

As we have seen, only NPs that trigger obligatory agreement are sensitive to Subject-to-Subject Raising, Subject-to-Object Raising, Equi-NP Deletion, and Left Dislocation from Subject Position. Furthermore, they control the 'por sí mismos' phrase and the reflexive clitic, and they are not marked with the personal 'a'.

On the contrary, NPs that trigger optional verb agreement are not sensitive to Subject-to-Subject Raising, Subject-to-Object Raising, Equi-NP Deletion, and Left Dislocation from Subject Position. They can be marked with the so-called personal 'a', and they do not control the 'por sí mismos' phrase, nor the reflexive clitic. Thus, it is very likely that they are objects and not subjects, particularly in the case of the NP associated with the verb in the Impersonal SE Construction.

Although it might be possible to find some counter-examples to the claims made in this Chapter--particularly in relation to word order, for instance--, the overall picture provided by the set of arguments presented here inevitably leads to the conclusion that only subject NPs trigger obligatory verb agreement in Spanish.

## FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER TWO

[2/1] See Keenan (1976, pp.305-306) for a justification of the notion 'subject of' in universal grammar. This notion is also assumed in Chomsky's 'Specified Subject Condition' (1973). Nevertheless, Contreras (1976, p.128) contends "that this category is irrelevant in deep structure" in a case grammar model or a theory like the one he proposes. Of course, the validity of these assumptions only holds within the respective frameworks, whose adequacy I shall not dispute here.

[2/2] See Contreras (1976, pp.121-136) for the justification of these rules. In this study, I am only concerned with that part of Contreras' rule that accounts for optional verb agreement.

[2/3] Actually it is not at all clear how it works, since Contreras (1976) does not say if the feature [+subject] is to be assigned to the patients of llover and haber by the Subject Selection Rule or some other mechanism. Since the Subject Selection Rule proposed by Contreras does not make any reference to the alleged lexical feature that would allow the assignment of the feature [+subject] to the patients of these particular verbs, it is very likely that he would need to add an extra piece of machinery to his solution.

[2/4] The fact that not all native speakers agree on their judgments with respect to the possibilities of occurrence of the subject in an example such as (2/16) does not affect the validity of this argument. Indeed, those speakers that found the sentence-final position unacceptable, also found that position unacceptable when the verb was third person singular.

[2/5] I am assuming here--without argument--that the Phrase Structure Rules of Spanish that expand S generate a TOP node plus S. The question of the COMP node is irrelevant for the discussion below. See Chomsky 1976 for a justification of the TOP node in English, and Rivero 1977 in Spanish.

[2/6] Some speakers might find these examples perfectly acceptable without comma intonation, provided that some other constituents which change the intonation contour of the sentence are present, as in: Entonces, las flores llovieron {\*/del cielo} - 'Then, the flowers rained-3rd.p.pl. {\*/from the sky}'. Of course, since there is no possible ambiguity in a sentence like this, the corresponding NP can be moved freely within the boundaries of S, provided that the presence of some other constituents in the sentence balance the intonation.

[2/7] To the best of my knowledge, the other verbs that accept Subject-to-Object Raising--as discussed in this section--are descubrir ('to discover') and dejar ('to leave'): Juan nos descubrió [que ~~Ø~~ estábamos jugando] - 'Juan discovered us [that (we) were playing]'; Juan nos dejó [que ~~Ø~~ jugáramos] - 'Juan permitted us [that (we) played]'.

[2/8] Nevertheless, for some speakers the following example seems to be acceptable: LOS APLAUSOS, yo los escuché que llovían - 'The applauds, I heard them that rained-3rd.p.pl.' If this is the case, it means that meteorological verbs in Spanish have a very peculiar syntactic behaviour, namely that they can take a complement that may optionally trigger verb agreement, or a subject that would trigger obligatory agreement. Note that this example is definitely ungrammatical if the tensed verb of the subordinate clause does not agree in person and number with the left-dislocated NP: \*LOS APLAUSOS, yo los escuché que llovía - 'The applauds, I heard them that rained-3rd.p.sg.'

[2/9] See Rivero 1977 for a detailed discussion on Left Dislocation in Spanish. According to her, left-dislocated structures are base generated in Spanish, a view which I share. See Section Two, Chapter III, particularly my discussion in relation to examples (3/21) - (3/24).

[2/10] As reported by Contreras (1976, p.131 and fn. 4, Chapter XIV), in most dialects, "subject pronouns must be obligatorily deleted when the antecedent is inanimate". Nevertheless, that there are examples such as (2/49) is completely beside the point. The following example is quoted from Contreras (1976, p.131): Las flores, ellas se venden [por sí solas] - 'The flowers, they sell-3rd.p.pl. [by themselves]'.

[2/11] I am grateful to Professor Knowles for pointing out this fact to me. Of course, the analysis here presented is my own responsibility.

## CHAPTER III:

THE VERB AGREEMENT QUESTION.

---

As we have already found, Subject-Verb Agreement is obligatory, and Object-Verb Agreement is optional. Obligatory agreement is briefly discussed in the first section of the Chapter, and a tentative rule is proposed. Sections Two and Three are devoted to a full discussion of optional verb agreement, which is central to the problem posed by Impersonal SE Sentences.

In Section Two I argue--contrary to Otero (1972 and 1973)--that the optional verb agreement observed in Impersonal SE Sentences is to be accounted for by a rule of the grammar, which can be stated using the formalism suggested by Chomsky (1965, pp.174-176). A first approximation to that rule is presented here. In this same section, I also argue that the third person singular verb ending is the unmarked verb ending in Spanish, and that it is to be assigned to the tensed verb of a sentence that has not undergone agreement, by a general convention that finds ample justification on universal grounds.



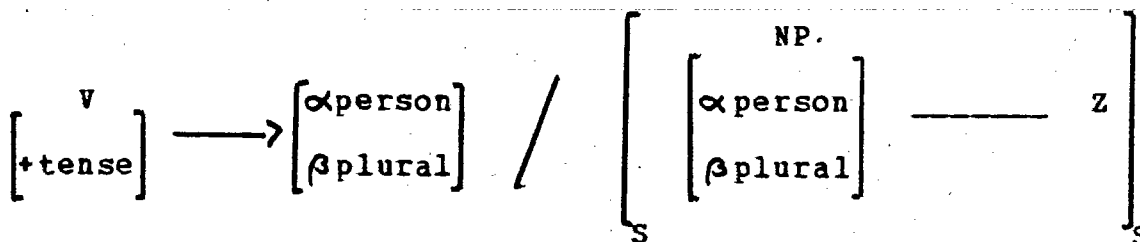
Section Three includes an extensive discussion on Clause Reduction, a process which is crucial for the analysis of certain counter-examples to the optional verb agreement rule provisionally proposed in Section Two, specifically those cases where the tensed verb of a matrix sentence agrees in person and number with the object of the verb of an embedded non-tensed sentence. The provisional rule proposed in Section Two is modified in such a way as to account for these particular examples. Finally, the revised version of this rule is motivated on external grounds.

### 3.1. OBLIGATORY AGREEMENT: A TENTATIVE SOLUTION.

As I have already discussed in Chapter II, NPs that trigger obligatory verb agreement in Spanish are sensitive to the tests for subjecthood available in the language. I have also discussed the necessity for a positional marking of subjects, particularly in the section on word order.

Thus, we are in a position to propose the following tentative Subject-Verb Agreement Rule for Spanish:

(3/1) Subject-Verb Agreement Rule (OBLIGATORY):



This rule, which has been stated using the formalism suggested by Chomsky (1965, p.175), simply reads as follows: assign the features  $[\alpha person]$  and  $[\beta plural]$  from the NP directly dominated by S to the tensed verb of that S. [fn.3/1] It accounts for all the cases of obligatory agreement examined in the last Chapter.

Of course, this rule is probably subject to some refinements in light of a more ample range of data than that considered in this study, and also depending on the answer to the question of whether there is a VP node in Spanish or not.[fn.3/2] If the answer is negative, subjects would have to be re-defined in Spanish, and the Subject-Verb Agreement Rule reformulated accordingly, as well as all the other rules that account for the processes affecting subjects in the language. [fn.3/3]

Nevertheless, considering the data discussed in this study, it is very likely that the Subject-Verb Agreement Rule in Spanish looks much like (3/1). Since Subject-Verb Agreement is not a central problem to the discussion of Impersonal SE Sentences, I will leave open the question of the final formulation of the corresponding rule.

### 3.2. OPTIONAL AGREEMENT: A FIRST APPROXIMATION.

As was pointed out in the last Chapter, Object-Verb Agreement is optional in the Impersonal SE Construction:

(3/2) a. Se abrió las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.sg. the doors.'

b. Se abrieron las puertas.

'PRO opened-3rd.p.pl. the doors.'

According to Otero (1973, p.551), examples such as (3/2b)

"cannot be generated at all, either 'directly' or 'derivately' (Chomsky 1965, IV, fn.2), because they are in fact 'agrammatical' (to coin a new term by analogy to amoral/immoral)". (Otero 1973, p.551)

In Otero's approach,

"what is 'agrammatical' is neither grammatical nor 'ungrammatical' (taking the latter term in the sense of 'partially grammatical'); it is simply outside the scope of the grammar". (Otero 1973, p.551)

We certainly do not need to reproduce here all of Otero's theoretical justification for the terminology he uses, since our concern is the basic claim he makes, namely that sentences such as (3/2b) cannot be generated at all by the grammar of Spanish, although they are perfectly acceptable. In fact, Otero (1972, pp.239-240) has argued that for the grammar of Spanish to generate sentences such as (3/2b), a special verb agreement rule with the following highly unnatural conditions would be required:

(3/3) Attach the plural morpheme to a verb with an unspecified human subject (manifested as SE) just in case,

a. the direct object is not QUE+SENTENCE:

(3/4) a. Se planeaba que se construiría(n)

muchas casas.

'PRO used-to-plan-3rd.p.sg. that PRO  
would-build many houses.'

b. \*Se planeaban que se construiría(n)

muchas casas.

'PRO used-to-plan-3rd.p.pl. that PRO  
would-build many houses.'

b. the verb is not intransitive:

(3/5) a. Se vive bien en Los Angeles.

'PRO live-3rd.p.sg. well in Los Angeles.'

b. \*Se viven bien en Los Angeles.

'PRO live-3rd.p.pl. in Los Angeles.'

c. the verb is not the copula:

(3/6) a. Siempre se es chileno por nacimiento.

'PRO is always Chilean by birth.'

b. \*Siempre se son chileno por nacimiento.

'PRO are always Chilean by birth.'

d. the oblique NP is not marked by a preposition:

(3/7) a. Se felicita a los amigos.

'PRO congratulate-3rd.p.sg. to the friends.'

b. \*Se felicitan a los amigos.'

'PRO congratulate-3rd.p.pl. to the friends.'

e. the direct object is not a clitic:

(3/8) a. Se los alquila.

'PRO D.O.Cl.pl. rent-3rd.p.sg.'

b. \*Se los alquilan.

'PRO D.O.Cl.pl. rent.3rd.p.pl.'

f. the direct object has not been left-dislocated

('topicalized', in Otero's terms):

(3/9) a. Los apartamentos, se los alquila.

'The apartments, PRO D.O.Cl.pl.

rent-3rd.p.sg.'

b. \*Los apartamentos, se los alquilan.

'The apartments, PRO D.O.Cl.pl.

rent-3rd.p.pl.'

g. the sentence cannot be construed in more than

one way:

(3/10) a. Se reunieron los miembros de la junta.

'The members of the junta got together.'

b. \*Se reunieron los miembros de la junta.

'PRO brought together the members of the  
junta.'

h. the object NP is not singular [fn.3/4]:

(3/11) a. Se alquila (este) apartamento.

'PRO rent-3rd.p.sg. (this) apartment.'

b. \*Se alquilan (este) apartamento.

'PRO rent-3rd.p.sg. (this) apartment.'

In light of these conditions, Otero (1972 and 1973) concluded that the agreement exhibited by Impersonal SE Sentences such as (3/2b) could not be accounted for by a rule of grammar, and that it had to be a question of performance.

Nevertheless, most of these conditions are simply illusory. First, as pointed out by Contreras (1974, p.46), QUE-Sentences never trigger plural agreement:

(3/12) a. <sup>1</sup>Es bueno que los prisioneros trabajen.

'Is good that the prisoners work.'

b. \*Son bueno(s) que los prisioneros trabajen.

'Are good(pl) that the prisoners work.'

Further evidence to support this claim is provided by sentential subjects, which are sensitive to Subject-to-Subject Raising:

(3/13) a. Parece que es muy bueno que los prisioneros trabajen.

'Seem-3rd.p.sg. that is very good that the prisoners work.'

=====7

b. Que los prisioneros trabajen parece ser muy bueno.

'That the prisoners work seem-3rd.p.sg. to-be very good.'

BUT,



c. \*Que los prisioneros trabajen parecen ser muy bueno.

'That the prisoners work seem-3rd.p.pl. to-be very good.'

Moreover, in examples such as (3/4), verb agreement is only precluded provided that the complement sentence is tensed. Otherwise, it is perfectly possible:

(3/14) a. Se planeaba construir muchas casas.

'PRO used-to-plan-3rd.p.sg. to-build many houses.'

b. Se planeaban construir muchas casas.

'PRO used-to-plan-3rd.p.pl. to-build many houses.'

The fact that example (3/14b) is perfectly acceptable, whereas (3/4b) is not, clearly shows that the verb agreement exhibited by the former must be due to a rule of grammar, which is sensitive to the Tensed Sentence Condition, as stated in Chomsky (1973, p.238). In fact, according to Chomsky,

(3/15) No rule can involve X, Y in the structure

...X...[ $\alpha$  ...Y...]...

where  $\alpha$  is a tensed sentence.

This is precisely the condition that precludes agreement in (3/4b). Since Chomsky's conditions are conditions on the application of rules of grammar, by no means is it possible to maintain the claim that examples such as (3/14b) are "simply outside the scope of the grammar." (Otero 1973, p.551) On the contrary, this suggests that we are dealing with a rule of grammar.

Second, if the verb is intransitive or the copula, it cannot be associated to any other NP, except for the subject NP. Since apparently sentences constructed with impersonal SE lack a subject NP specified for number, there is no reason to expect singular or plural agreement in examples such as (3/5) and (3/6), and the third person singular verb ending of the corresponding (a) examples is rather due to lack of agreement, as I shall show in the following paragraphs.

Third, condition (3/3d), i.e. that the oblique NP not be marked by a preposition, is not very surprising at all. Indeed, observe that in Hindi [fn.3/5], when the NP that triggers verb agreement in certain passive sentences is marked with the case marking -ko (oblique), the verb takes the third person singular masculine ending, which is the unmarked verb ending in this language:

(3/16) a. Bacch-o-ko chaDi-se Daraay-a jaat-a h-ẽ.

'Kids-obl.pl.-obl.

stick(fem)-with/by

frighten-sg.(masc)

PASSIVE-sg.

be-sg.'

b. \*Bacch-o-ko chaDi-se Daraay-e jaat-e h-e.

'Kids-obl.pl.-obl.

stick(fem)-with/by

frighten-pl.(masc)

PASSIVE-pl.

be-pl.'

Otherwise, such an NP triggers verb agreement:

(3/17) a. Bacch-e chaDi-se Daraay-e jaat-e h-e.

'Kids-pl.

stick(fem)-with/by

frighten-pl.

PASSIVE-pl.

be-pl.'

b. \*Bacch-e chaDi-se Daraay-a jaat-a h-ẽ.

'Kids-pl.

stick(fem)-with/by

frighten-sg.

PASSIVE-sg.

be-sg.'

Thus, in (3/16)--where the NP bacche ('kids') is marked with the oblique case -ko -- the whole verbal system goes in the third person singular masculine, whereas in (3/17)--where the NP bacche is not marked for case (or, where  $\emptyset$  = nominative, if we allow  $\emptyset$  morphemes)--, the whole verbal system agrees with it.

Observe that this is precisely the case with condition (3/3d) above. Whenever the preposition a ('to')--which marks [+animate, +specific] NPs in object position [fn.3/6]--is present, the verb takes the third person singular ending:

(3/18) a. Se felicita a los amigos.

'PRO congratulate-3rd.p.sg. to the friends.'

b. \*Se felicitan a los amigos.

'PRO congratulate-3rd.p.pl. to the friends.'

Otherwise, the verb may optionally agree with its associated NP:

(3/19) a. Se alquila apartamentos.

'PRO rent-3rd.p.sg. apartments.'

b. Se alquilan apartamentos.

'PRO rent-3rd.p.pl. apartments.'

The only difference with the Hindi example is that verb agreement is optional in Spanish, but the principle that precludes it in both languages is exactly the same. Thus, it must be concluded that condition (3/3d) is not unnatural at all, and as we shall show in the formulation of the optional verb agreement rule below, it is not even necessary to state it as a condition on the application of that rule.

Furthermore, as we have already pointed out in Chapters I and II, there are certain Spanish dialects that accept agreement across the so-called personal a, but in most educated dialects this is not possible. I will come back to this question in the discussion of the optional verb agreement rule.

Fourth, it should not surprise us either that the verb does not agree with its direct object clitic, as in examples (3/8). Since verb agreement is a rule to be stated in terms of the

tensed verb of a sentence and its associated NP, this question does not pose any problem at all. Furthermore, direct object clitics never trigger verb agreement in Spanish. Consider the following sentence constructed with the existential haber ('there-to-be'), where the argument of that predicate is a direct object clitic in the plural. The sentence in question cannot be translated into English.

(3/20) a. De que los había, los había.

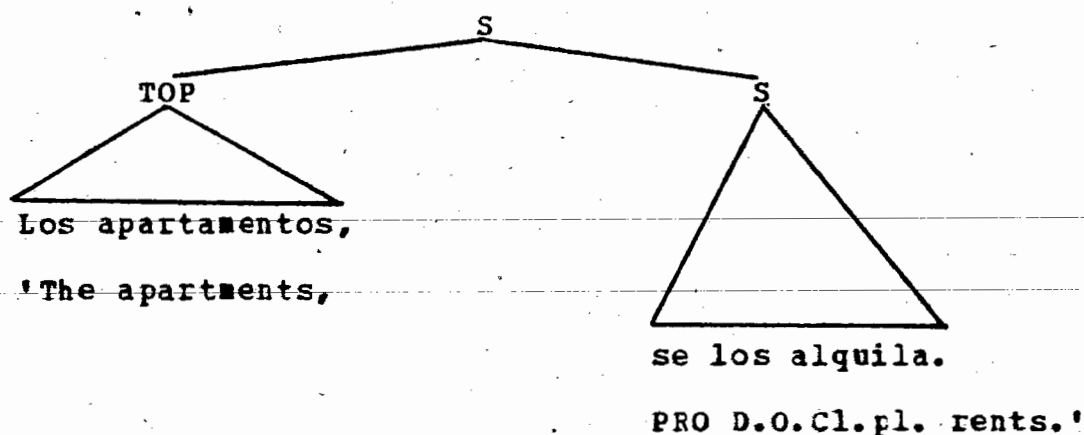
'That D.O.Cl.pl. there-was, D.O.Cl.pl. there-was.'

b. \*De que los habían, los habían.

'That D.O.Cl.pl. there-were, D.O.Cl.pl. there-were.'

Fifth, in the case of the left-dislocated object NP, the verb cannot be expected to agree with it since such an NP has been moved out of the domain of S, to TOP position, and verb agreement is a rule that operates within the boundaries of S:

(3/21)



Indeed, left-dislocated object NPs never trigger verb agreement in Spanish either. Consider the following examples:

(3/22) a. *Sí que habían muchas personas.*

'Of-course that there-were many persons.'

=====>

b. *Muchas personas, sí que las había.*

'Many persons, of-course that D.O.Cl.pl. there-was.'

BUT,

c. *\*Muchas personas, sí que las habían.*

'Many persons, of-course that D.O.Cl.pl. there-were.'

Furthermore, left-dislocated structures do not seem to trigger any grammatical processes within the boundaries of the sentence that follows them. Observe that the verb is always second in main sentences in German:

(3/23) a. *Johann gab diese Bücher gestern Marie.*

'Johann gave these books yesterday to Marie.'

b. *Gestern gab Johann diese Bücher Marie.*

'Yesterday gave Johann these books to Marie.'

Also observe that the verb remains in second position within the boundaries of S if the NP diese Bücher ('those books') is left-dislocated:

(3/24) a. Diese Bücher, Johann gab sie gestern Marie.

'Those books, Johann gave them yesterday to Marie.'

b. \*Diese Bücher, gab Johann sie gestern Marie.

'Those books, gave Johann them yesterday to Marie.'

That the verb be second in main sentences in German is mandatory. Nevertheless, examples (3/25) seem to contradict this assumption, unless it is postulated that left-dislocated structures are outside of the boundaries of S. Otherwise examples such as (3/24) would remain unexplainable.

Thus, condition (3/3f) is completely unjustified, but left-dislocated object NPs do present a problem depending on our analysis of left-dislocation. If we assume that left-dislocation is a transformation, we need to order it before verb agreement in Spanish. Otherwise, sentences such as (3/9b), which is ungrammatical in the impersonal reading, would be generated. Nevertheless, Rivero (1977) has very strongly argued that left-dislocated structures are to be base generated in Spanish, an alternative which is considered perfectly feasible for English by Emonds (1976, p.33) along the lines of a suggestion of Chomsky and Van Riemsdijk, and that has been adopted for English in Chomsky 1976. Consequently, if Rivero's analysis for Spanish is correct, there would be no need for rule



ordering in the particular case under consideration. Indeed, since in Rivero's view left dislocated structures are base generated in TOP position, i.e. outside of the boundaries of S, they can never trigger agreement assuming that the verb-agreement rule is a rule that operates within the boundaries of S.

Sixth, condition (3/3g) is completely beside the point. In fact, in the last Chapter I already provided some evidence showing that the NP associated with the verb in the Intransitive SE Construction is to be generated in subject position since verb agreement with such an NP is obligatory. In that particular Chapter I also advanced a feasible solution to the problem posed by sentences that exhibit their subjects in final position, in terms of focus or new information:

(3/25) a. LOS MIEMBROS DE LA JUNTA se reunieron.

+focus

=====>

b. Se reunieron LOS MIEMBROS DE LA JUNTA.

'The members of the junta got together.'

Furthermore, the ungrammaticality of example (3.10b) reproduced below does not stem from the fact that SE is the manifestation of an unspecified human subject, but rather from the fact that

the object NP los miembros de la junta ('the members of the junta'), which is [+animate, +specific] lacks the preposition a ('to'), which in turn precludes agreement in most educated dialects, as we have already discussed above. Compare (3/10b) and (3/26):

(3/10b) \*Se reunieron los miembros de la junta.

'PRO brought-together-3rd.p.pl. the members  
of the junta.'

(3/26) a. Se reunió a los miembros de la junta.

'PRO brought-together-3rd.p.sg. to the members  
of the junta.'

b. \*Se reunieron a los miembros de la junta.

'PRO brought-together-3rd.p.pl. to the members  
of the junta.'

Finally, condition (3/3h)--which we simply added to make Otero's rule consistent-- is not at all required if the corresponding rule is adequately formulated. In fact, a sentence such as (3/11a) is syntactically ambiguous in the sense that one can consider that the verb agrees with its associated NP, which is third person singular, or that it has been assigned the unmarked verb ending:

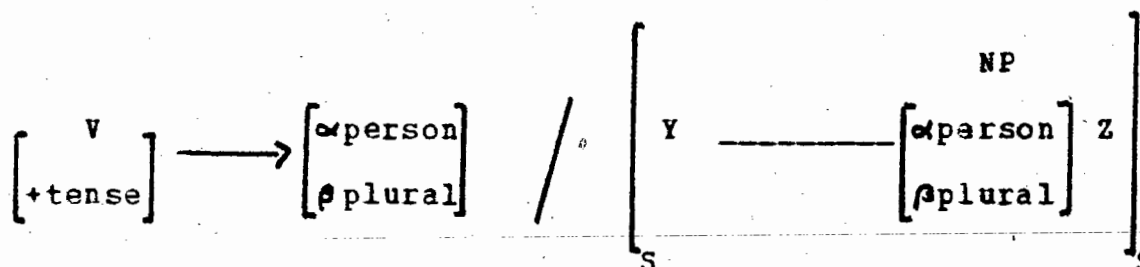
(3/27) a. Se vende apartamento. (AGREEMENT)

b. Se vende apartamento. (LACK OF AGREEMENT)

'PRO sell-3rd.p.sg. apartment.'

In light of these considerations, we are now in a position to propose the following first approximation to the optional verb agreement rule:

(3/28) Object-Verb Agreement Rule (OPTIONAL):



CONDITION:  $Y \neq \left[ \begin{array}{c} \text{NP} \\ \alpha\text{person} \\ \beta\text{plural} \end{array} \right] \dots$

Rule (3/28) reads: assign the features  $[\alpha\text{person}, \beta\text{plural}]$  to the tensed verb of a sentence from the NP that immediately follows it, provided that there is no such NP immediately dominated by S. This rule is to be complemented by the following general convention, which finds ample justification on universal grounds:

(3/29) The tensed verb of a sentence that does not undergo agreement is assigned the third person singular or unmarked verb ending.

In fact, this is exactly the case of examples (3/4a), (3/5a), (3/6a), (3/7a), (3/8a), and (3/9a), the Hindi example in (3/16a), and the case of the Turkish, Finno-Ugric, Georgian, Caucasian, Dravidian, and Eskimo examples discussed by Benveniste (1971, p.198). The case of the Eskimo example is particularly relevant here:

"In Eskimo, W.Thalbitzer clearly indicates the nonpersonal nature of the 3rd.sing.: 'Of a neutral character, lacking any mark of personality, is the ending of the third person singular: -oq... which quite agrees with the common absolute ending of the noun... These endings for the third person indicative must be regarded as IMPERSONAL FORMS (emphasis mine, G.W.): kapiwok 'there is a stab', 'one is stabbed'." (H.A.I.L., I : 1032, 1057)." (Benveniste 1971 p.198)

Consequently, there is strong evidence to support the claim that a convention such as (3/29) must be a principle of universal grammar.

As stated, Rule (3/28) accounts for the optional agreement observed in examples (3/2), and precludes the generation of all the ungrammatical examples listed in (3/4)-(3/11). In fact, Rule (3/28) requires that the object of the verb be an NP marked for person and number. Since no QUE+Sentence is allowed in that position, examples such as (3/4b) are never generated.

Since intransitive and copular verbs lack an object NP, no agreement can be triggered in the case of examples (3/5) and (3/6). [fn.3/7]

Rule (3/28) cannot apply in the case of example (3/7) either because no preposition can appear between the verb and the corresponding object NP.

Finally, this rule does not apply in the case of examples (3/8) and (3/9) because the object of the verb is a clitic in the former, and the object NP is outside of the boundaries of S in the latter. (I am assuming--without argument-- that clitics are [-N])

Furthermore, Rule (3/28) with its associated convention not only accounts for the examples discussed by Otero (1972 and 1973), but also for the following examples:

(3/30) a. Llovió monedas.

'Rained-3rd.p.sg. coins.'

b. Llovieron monedas.

'Rained-3rd.p.pl. coins.'

(3/31) a. Había muchas personas.

'There-was many persons.'

b. Habían muchas personas.

'There-were many persons.'

These examples constitute external evidence on the problem posed by the Impersonal SE Construction, and they strongly support the claim made in this study that Rule (3/28) and its associated convention constitute part of the grammar of Spanish.

Nevertheless, the following example reported by Bello and already discussed in Chapter I runs counter to Rule (3/28):

(3/32) Se azotaron a los delincuentes.

'PRO whipped-3rd.p.pl. to the delinquents.'

Although example (3/32) is rejected as ungrammatical in most educated dialects of Spanish, it could be accounted for either by allowing the appearance of the preposition 'a' between the

verb and its object NP, or by ordering object-verb agreement before the rule of Personal 'a' Insertion, in the case of the particular dialects where this type of agreement is acceptable. [fn.3/8].

Consider now the following examples from English [fn.3/9]:

(3/33) a. There is a unicorn and a centaur playing  
in the garden.

b. (\*) There are a unicorn and a centaur playing  
in the garden.

(3/34) a. A unicorn and a centaur are playing in the garden.

b. \*A unicorn and a centaur is playing in the garden.

These examples show that Subject-Verb Agreement is different from Complement-Verb Agreement in English. In the former, if the subject NP is a conjunction of two singular NPs, the verb must be plural. In the latter, the verb may agree with the first lexical NP to its right. Observe that this is clear cut in the case of the Spanish Impersonal SE Construction:

(3/35) a. Se vende un auto y una bicicleta.

'PRO sell-3rd.p.sg. a car and a bicycle.'

b. \*Se venden un auto y una bicicleta.

'PRO sell-3rd.p.pl. a car and a bicycle.'

(3/36) a. Se vende una bicicleta y dos autos.

'PRO sell-3rd.p.sg. a bicycle and two cars.'

b. \*Se venden una bicicleta y dos autos.

'PRO sell-3rd.p.pl. a bicycle and two cars.'

(3/37) a. Se vende dos autos y una bicicleta.

'PRO sell-3rd.p.sg. two cars and a bicycle.'

b. Se venden dos autos y una bicicleta.

'PRO sell-3rd.p.pl. two cars and a bicycle.'

And also in the case of existential sentences:

(3/38) a. Había una chica y un muchacho en la esquina.

'There was a girl and a boy at the corner.'

b. \*Habían una chica y un muchacho en la esquina.

'\*There were a girl and a boy at the corner.'

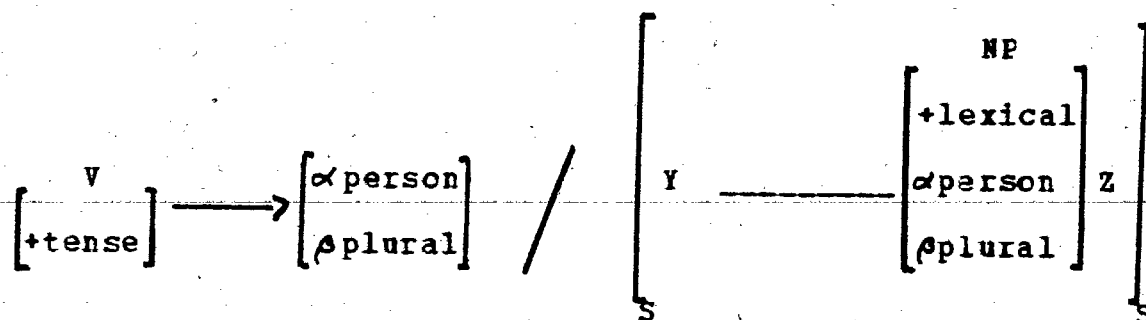


- (3/39) a. Había una chica y dos muchachos en la esquina.  
 'There-was a girl and two boys at the corner.'
- b. \*Habían una chica y dos muchachos en la esquina.  
 '\*There-were a girl and two boys at the corner.'
- (3/40) a. Había dos muchachos y una chica en la esquina.  
 'There-was two boys and a girl at the corner.'
- b. Habían dos muchachos y una chica en la esquina.  
 'There-were two boys and a girl at the corner.'

Examples such as (3/35) could have been another piece of evidence to support Otero's claim on 'acceptable agrammaticality', but apparently he missed these data. Nevertheless, considering that English observes the same behaviour as Spanish with respect to Complement-Verb Agreement, the evidence presented strongly supports the claim made here that this type of agreement is to be accounted for by a grammatical rule, and that this type of rule must be available to the set of possible grammars.

In order to account for the examples just considered, we must introduce the following modification in our Object-Verb Agreement Rule: the NP that immediately follows the verb must be [+lexical].

(3/41) Object-Verb Agreement Rule (OPTIONAL):



CONDITION:  $Y \neq \begin{array}{c} NP \\ [\alpha \text{ person}] \\ [\phi \text{ plural}] \end{array} \dots$

### 3.3. OPTIONAL AGREEMENT AND CLAUSE REDUCTION.

In a revised version of Otero's rule of agreement discussed in the last section, he included two more conditions that I will examine below. Otero's re-formulated rule reads as follows:

(3/42) Pluralize V in the context

$$[_S X [_S \text{COMP(NEG) se } \_\_\_\_\_\_ Y [_{NP} Z]_S]_S]_S$$

$\left[ \begin{smallmatrix} +pl. \end{smallmatrix} \right]$

CONDITIONS: (among those already discussed above, G.W.)

...

a. Y does not include SER:

(3/43) a. Lo que se derrumbará {es/scn} los  
regímenes neocoloniales.

'What PRO will-overthrow-3rd.p.sg.  
{is/are} the neocolonial regimes.'

b. \*Lo que se derrumbarán {es/son} los  
regímenes neocoloniales.

'What PRO will-overthrow-3rd.p.pl.  
{is/are} the neocolonial regimes.'

b. Y is null or 'not too long':

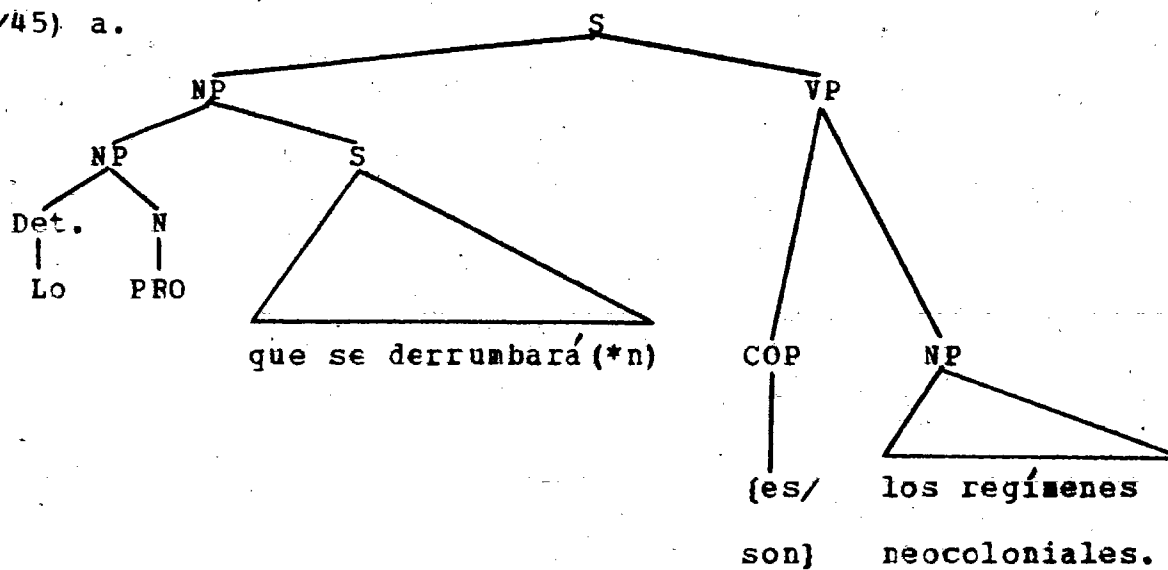
(3/44) a. Se había estado intentando tratar de  
derrumbar los regímenes neocoloniales.  
'PRO had-3rd.p.sg. been trying to-make-  
an-attempt to overthrow the neccolonial  
regimes.'

b. \*Se habían estado intentando tratar  
derrumbar los regímenes neocoloniales.  
'PRO had-3rd.p.pl. been trying to-make-  
an-attempt to overthrow the neccolonial  
regimes.'

... (Otero 1976, p.357)

Example (3/43) does not qualify as a counterexample to Rule (3/28). Furthermore, it does not even qualify as a condition on Otero's rule reproduced in (3/42). In fact, example (3/43) is a pseudo-cleft sentence with a headless relative clause in subject position [fn.3/10]:

(3/45) a.



b. [<sub>S</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> Lo PRO] [<sub>S</sub> que se derrumbará (\*n)]<sub>S</sub>] <sub>NP</sub>  
 [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>V</sub> {es/scn}] [<sub>V</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> los regímenes neocoloniales] <sub>NP</sub>] <sub>VP</sub>]<sub>S</sub>

Obviously, the structure presented in (3/45) does not satisfy the structural description of the Object-Verb Agreement stated in (3/28), nor does it satisfy that of the rule proposed by Otero (1976, p.357) which I reproduce in (3/42). Indeed, since the NP los regímenes neocoloniales ('the neocolonial regimes') forms part of the VP of the matrix sentence (and not of the sentence embedded under the subject NP), and both rules operate within the boundaries of S, the tensed verb of the headless relative clause cannot be expected to agree with the NP in focus position because it is outside of the boundaries of the corresponding S. For this reason, rather than that given by Otero, example (3/43b) is ungrammatical.

Consequently, example (3/43b) does not constitute a counterexample to the Object-Verb Agreement Rule formulated in the last section, and example (3/43a) rather supports it. Indeed, observe that the copula can be either singular or plural. This is precisely the type of data Rule (3/28) accounts for. Since the subject NP introduced with lo que ('what') is not specified for number, Rule (3/28) may optionally trigger agreement of the copula with the NP that follows it. Otherwise, the copula is assigned the third person singular ending, by the general convention stated in (3/29).

Let us now consider the examples presented in (3/44). Observe that the tensed verb of a sentence constructed with Impersonal SE may optionally agree with the object of the verb of an embedded non-tensed sentence:

(3/46) a. Se planeaba construir muchas casas.

'PRO used-to-plan-3rd.p.sg. to-build many houses.'

b. Se planeaban construir muchas casas.

'PRO used-to-plan-3rd.p.pl. to-build many houses.'

Nevertheless, this is not always possible, as Otero's examples reproduced in (3/44) show. Indeed, as formulated in (3/28), the Object-Verb Agreement Rule proposed in the last section fails to account for the grammaticality of (3/46b) and the ungrammaticality of (3/44b) since no non-tensed verbs are allowed by that rule to occur between the tensed verb of the sentence and the NP that triggers agreement in (3/46b). Moreover, if we reformulate Rule (3/28) in such a way as to allow the presence of a certain number of non-tensed verbs in that position, it still cannot predict the ungrammaticality of (3/44b) unless we are able to specify what is to be understood by 'too long'. Consequently, examples (3/44) and (3/46) pose a very crucial problem for the formulation of the verb agreement rule. To the best of my knowledge, this problem has never been satisfactorily solved in any of the analyses thus far proposed.

[fn.3/11]

The hypothesis I will argue for in this section is that example (3.42b) has undergone Clause Reduction, whereas (3.40b) has not. This makes the agreement observed in (3.42b) strictly dependent on Clause Reduction, which is a rule that adjoins the verb of an embedded non-tensed sentence to the verb of the matrix sentence, producing a complex verb as output:

(3/47) Clause Reduction (SIMPLIFIED):

$$[X]_V - [Z]_V \implies [X Z]_V$$

(3/47) is not intended as an exhaustive formalization of the Clause Reduction Rule, but rather a simplified version of it.

Let us first justify the existence of Clause Reduction. The arguments for Clause Reduction reproduced here are taken from Contreras (1978):

"The first argument--due to Aissen and Perlmutter (1976)--is based on structures like the following:

(3/48) Quiero [~~Ø~~ permitirte [PRO hacerlo]]

I want [~~Ø~~ to-allow you [PRO do it]]



If no Clause Reduction takes place, the clitics remain in their original position, and the following sentence is generated:

(3/49) Quiero permitirte hacerlo.

'I want to-allow you to-do it.'

If the two lower clauses are reduced, the clitics are promoted to permitir ('to-allow'), and the following sentence is generated:

(3/50) Quiero permitirtelo hacer.

'I want to-allow you to-do it.'

If all three clauses are reduced, the clitics are attached to the highest verb:

(3/51) Te lo quiero permitir hacer.

'I want to-allow you to-do it.'

Finally, if only the two highest clauses are reduced, the lowest clitic remains attached to hacer ('to-do'), but te ('you-cl.') is promoted to querer ('to-want'):

(3/52) Te quiero permitir hacerlo.

'I want to-allow you to-do it.'

There are no other possibilities under the Clause Reduction hypothesis. On the other hand, under the theory that considers Clitic Promotion optional, there is one more possibility, namely, advancing each clitic one clause up:

(3/53) \*Te quiero permitirlo hacer.

The ungrammaticality of this sentence, which is not generated under the Clause Reduction hypothesis, lends strong support to this analysis." (Contreras 1978, pp.13-14)

That the examples quoted from Contreras (1978) have undergone Clause Reduction can be further demonstrated using the pseudo-cleft test:

(3/54) Lo que quiero permitirte es hacerlo. (cf. (3/49): -CR)

'What I want to-allow you is to-do it.'

(3/55) Lo que quiero es permitirte hacerlo. (cf. (3/49): -CR)

(3/56) \*Lo que quierc permitirtelo es hacer.(cf. (3/50): +CR)

BUT,

(3/57) Lo que quiero es permitirtelo hacer.(cf. (3/50): -CR)

AND,

(3/58) \*Lo que te lo quiero es permitir hacer.(cf. (3/51): +CR)

(3/59) Lo que te quiero permitir es hacerlo.(cf. (3/52): -CR)

BUT,

(3/60) \*Lo que te quiero es permitir hacerlo.(cf. (3/52)): +CR)

Since only constituents that are not in construction with one another can appear in focus position in the pseudo-cleft construction, the ungrammaticality of examples (3/56), (3/58) and (3/60) clearly shows that what is in focus position is not a single constituent. Observe that these are precisely the examples that have undergone Clause Reduction, i.e. where the non-tensed verb of a lower clause has been attached to the verb of a higher clause, producing a complex verb at the level of the latter.

The following argument, also reproduced from Contreras (1978) is due to Aissen (1974):

"[...] notice that the surface structure corresponding to (3/61) is (3/62), not (3/63):

(3/61) Hice [Juan salir]

'I made [Juan leave].'

(3/62) Hice salir a Juan.

(3/63) \*Hice a Juan salir.

This linear order follows from the Rule of Clause Reduction. In the absence of such rule, an ad-hoc rule placing the subject in final position for sentences embedded under verbs of perception and causation would have to be posited." (Contreras 1978, pp.14-15)  
(fn.3/11)

The following arguments for Clause Reduction are due to Contreras (1978):

"Notice the ungrammaticality of the following sentence:

(3/64) \*Pedro' hizo [salir a Juan] ayer  
y Ricardo [lc] hizo hoy.

'Pedro made Juan leave yesterday  
and Ricardo did it today.'

where [lc] refers to [salir a Juan] ('Juan leave').  
Unless, Clause Reduction is posited, this is  
unexplainable, since Juan salir is a constituent, and  
if embedded under a verb that does not trigger Clause  
Reduction, it can be referred to anaphorically by the  
pronoun lc, as in:

(3/65) Juan no va a salir porque su esposa se lc prohíbe.

'Juan is not going out because his wife won't  
let him.'

[Another] argument in favor of Clause Reduction is  
based on pseudo-cleft constructions. Notice that the  
following string is ungrammatical:

(3/66) \*Lo que Pedro hizo fue salir a Juan.

'What Pedro made was Juan leave.'

This suggests that salir a Juan is not a constituent, which is exactly what Clause Reduction predicts. This analysis also predicts that salir ('to-leave') is not a constituent. This is substantiated by the ungrammaticality of the following string:

(3/67) \*Lo que Pedro hizo a Juan fue salir.

'What Pedro made Juan was to-leave.'

Both of these facts follow from the Clause Reduction hypothesis, which assigns the following structure to the relevant sentences:

(3/68) Pedro [ hizo salir] a Juan.

'Pedro [ made to-leave] to Juan.'

The next argument is based on the presence of the preposition a 'to' in front of Juan in the preceding sentences. This preposition is traditionally considered to be added to animate nouns in direct object position. Notice that in other cases, a subject in post-verbal position does not take the preposition

a:

(3/68) Al llegar (\*a) Juan, todos se alegraron.

'When Juan arrived, everybody got happy.'

The presence of 'a' in (3/68) follows from the Clause Reduction hypothesis, which says that the subject embedded under a verb of causation becomes the object of the complex verb formed by the rule.

The final argument [presented by Contreras (1978)] in favour of Clause Reduction is based on the following structure:

(3/70) Juan vió [el doctor examinarla].

'Juan saw [the doctor examine her].'

Agent Postposing changes this structure into (3/71):

(3/71) Juan vió [t examinarla por el doctor].

'Juan saw [t examine her by the doctor].'

If no other transformation is assumed to apply, this structure should allow two versions:

(3/72) a. \*Juan vió examinarla por el doctor.

b. Juan la vió examinar por el doctor.

'Juan saw her be examined by the doctor.'

But, as we see, only (3/72b) is grammatical. The analysis which considers Clitic Promotion optional is incapable of accounting for this fact. On the other hand, this is precisely what our assumptions about Clause Reduction and the obligatory nature of Clitic Promotion predict." (Contreras 1978, pp.15-17)

Now, I will present three additional arguments in favour of Clause Reduction.

Observe that in the following questions, the subject cannot appear in pre-verbal position in Spanish:

(3/73) a. A quién quiere Juan comprarle ese libro?

'To whom wants Juan to-buy-I.O.Cl. that book?'

b. A quién quiere comprarle Juan ese libro?

'To whom wants to-buy-I.O.Cl. Juan that book?'

c. A quién quiere comprarle ese libro Juan?

'To whom wants to-buy-I.O.Cl. that book Juan.'

d. \*A quién Juan quiere comprarle ese libro?

✓ 'To whom Juan wants to-buy-I.O.Cl. that book?'



Also observe that the word order of (3/73a) is not possible when there is Clitic Promotion, which according to Contreras (1978) is obligatory when Clause Reduction has taken place:

(3/74) \*A quién le quiere Juan comprar ese libro?

Under these conditions, the subject must be moved after the complex verb formed by the Clause Reduction Rule, to any of the other positions illustrated above:

(3/75) a. A quién le quiere comprar Juan ese libro?

b. A quién le quiere comprar ese libro Juan?

The ungrammaticality of example (3/74) constitutes additional evidence in support of the Clause Reduction analysis.[fn.3/12]

The other piece of evidence for Clause Reduction is offered by the distribution of adverbs. Consider the following examples:

(3/76) a. Ellos quieren simplemente lavarlo.

b. \*Ellos lo quieren simplemente lavar.

BUT,

c. Ellos simplemente lo quieren lavar.

'They simply want to wash it.'

Again, the ungrammaticality of (3/76b) is only explainable in terms of Clause Reduction.

The last argument is based on Topicalization:

(3/77) a. Ellos quieren lavar<sup>lo</sup>.

b. Lavar<sup>lo</sup>, quieren ellos.

'They want to wash it.'

(3/78) a. Ellos lo quieren lavar.

b. \*Lavar, lo quieren ellos.

Since under the Clause Reduction hypothesis lavar ('to-wash') is no longer a constituent, it cannot be topicalized. If Clause Reduction is not posited, all these facts would remain unexplained.

Now that Clause Reduction has been reasonably justified on the basis of the above arguments, let us return to the question of the agreement exhibited by the tensed verb of a matrix sentence with the object of the verb of an embedded non-tensed sentence.

As I stated at the beginning of this section, the hypothesis to be defended here is that this type of agreement is only possible if Clause Reduction has taken place. Although the evidence for Clause Reduction is indirect, it can be easily attested in sentences constructed with the Impersonal SE using any of the following tests, either by themselves or in conjunction with one another:

- (i) Clitic Promotion. (cf. (3/49)-(3/52))
- (ii) Pseudo-Clefting. (cf. (3/54)-(3/60))  
and (3/66)-(3/67))
- (iii) Pronominalization with lo. (cf. (3/64)-(3/65))
- (iv) Distribution of Adverbs. (cf. (3/76))
- (v) Topicalization. (cf. (3/77)-(3/78))

Let us first consider the following:

(3/79) a. Antes se necesitaba aprender muchas cosas.

b. Aprender muchas cosas, se necesitaba antes.

'Before PRO needed-3rd.p.sg. to-learn many things.'

(3/80) a. Antes se necesitaban aprender muchas cosas.

b. \*Aprender muchas cosas, se necesitaban antes.

'Before PRO needed-3rd.p.pl. to-learn many things.'

Since under the Clause Reduction hypothesis aprender muchas cosas ('to-learn many things') is not a constituent, it cannot be topicalized if agreement has taken place. This implies that the agreement exhibited by the tensed verb in (3/80a) is possible because Clause Reduction has taken place. Otherwise, example (3/80b) should be grammatical, but it is not.

This can be furtherly attested by Pseudo-Clefting:

(3/81) a. Lo que antes se necesitaba

era aprender muchas cosas.

'What PRO needed-3rd.p.sg. before

was to learn many things.

b. \*Lo que antes se necesitaban

era aprender muchas cosas.

'What PRO needed-3rd.p.pl. before

was to learn many things.'

Also by Pronominalization with lo:

- (3/82) a. Antes se necesitaba [aprender muchas cosas],  
pero hoy ya nadie [lo] necesita.  
'Before PRO needed-3rd.p.sg. [to learn many things],  
but nowadays nobody needs [D.O.Cl.(it)].'
- b. \*Antes se necesitaban [aprender muchas cosas],  
pero hoy ya nadie [lo] necesita.  
'Before PRO needed-3rd.p.pl. [to learn many things],  
but nowadays nobody needs [D.O.Cl.(it)].'

And the distribution of adverbs:

- (3/83) a. Antes se necesitaba, sin embargo,  
aprender muchas cosas.  
'Before PRO needed-3rd.p.sg., nevertheless,  
to learn many things.'
- b. \*Antes se necesitaban, sin embargo,  
aprender muchas cosas.  
'Before PRO needed-3rd.p.pl., nevertheless,  
to learn many things.'

The ungrammaticality of examples (3/80b), (3/81b), (3/82b) and (3/83b) is only explainable in terms of the Clause Reduction hypothesis. Consequently, we can assume that the agreement observed in (3/80a) is possible because Clause Reduction has taken place. Conversely, whenever agreement is not possible between the tensed verb of a matrix sentence and the object of a non-tensed embedded sentence, we can assume that Clause Reduction has not taken place in that particular instance. Let us consider a parallel example to that quoted from Otero (1976) under (3/44):

(3/84) a. Se trató de derrumbarle

los regímenes neocoloniales al Imperio.

'PRO made-an-attempt-3rd.p.sg. to overthrow-I.O.Cl.

the neocolonial regimes to the Empire.'

b. \*Se trataron de derrumbarle

los regímenes neocoloniales al Imperio.

'PRO made-an-attempt-3rd.p.pl. to overthrow-I.O.Cl.

the neocolonial regimes to the Empire.'

BUT,

c. Se le trataron de derrumbar

los regímenes neocoloniales al Imperio.

'PRO I.O.Cl. made-an-attempt-3rd.p.pl. to overthrow

the neocolonial regimes to the Empire.'

As Contreras (1978) has convincingly argued, Clitic Promotion is obligatory if Clause Reduction has taken place. Since there is no Clitic Promotion in (3/84a), this implies that no Clause Reduction has taken place in that particular example. If my hypothesis is correct, (i.e. that verb agreement is possible in this particular type of examples only when there is Clause Reduction), verb agreement should not be possible when there is no Clitic Promotion. This is precisely what the ungrammaticality of example (3/84b) shows. By the same token, the grammaticality of example (3/84c), which shows that verb agreement is perfectly acceptable when there is Clitic Promotion, strongly supports the claim being made in this study.

The optional character of this agreement is attested by the following example, which is parallel to (3/84c):

- (3/85) Se le trató de derrumbar  
 los regimenes neocoloniales al Imperio.  
 'PRO made-an-attempt-3rd.p.sg. to overthrow  
 the neocolonial regimes to the Empire.'

Example (3/85) and its plural counterpart in (3/84c) show that Clause Reduction does not depend on agreement, which is a logical alternative in the light of the examples considered

above. Rather, it shows that Clause Reduction is a necessary condition for optional agreement to apply. This is confirmed by the following examples:

(3/86) a. Se había estado intentando tratar de derrumbarle los regímenes neocoloniales al Imperio.

'PRO had-3rd.p.sg. been trying to-make-an-attempt to overthrow-I.O.Cl. the neocolonial regimes to the Empire.'

b. \*Se le había estado intentando tratar de derrumbar los regímenes neocoloniales al Imperio.

'PRO I.O.Cl. had-3rd.p.sg. been trying to-make-an-attempt to overthrow the neocolonial regimes to the Empire.'

c. \*Se (le) habían estado intentando tratar de derrumbar los regímenes neocoloniales al Imperio. (cf. (3.40b)

'PRO had-3rd.p.pl. been trying to-make-an attempt to overthrow the neocolonial regimes to the Empire.'

Observe that Clitic Promotion is not possible in (3/86b). This means that there is no Clause Reduction in that particular example. Since there is no Clause Reduction, no verb agreement should be possible. This is substantiated by the

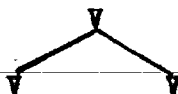


ungrammaticality of (3/86c), which is quoted from Otero (1976). This example quoted here is precisely the example on the basis of which Otero justified condition (b), Rule (3/42) above.

In light of this discussion, we are now in a position to conclude that none of Otero's conditions on the application of the optional verb agreement rule really hold, and that all of them are simply illusory. Nevertheless, we still have the problem of re-formulating that rule, since as we pointed out at the beginning of this section, Rule (3/28) fails to account for the facts here presented.

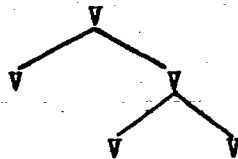
Since the agreement exhibited by the tensed verb of a sentence with an object of the verb of an embedded non-tensed sentence is strictly dependent on Clause Reduction as I have tried to show in this section, this must be expressed in the formulation of the corresponding rule. As I stated in (3/47), the output of the Clause Reduction Rule is supposed to be of the following form:

(3/87)



Because it is possible to reduce more than one clause in a sentence (cf. (3.46)-(3.48)), the following outputs are also allowed:

(3/88)



Since the tensed verb of a sentence is always the left-most verb in the string within the boundaries of S (cf. (3/49)-(3/52)), to indicate that clause reduction has taken place, we simply need to specify one more V node within those boundaries:

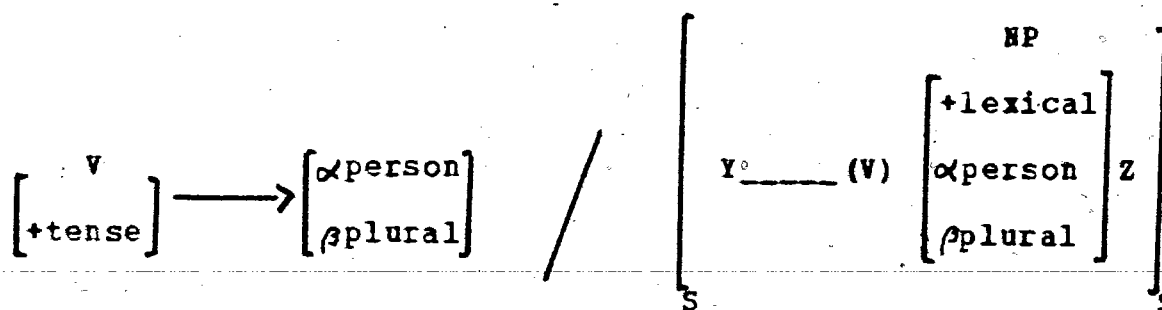
(3/89) ...[<sub>S</sub> ...  $\begin{bmatrix} V \\ +\text{tns.} \end{bmatrix}$  V ...]<sub>S</sub> ...

If no Clause Reduction takes place, the second instance of V in (3/89) remains outside the boundaries of S. Now, since the second instance of V may also be the output of the Clause Reduction Rule at other levels, it might eventually have the form of (3/87), (3/88) or the like. Nevertheless, every complex verb under that instance of V would have to be by definition within the boundaries of S. Consequently, we do not need to

specify this second instance of V any further, and something like (3/89) should be sufficient to indicate that S contains a complex verb resulting from the Clause Reduction Rule.

With these observations in mind, we can now reformulate Rule (3/28) in such a way as to account for the data examined in this section:

(3/90) Object-Verb Agreement Rule (OPTIONAL):



CONDITION:  $Y \neq \left[ \begin{array}{c} \text{NP} \\ \alpha person \\ \beta plural \end{array} \right] \dots$

As stated now in (3/90), the Object-Verb Agreement Rule can still account for the data examined in Section Two of this Chapter since the second instance of V within the boundaries of S is optional. It also accounts for the facts examined in this section, namely examples (3/44), (3/46), (3/80), (3/81), (3/82),

(3/83), (3/84), (3/85), and (3/86). But not only for these. It also accounts for some other examples where no Impersonal SE intervenes in the construction. Consider the following:

(3/91) a. Tiene que estar lloviendo monedas del cielo.

'Must-3rd.p.sg. be raining coins from heaven.'

b. Tienen que estar lloviendo monedas del cielo.

'Must-3rd.p.pl. be raining coins from heaven.'

(3/92) a. Debe (de) haber muchos invitados en la fiesta.

'Must-3rd.p.sg. there-to-be many guests at the party.'

b. Deben (de) haber muchos invitados en la fiesta.

'Must-3rd.p.pl. there-to-be many guests at the party.'

(3/93) a. No parece haber muchos peros en este análisis.

'Neg. seem-3rd.p.sg. there-to-be many buts with this analysis.'

b. No parecen haber muchos peros en este análisis.

'Neg. seem-3rd.p.pl. there-to-be many buts with this analysis.'

Thus, these examples constitute external evidence that justifies the existence of the rule stated in (3/90), and its associated convention stated in (3/29).

### 3.4. CONCLUSIONS.

In Section One of this Chapter, obligatory verb agreement was briefly examined and a tentative rule was proposed. The final formulation of this rule was left open to the results of the research still to be done in relation to that aspect of verb agreement, considering that it is not crucial for the problem posed by the Impersonal SE Construction.

Section Two was devoted to an examination of the 'conditions' that according to Otero (1972 and 1973) justify his claim on 'acceptable agrammaticality', i.e. that Impersonal SE Sentences that exhibit agreement between the verb and its associated NP cannot be generated at all by the grammar of Spanish. It was shown that none of these 'conditions' are necessary, and that such verb agreement is to be accounted for by a rule of grammar, which is subject to Chomsky's 'Tensed Sentence Condition'. A first approximation to such a rule was proposed, along a convention that assigns the third person singular verb ending to the tensed verb of a sentence that has not undergone agreement.

Section Three included a discussion on Clause Reduction, a process which adjoins the non-tensed verb of an embedded sentence to the verb of an upper sentence. In this Section it was hypothesized that the tensed verb of a matrix sentence may optionally agree with the object of the verb of an embedded clause provided that Clause Reduction has taken place. The existence of the Clause Reduction Rule was justified using the arguments presented by Contreras (1978), and three other original arguments. After establishing the tests for Clause Reduction, they were used, in the examination of the examples of Impersonal SE Sentences whose tensed verb exhibits agreement with an object of a non-tensed 'embedded' verb. It was found that the application of these tests systematically shows that clause reduction has taken place when this type of verb agreement is possible. It was also found that the application of these tests rendered the corresponding examples ungrammatical when verb agreement was not possible. Finally, the object verb agreement tentatively proposed in Section Two was reformulated in such a way as to account for the examples examined in this Section, and it was shown that the final formulation of such a rule could not only account for this type of verb agreement in the Impersonal SE Construction, but also in some other constructions found in the language.

Consequently, it is possible to conclude that:

(i) The optional object-verb agreement exhibited by some Impersonal SE Sentences is to be accounted for by a rule of grammar.

(ii) The existence of this rule is justified both on theoretical and external grounds. In fact,

(a) Such a rule is sensitive to Chomsky's 'Tensed Sentence Condition', and

(b) It is also required in the grammar of Spanish to account for the optional verb agreement observed in existential sentences and sentences constructed with meteorological verbs.

(iii) The rule in question can be stated using the formalism suggested for rules of agreement in Chomsky 1965.

(iv) Such a rule is to be complemented with a general convention that assigns the third person singular verb ending to the tensed verb of a sentence that has not undergone agreement. This convention finds ample justification on universal grounds.

## FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER THREE.

[3/1] According to Chomsky (1965, p.175), "Formally, rules of agreement [...] are quite analogous to the rules of assimilation of the phonological component". This is precisely the type of formalism used here in the formulation of both the Subject and the Object Verb Agreement Rules.

I am assuming that only NPs that are +PRO are either [+person] or [-person], whereas NPs that are -PRO are always [-person]. Along the lines of Benveniste (1971), I am also assuming that only the 1st. and the 2nd. are technically [+person], whereas the 3rd. is [-person].

[3/2] Barillas (1978) has presented some preliminary evidence that suggests that in Spanish, the subject NP must be introduced by the same Phrase Structure Rule that introduces the verb. This obviously brings into question the existence of a VP node in Spanish, which has been currently assumed without formal justification.



[3/3] I am assuming here that in the string [s NP...V..., the NP that immediately follows the bracket is the subject of the verb, i.e. the left-most NP directly dominated by S within the boundaries of S. Once the subject has been identified in these terms, the question of whether there is a VP node or not becomes superfluous. The A-over-A principle would automatically select the top NP in that string.

[3/4] This last condition does not form part of Otero's rule, but given the terms in which that rule was formulated, it is obviously required.

[3/5] I am grateful to R. Armitavalli for pointing out this to me, and furnishing me with the relevant data.

[3/6] See Luján (1971) for a precise statement of the Rule of Personal 'a' Insertion. Also Bordelois (1972).

[3/7] Nevertheless, see examples (3/43) and (3/45), and the corresponding discussion in Section Three below.

[3/8] Which of these solutions is more adequate, still remains to be found. The problem is complex. First of all, observe that verb agreement is not possible across the preposition 'a' that marks indirect objects in Spanish: Se les escribe(\*n) a

las chicas - 'PRO I.O.Cl. write to the girls'. If the presence of the preposition 'a' is allowed in Rule (3/28), the ungrammatical example here presented would be generated. Consequently, the other alternative must be preferred. In this case, if we assume that marking triggers 'a' insertion both in the case of the direct and the indirect object, the same undesired result would be obtained. The only way out of the problem seems to be to assume that the indirect object is introduced as a PP by the phrase structure rules, and that the so-called personal 'a' is introduced transformationally if the direct object is [+animate, +specific]. This view would be supported by the fact that no indirect object ever fails to be introduced by the preposition 'a' in Spanish: Yo le describí [\*Ø/a] unas chicas - 'I wrote [\*Ø/to] some girls'. Under this assumption, the second solution would be preferable.

[3/9] I am grateful to Dr. DeArmond for pointing this out to me. The fact that example (3/33b) is acceptable to some speakers of English does not affect the form of the argument.

[3/10] For a detailed analysis of headless relative clauses in Spanish, see Flann (1972). Although she assigns the feature [+singular] to the PRO form that according to her appears under ■ in order to obtain 'lo', which she claims is also singular,

examples such as (3/43a) contradict this assumption because the copula is not necessarily singular. Consequently, it seems to me that, if there is such a PRO form in that position, it must be [-number].

[3/11] The only attempt known to me is that of Aissen (1974), who claims that the problem can be handled by a rule of analogy.

[3/12] An alternative analysis would be to claim that (3/74) is ungrammatical because the Specified Subject Condition (Chomsky 1973) has been violated by applying Clitic Promotion. See Contreras 1978, where it is argued "that neither the Tensed Sentence Condition nor the Specified Subject Condition plays any role in predicting the behaviour of Spanish clitics".

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS

---

In Chapter I of this study, it was shown that the Two-Source Analysis of Impersonal SE Sentences, as proposed in Knowles 1974 and 1975, cannot be maintained. This was attested by the following facts:

(i) That the tests proposed by Knowles 1975 to distinguish between his A- and B-type sentences at the surface level do not actually establish a clear cut distinction between his types, but rather, between those considered by Otero 1972, 1973 and 1976.

(ii) None of the arguments presented in Knowles 1975 against the assumption that Indefinite SE Sentences and Impersonal SE Sentences that exhibit verb agreement are the same in deep and derived structure really hold.


(iii) The difference in meaning between Intransitive SE Sentences and Impersonal SE Sentences that exhibit verb agreement is not due to a lexical interpretation of the verb, but rather to a structural difference.

(iv) The Two-Source Analysis is empirically inadequate because it fails to account for the relevant data.

In Chapter II, I presented further evidence showing that the NP that triggers optional verb agreement in the Impersonal SE Construction is not the subject at the surface level. This was attested by using a series of syntactic tests for subjecthood available in the language, and it was found that only NPs that trigger obligatory verb agreement are sensitive to those tests, whereas those that trigger optional verb agreement are not. Further, in the particular case of the NP that triggers optional verb agreement in the Impersonal SE Construction, it was found that such an NP had the same syntactic behaviour regardless of whether the verb agreed with it or not. Since there is no doubt that such an NP is the object when the verb is third person singular, there is no reason to believe that it is not the object when the verb agrees with it.

Furthermore, in light of the evidence presented in this Chapter, it must be concluded that Contreras' definition of subject in terms of verb agreement cannot be maintained either.

In Chapter III, a tentative rule of Subject-Verb Agreement was proposed, and most of the Chapter was devoted to a discussion of Object-Verb Agreement. In Section Two of the Chapter, it was shown that none of the conditions stated by Otero (1972 and 1973) to justify his claim on 'acceptable agrammaticality' are really necessary if the rule of Object-Verb Agreement is adequately formulated. A provisional Object-Verb Agreement Rule was proposed here, along with a general convention that assigns the third person singular verb ending to the tensed verb of a sentence that has not undergone agreement. Section Three of this Chapter was devoted to a full discussion of Clause Reduction, which was proven to be crucial for the analysis of certain counterexamples to the rule provisionally proposed in Section Two, namely those cases where the tensed verb of a matrix sentence may optionally agree with the object of the verb of an embedded non-tensed sentence. It was shown that whenever Clause Reduction could be attested by some other evidence, such as Clitic Promotion--for example--, this type of agreement was perfectly possible. Conversely, it was also shown that whenever Clause Reduction could not be attested by any of the tests available, this optional verb agreement was not possible. Finally, the corresponding rule was re-formulated in such a way as to account for the data examined in this last Section.



Consequently, it must be concluded that

(i) The NP that triggers optional verb agreement in the Impersonal SE Construction is not the subject of the verb, but rather its object.

(ii) Such agreement is to be accounted for by a rule of grammar, which is sensitive to the Tensed Sentence Condition and also required in the grammar of Spanish to account for some other cases of optional verb agreement, namely in some sentences constructed with meteorological verbs and those constructed with the existential haber ('there-to-be').

(iii) The third person singular verb ending is to be assigned to the tensed verb of a sentence that has not undergone agreement, by a general convention which is justifiable on universal grounds.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aissen, J (1974) 'Shifty Objects in Spanish', in Papers from the Ninth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistics Society, pp.11-22.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1974) 'Verb Raising', in Linguistic Inquiry, vol.V, #3, pp.325-366.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and D.Perlmutter (1976) 'Clause Reduction in Spanish', in Berkeley Linguistic Society, vol.2, pp.1-30 (as cited in Contreras 1978).
- Barillas, M (1978) 'VP Node in Spanish?', Graduate Paper, Dept. of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics, Simon Fraser University..
- Benveniste, E (1971) "Problems in General Linguistics", Miami Linguistics Series #8, University of Miami Press.
- Bordelois, I (1974) "The Grammar of Spanish Causative Complements", M.I.T. Ph.D. Dissertation.
- Chomsky, N (1965) "Aspects of the Theory of Syntax", M.I.T. Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1973) 'Conditions on Transformations', in Anderson, S. and P.Kiparsky (Eds.) "A Festschrift for Morris Halle", Holt, Rinehart and Winston, N.Y. pp.232-286.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1976) 'On Wh-Movement', in Cullicover . et al (Eds.) "Formal Syntax", Academic Press, Inc.
- Contreras, M (1973) 'Grammaticality versus Acceptability: The Spanish SE Case', in Linguistic Inquiry, vol.IV, #1, pp.83-87.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1974) 'Indeterminate-Subject Sentences in Spanish', Indiana University Linguistic Club (mimeo).
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1976) "A Theory of Word Order with Special Reference to Spanish", North-Holland Linguistic Series #29.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1978) 'Clause Reduction, the Saturation Constraint, and Clitic Promotion in Spanish', paper presented at the Simon Fraser University Linguistic Colloquium (March).



- DeFazio, S (1971) "Separating the Uses of SE in Spanish", Georgetown University, Ph.D. Dissertation.
- DeHollo, G (1978) 'On The Use of POR Plus Agent with SE Constructions', in Hispania, vol.61, #2, pp.323-327.
- Emonds, J (1976) "A Transformational Approach to English Syntax. Root, Structure Preserving and Local Transformations", Academic Press, Inc.
- Gili y Gaya, S (1961) "Curso Superior de Sintaxis Española", Bibliograph, S.A.
- Hadlich, R (1971) "A Transformational Grammar of Spanish", Prentice Hall.
- Hust, J (1978) 'Lexical Redundancy Rules and the Unpassive Construction', in Linguistic Analysis, vol.IV, #1, pp.61-89.
- Keenan, E (1974) 'The Functional Principle: Generalizing the Notion of SUBJECT OF', Papers from the Tenth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, pp.298-309.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1976) 'Towards a Universal Definition of SUBJECT', in Li, C.N. (Ed.) "Subject and Topic", Academic Press, Inc. pp.305-333.
- Knowles, J (1974) 'On Acceptable Agrammaticality', in Linguistic Inquiry, vol.V, #4, pp.622-627.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1975) 'The Spanish Impersonal SE: Two Sources or One?', in Language Sciences #35, pp.9-14.
- Lozano, A (1970) 'Non-Reflexivity of the Indefinite SE in Spanish', in Hispania #53, pp.452-457.
- Luján, M (1971) 'Direct Object Nouns and the Preposition 'a' in Spanish', paper presented at the Language Society of America Annual Meeting, Buffalo, N.Y. (as cited in Contreras 1978).
- Otero, C-F (1972) 'Acceptable Ungrammatical Sentences in Spanish', in Linguistic Inquiry, vol.III, #2, pp.233-242.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1973) 'Agrammaticality in Performance', in Linguistic Inquiry, vol.IV, #4, pp.551-561.

