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# Studies in Historical Linguistics and Language Change

## Grammaticalization, Refunctionalization and Beyond

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Edited by  
Dorien Nieuwenhuijsen and Mar Garachana  
Printed Edition of the Special Issue Published in *Languages*

# **Studies in Historical Linguistics and Language Change**



# Studies in Historical Linguistics and Language Change. Grammaticalization, Refunctionalization and Beyond

Special Issue Editors

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## About the Special Issue Editors

**Dorien Nieuwenhuijsen** is Associate Professor in Spanish Linguistics at Utrecht University. Her research is focused on the historical development of Spanish, especially Spanish syntax, and on variation and change in contemporary Spanish, in Spain and Spanish America. She is particularly interested in the role internal and external factors play in linguistic variation and change. To recollect her data she uses large digital language corpora and she takes a special interest in the opportunities these digital tools offer for the study of historical linguistics. She takes part in the research project *Diccionario histórico de las perífrasis verbales del español. Gramática, pragmática y discurso (II). Perífrasis temporales y aspectuales* (MINECO FFI2016-77397-P). She is a member of the research group *Grup de Gramàtica i Diacronia (Gradia)* recognised as 'consolidated' by the *Agència de Gestió d'Ajuts Universitaris i de Recerca (AGAUR)* of the *Generalitat de Catalunya* (2017 SGR 1337).

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## Introduction

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It is a commonly known fact that language change can be observed at different linguistic levels, which correspond to the traditional disciplines of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. In this special issue we concentrate on morphological and syntactic changes in Spanish, although we do not exclude phonological or semantic change, as long as they are linked to or relevant for the discussion of a certain morphological or syntactic evolution.

Whereas grammatical change for many decades has been an important issue in the work of a number of Spanish historical linguists, the interest in this kind of change received a strong boost with the development of grammaticalization studies, which undoubtedly have greatly enhanced our knowledge of concrete linguistic evolutionary processes, as well as our understanding of the evolution of grammar in general<sup>1</sup>.

Work on grammaticalization developed mainly from the late twentieth century onwards. However, it was far from being a novelty then, since various previous studies already touched upon this concept, particularly several nineteenth-century German linguists who dealt with central issues of grammaticalization studies. The term itself was coined by Meillet in 1912 (Meillet 1912), and Kuryłowicz returned to the concept and the process of grammaticalization in 1965 (Kuryłowicz 1965). A few years later, Givón (1971) elaborated further on the topic, but it was not until 1982 that the first monograph on grammaticalization was conceived by Lehmann (only published in (Lehmann 1995); for more information see Narrog and Heine 2011). Finally, the decade of the nineties meant the consolidation of grammaticalization as an approach for studying grammatical change. It provided a framework that made it possible to systemize the study of grammatical change, understood as the evolution from a lexical item or construction to a grammatical word or as the transition from a grammatical item to a more grammatical item.

Unquestionably, numerous processes of grammatical change fit in this definition. However, others, such as the development of the preterite subjunctive in Spanish or the emergence of prepositions such as Old Spanish *no obstante* ('in spite of') or *no embargante* ('notwithstanding'), fall outside the limits of grammaticalization proper. Therefore, alternative approaches arose in order to explain how these and other changes took place.

Concepts such as exaptation, capitalization, refunctionalization and adfunctionalization emerged as a result of the need to explain certain evolutionary processes that did not match with the evolutionary patterns proposed by grammaticalization theory. For instance, it is not unusual that languages recycle grammatical material for uses different from its original etymological use. That was the case with Latin

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<sup>1</sup> As historical linguists, we concentrate on changes in the course of recorded history, not on the development of human language capacity in general. In that sense, we assume that "the historical record (all written until about a century and a half ago, when live recording began) reflects modern cognitive ability and a stable stage in the evolved human language capacity" (Traugot 2008, p. 219).

plural neuter nouns that ended in *-a*, whose ending in Spanish, instead of being a plural marker, came to be reanalyzed as a singular feminine marker of collective nouns as words like *leña* prove (from Latin neuter *lignum*, plural *ligna*, 'wood', hence 'firewood' in Spanish; cf. Penny 2004, p. 122). Interestingly, the change that experimented these Latin neuter plural nouns in their transition to Spanish took place at the morphosyntactic as well as the lexical level. However, a grammaticalization path cannot be invoked to explain the reinterpretation of this ending, since it goes beyond the mere reanalysis of endings in *-a* as feminine markers in Vulgar Latin, as it also entails the retention of the original plural sense in the collective meaning of these words.

In his well-known and much debated article of 1990, Lass launched the notion of *exaptation*, which refers to "the opportunistic co-optation of a feature whose origin is unrelated or only marginally related to its later use" (Lass 1990, p. 80). Borrowed from evolutionary biology, he used this term to describe a kind of linguistic evolution in which a grammatical element is recycled and redeployed for a new linguistic purpose. In line with Lass's (1990, 1997) ideas, it may be maintained that in the course of time the plural neuter marker *-a* had become obsolete, since only the masculine and feminine gender survived as such in Spanish, and plural meaning was expressed by *-s*. While neuter singular nouns, ending in *-um*, in most cases became masculine in Spanish (*-um* > *-o*), the neuter plural marker in *-a* had become a sort of morphological junk, a useless piece that could be exploited in order to signal collectivity. Obviously, the fact that feminine nouns in Spanish frequently ended in *-a* favored the morphological integration of this type of nouns.

Connecting with Lass' original idea, Pountain (2000, p. 295) proposed the term *capitalization*, which he defined as "an attempt to label the historical process by which a linguistic feature which already exists in a language comes to be substantially exploited for wider purposes, sometimes simply making overt distinctions which were previously covert, but sometimes apparently creating new expressive possibilities".

Subsequently, in order to distinguish between instances of exaptation in which the original function had been lost and instances in which a new function was added to the original one, and to clarify the somewhat diffuse concept of exaptation, Smith (2011) introduced two types of change: refunctionalization and adfunctionalization. He categorized the evolution of the Latin plural neuter nouns as a case of adfunctionalization, i.e., "the process in which a form assumes a new function alongside or in addition to its original function" (Smith 2011, p. 305), arguing that the number opposition of singular/plural continued to exist, but was no longer expressed by the original neuter morphology (Smith 2011, p. 296).

More recently, Van de Velde and Norde (2016) have traced the origin and history of the concept of exaptation, showing that ever since its introduction it has been susceptible to divergent interpretations, leading to terminological confusion and controversy. Broadening the scope of the term, the authors conceive exaptation as "the leap-like co-optation of a trait for a new function that is not immediately related to its former function" (Van de Velde and Norde 2016, p. 10). For Van de Velde & Norde the key issue is no longer whether the new function corresponds to an obsolete word or grammatical function, but the fact that the evolution does not follow its predicted or common course. In this way, exaptation has been applied to deal with unexpected changes. In Spanish, examples can be found in the acquiring of a subjunctive value by the pluperfect indicative (CANTAVERAM; Rodríguez 2006, p. 174 ff.) or in the extension of the definite article at the head of completive *that*-clauses (Wall and Octavio de Toledo y Huerta 2016) as in *El que no sepas caminar y mascar chicle al mismo tiempo no significa que el resto de la raza humana sea como tú*. ('That you do not know how to walk and chew gum at the same time does not mean that the rest of the human race is like you.').

In spite of the indisputable merits of grammaticalization theory and concepts as exaptation, capitalization, refunctionalization or adfunctionalization, they generally disregard or do not properly allow for other aspects that are highly relevant for certain grammatical changes. As a matter of fact, languages are not only used in specific conversational contexts, but they are also employed in written texts, and as Narrog and Ohori (2011) showed, a grammatical change may also start or develop in

this latter modality. In the same vein, even so-called dead languages, as is the case with Latin in the European medieval countries, may generate linguistic innovations, that originated either in written texts or in language employed in formal contexts (cf. Jover 2010). These innovations in Latin were transferred to European vernaculars via written texts and, afterwards, were introduced into the spoken language through formal registers. Since, in our view, these features are an integrated part of certain types of grammatical changes, it is essential to take into account the cultural and social context in which these particular changes occur.

The present special issue examines the usefulness and applicability of a number of the above-mentioned concepts and processes of change to a range of linguistic changes in Spanish and Latin that cannot be easily or can only be partially accounted for within the framework of grammaticalization. Rather than challenging the insights of grammaticalization theory, the different contributions to this special issue demonstrate that exaptation, capitalization, refunctionalization and adfunctionalization, as well as changes motivated by rhetorical guidelines, constitute interesting and valuable notions that allow for a better understanding of specific language changes in Spanish and, by extension, of language change in general.

This special issue consists of three parts that focus on different components of the grammar. Each part comprises a number of case studies on specific grammatical topics in Spanish or Latin. Ideally, the reader should read the papers in the order we establish below, since this order, we believe, renders a thematically coherent overview of the work included in the present issue.

However, every paper may also be read independently and actually, as the reader will find out, the order of the papers on the journal website differs from the one proposed here. Thus, the reader may also play hopscotch, as in Julio Cortázar's famous novel *Rayuela/Hopscotch*, and read the papers in his own preferred order, or simply follow the order of the journal website.

Pountain opens the first part of this special issue, which concentrates on changes in the noun phrase. The author argues that the development of the definite and indefinite articles in Spanish may be regarded as an instance of capitalization or adfunctionalization. His meticulous quantitative and qualitative analysis reveals that the definite article is the result of a partial exaptation of the Latin demonstrative *ILLE*, whereas the indefinite article still preserves its original value of numeral. However, as Pountain shows, both articles developed additional functions, related to the original ones.

Pato studies the history of the sequence <indefinite article + possessive + noun>, as in *un su amigo* (literally 'a his friend'), which existed in Medieval Spanish, fell in disuse in Modern Peninsular Spanish but has survived in some Spanish American dialects, particularly in Central American Spanish, although with a new discursive value. The claim of the author that the construction can be understood as an example of refunctionalization is convincingly grounded in a qualitative analysis of the distinct values of the possessive construction.

The third contribution concerning the noun phrase explores the relationship between refunctionalization and usage frequency. Rosemeyer proposes that folk etymology processes can be characterized as a type of refunctionalization, since in folk etymology obsolescent morphemes are replaced with morphemes that still have a function in language. In order to test this claim, he conducted a questionnaire survey in which participants were asked if they accepted the assumption that a target word derived from a proposed etymon that, however, was false. Rosemeyer's results indicate that usage frequency plays a role in folk etymology processes and, hence, in refunctionalization.

The second part of the special issue, dedicated to changes in the verb phrase, starts with a contribution by Kailuweit, who studies the use of <to be + past participle> with intransitive verbs in Medieval and Early Modern Spanish. Whereas in Latin <esse + past participle> mainly had an aorist reading, Medieval Spanish <ser + past participle> has to be interpreted as a resultative construction, thus challenging the common assumption of a grammaticalization path from resultative constructions to aorist constructions. In order to describe this process adequately, the author introduces the term *decapitalization* reversing Pountain's concept of capitalization.

Hernández Díaz analyzes the diachronic development of the first person plural verb form *habemos* (literally ‘we have’, now ‘there are’), which originally was a full verb expressing possessive meaning but in the course of time became an auxiliary of perfect tense and in Modern Spanish has an existential value. Hernández Díaz argues that the recycling of *habemos* can be conceived as a case of refunctionalization, triggered by the fact that it presents communicative advantages that other existential verbs lack.

The topic of part three is the origin and development of a number of discourse markers and grammatical words. In her contribution, Company stresses the necessity to consider context as the unit of language change when grammatical words are involved, being context always the locus of change in this particular cases. Typically, these changes exhibit an active spreading of a form to new contexts, which, however, does not entail a change in category or grammatical status. Evidence for these claims comes from the diachronic expansion of the Spanish preposition *a* (‘to’).

The next two contributions discuss the evolution of the Spanish preposition *mediante* (‘by means of, with’) in different historical and diachronic periods. Artigas examines its origins in Late Latin and analyses the different uses of the verb *MEDIARE* (‘to be in the middle, to mediate’), particularly its present participle in ablative form *MEDIANTE*. This analysis allows her to shed light on the linguistic and extra-linguistic circumstances that accompanied the emergence and behavior of *mediante* in the first centuries of Spanish. At the same time, her work highlights the more general issue of the importance of discursive traditions and historical-cultural factors in the evolution of linguistic units.

Garachana Camarero studies the origin of the use of the preposition *mediante* (‘by means of, with’) in Medieval Spanish. She argues that, whereas traditionally its presence has been described as the result of a process of grammaticalization, empirical data extracted from two large digital diachronic corpora support the claim that this preposition is the outcome of a grammatical calque of Latin that entered the Spanish language through Aragonese and Catalan.

Subsequently, Azofra analyzes the role of elision in the evolutionary process of the additive connective *aparte* (‘besides’) and shows that this particle, that presents serious problems of categorization, as reflected in various lexicological works, introduces an argument that is not indispensable to reach a certain conclusion. In this sense, it is different from all other additive connectors in Spanish. The author uses the case of *aparte* to draw some more general conclusions on the explanatory force of grammaticalization theory and, at the same time, highlights the importance of context as the locus of change.

In the last contribution to this special issue, Nieuwenhuijsen studies the historical development of the Spanish doublet *ante-antes* (‘before’) and explores the question whether the adverbial *-s*, as present in *antes*, was exploited to mark a semantic difference between the two forms, once the original adverbial value of final *-s* had become obsolete. Quantitative data are presented to test this claim and to analyze the distribution of the different meanings of the two members of the doublet.

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Article

# The Development of the Articles in Castilian: A Functional Approach

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**Abstract:** The development of the definite and indefinite articles in Castilian may be regarded as an instance of capitalization or adfunctionalization, following partial exaptation of the Latin demonstrative *ille*, which involves progressive widening without significant loss of function, the rendering of overt distinctions which were previously covert through the contrast between definite article, indefinite article and the “zero” determiner, the creation of new expressive possibilities and the facilitating of further distinctions in the grammatical system in combination with other determiners (usage with possessives, demonstratives and *tal* is examined).

**Keywords:** refunctionalization; Castilian articles; definiteness; adfunctionalization; indefiniteness

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## 1. Introduction

For several years, I have been investigating examples of a historical linguistic phenomenon, which in Pountain (2000a) I called *capitalization*, in which a linguistic element with one or more existing functions appears to be progressively exploited to acquire ever more functions. In the history of Castilian, I have studied the extension of the copular verb *estar* (Pountain 2000a), the reflexive (Pountain 2000b, 2000c, 2008) and the creation of the neo-neuter article *lo* (Pountain 2015). Without going into detailed summaries of these studies, I begin by calling attention to what may be considered the most salient characteristics of these three developments.

First, they involve a widening, without significant loss, of function, in the course of which the creation of a structural opposition is critical. *Estar* appears to invade the functional field of *ser*, while maintaining its original locative function, but although *ser* to a certain extent yields ground to *estar*, it could not be said that *ser* loses any of its own functionality, but rather that there is progressive competition between the two verbs. The same can be said of the reflexive, which does not cease to express literal reflexivity, even though it competes with the “etymological” passive voice (*ser* + past participle), which comes to have a reduced frequency and stylistic range. The most that can be said, therefore, in these cases, is that there is a *change of markedness* in the element which is drawn into such competition. The case of *lo* is somewhat different, since the neuter gender as a morphological category disappeared completely in Castilian and the masculine definite article, which *lo* might have supplied (cf. several varieties of Catalan (Badía Margarit 1951, p. 287)) took the form *el*; the origin of this change might be seen as *exaptation* in the sense of Lass (1990) or *refunctionalization* in the sense of Smith (2011), according to which an element which is obsolescent comes to be used with a new value not necessarily related to its original value, which disappears. However, once *lo* is established as a determiner for an adjective, it thereafter broadens its functions without further loss.

Secondly, capitalization usually makes overt a distinction that was previously covert. The opposition between *ser* and *estar* with a past participle distinguishes a dynamic passive voice (*La puerta es cerrada* “the door is (being) closed/is (regularly) closed”) from a stative passive voice (*La puerta está cerrada* “the door is (in a state of having been) closed”). The use of the reflexive as a passive voice

allows the discrimination of a “middle” voice which does not envisage the participation of an agent. The reflexive passive *La puerta se cerró* “the door closed” in fact does not allow the statement of an agent at all: “*La puerta se cerró por Miguel* “the door was closed by Miguel” is unacceptable, and to express an agent Spanish uses the etymological passive *La puerta fue cerrada por Miguel* (unless, as is more frequent in speech, the passive is avoided altogether). The neo-neuter article (always appearing with an adjective, never with a noun) refers either to an absolute concept (*lo referido = (todo) lo referido* “(all) that has been referred to”) or to a partitive concept (*lo alto = la parte alta* “the high part”) by contrast with the nominal reference of an adjective used with other determiners (so *el enfermo* “the sick person”, *un joven* “a young person”).

Thirdly, capitalization creates new expressive possibilities. The extension of the opposition between *ser* and *estar* to adjectival complements has given rise to what are usually termed “subjective” uses of *estar* + adjective (so the “objective” *Juan es amable* “Juan is kind, a kind person” contrasts with *Juan estuvo más amable que de costumbre* “Juan was being kinder, behaving in a kinder way, than usual”). The reflexive has extended to both transitive and intransitive verbs, producing contrasts in meaning with the non-reflexive which are extremely difficult to describe because they are idiosyncratic to the verbs concerned, although there is no denying the reality of the distinction (such contrasts were studied in detail by (Moreira Rodríguez and Butt 1996)). *Lo* has developed a value of “extreme degree” which gives it what appears to be an adverbial function, there being no agreement between *lo* and the adjective, which is normally required within a noun phrase, e.g., *No sabes lo hermosa que es* “You don’t know how beautiful she is”.

Fourthly, the consequences of capitalization may have a wider impact on the grammatical system. The establishment of the opposition between *ser* and *estar* with adjectives appears to have given rise to a parallel distinction in inceptive verbs (verbs of becoming): *ponerse* is restricted to contexts in which *estar* is permitted, so *ponerse* is used with *triste* (*Juan se puso triste* “Juan became sad” corresponds to *Juan está triste* “Juan is sad”) while *hacerse* is used with *viejo* (*mi padre se hizo viejo* “my father became old” corresponds to *mi padre es viejo* “my father is old”). The favoring of the reflexive as a middle voice may have led to the lower frequency of the etymological passive as well as to the eventual demise of a potential competitor, the incipient indefinite pronoun *hombre*, which was amply attested in Old Castilian, and the comparative success of which can be observed in its French cognate *on*. The “extreme degree” function of *lo* competes with the older *cuán* deriving from Latin *quam* and finally overtakes it, since it is used not only with adjectives but with adverbs and whole noun phrases: *Todos elogian lo gran actor que es* “Everyone praises how great an actor he is” (Álvarez Menéndez 1970, p. 348), *Me sorprende lo en su punto que está la sopa* “It surprises me how absolutely ready the soup is” (Gutiérrez Rexach 1999, p. 44).

To a certain extent, capitalization corresponds to Smith (2011) notion of *adfunctionalization*. However, what is distinctive about capitalization is that it comprises a whole series of adfunctionalizations which are usually carried out over a considerable period of time. Thus, capitalization appears to correspond closely to the phenomenon described by Sapir within the venerable tradition (if not always completely honorable: see Pountain 2008) of the “genius” of a language:

All languages evince a curious instinct for the development of one or more particular grammatical processes at the expense of others, tending always to lose sight of any explicit functional value that the process may have had in the first instance, delighting, it would seem, in the sheer play of its means of expression. (Sapir 1921, p. 60)

This in turn recalls Voltaire’s (Voltaire 1879) definition of *génie de la langue*: “son aptitude à dire de la manière la plus courte et la plus harmonieuse ce que les autres langages expriment moins heureusement” (“its capacity for saying in the shortest and most harmonious way what other languages express less felicitously”). The results of the cases of capitalization I have described so far may indeed be viewed as characteristic of Spanish and consequently a part of what might be called its “genius”. They are accordingly features which non-native speakers are always very conscious, since they are the



most problematic areas in learning and teaching the language, as well as in translation (as is apparent in many of the examples in this article).

## 2. The Articles of Castilian

The creation of the Castilian articles and their subsequent development seem to constitute another *prima facie* case of capitalization. Their growing frequency century by century is shown by the raw figures in Table 1:

**Table 1.** Raw occurrences and frequency per million words of the definite and indefinite articles in the Corpus del español (Davies 2002–2019)<sup>1</sup>.

	<i>el/la</i> N	<i>un/una</i> N	<i>los/las</i> N	<i>unos/unas</i> N
1200s	171,304 (25,508)	7702 (1147)	85,752 (12,769)	518 (77)
1300s	69,593 (26,069)	714 (267)	28,521 (10,684)	30 (11)
1400s	201,374 (24,674)	3992 (489)	86,532 (10,603)	118 (14)
1500s	566,151 (33,236)	93,243 (5474)	269,380 (15,814)	6362 (373)
1600s	445,108 (36,046)	83,587 (6769)	167,940 (13,600)	3910 (317)
1700s	397,277 (40,470)	64,501 (6571)	207,240 (21,111)	3149 (321)
1800s	885,140 (45,869)	226,731 (11,749)	361,058 (18,710)	5265 (273)
1900s	975,746 (42,754)	300,905 (13,185)	395,102 (17,312)	9107 (399)

### 2.1. Widening of Functions

The articles have been the object of many valuable studies which I have no intention of replicating and on the results of which I am drawing; I pass immediately to a schematic chronology of their functions (Table 2). It can be seen that for each article there is a constant widening of function (adfunctionalization), against the background of a clear opposition between definite and indefinite article, although we must also take into account that the absence of a determiner (which I denote by Ø in the examples) continues to be a possibility and also forms part of this functional contrast. Thus, two of the characteristics of capitalization identified in Section 1 are present.

**Table 2.** Functional extension of the Castilian articles (based chiefly on Company Concepción 1991, Garachana Camarero 2009 and Ortiz Ciscomani 2009).

	Definite Article (ILLE)	Indefinite Article (UNUS)
Latin	demonstrative: necessarily deictic (anaphoric)	number
“Late” Latin	anaphoric: not necessarily deictic definite (attenuated demonstrative)	
“Early” Castilian	extended anaphoric	
13th Cent.	generic (subject human-referring nouns; unique reference entities nominalizer)	“introductory”: referential, specific (generic) (plural <i>unos/unas</i> : see Table 5)
14th Cent.	extension of generic value	
15th Cent.	abstract nouns mass nouns	not necessarily specific “metaphorical” uses
16th Cent.	extension of nominalizing use	proper nouns unique reference entities infinitives extension of the plural

<sup>1</sup> The reason for using the Corpus del español for this study is that, in spite of the many errors it contains, it has the enormous advantage of allowing searches by part of speech; without this facility, however rudimentary, obtaining statistics of this type would have been a practical impossibility. From the statistics in Table 1, it can be seen that: (a) the indefinite article always lags behind the definite article in terms of relative frequency; (b) the significant advance of the indefinite article takes place in the 16th century; and (c) the formal indefinite plural *unos/unas* is comparatively infrequent.

We now look more closely at the development of these functions.

### 2.1.1.1. The Definite Article

The generally accepted explanation of the evolution of the Romance definite article (see, for example, [Harris 1978](#), pp. 70–72) suggests that it begins with what may be considered an exaptation or partial refunctionalization of one of the Latin demonstratives (most widely *ille*), in conjunction with its substitution as a demonstrative by a reinforced form (*\*accu ille* in the case of Castilian). The impression we have of the use of *ille* in Late Latin (especially in the *Peregrinatio Egeriae*, for which the data are well known) is of a change of markedness, evidence for which is its greater frequency. The starting point for the extension of functions which is characteristic of capitalization is its anaphoric value, and it is in an “extended” anaphoricity that we can find the key to its subsequent expansion.<sup>2</sup> Its use with unique reference entities (*el sol* “sun”, *el rey* “king”, etc.) may be seen as a cultural anaphoricity (it would be inappropriate to speak of *el rey* “the king” in a community in which there was no king, or in which there was more than one king). Inalienable possession (typically with parts of the body) may also be considered a type of anaphoricity, in which the possessed element (*la mano* “hand” in (1a), *el pie* “foot” in (1b)) is necessarily associated with either the subject of the verb (1a) or with an indirect object (1b) (*Juan*):

- (1) a. *Juan levantó la mano*  
 Juan raised DEF.ART hand  
 “Juan raised his hand”
- b. *A Juan le duele el pie*  
 To Juan 3SG.IND.OBJ hurts DEF.ART foot  
 “Juan’s foot hurts”

It is also interesting, incidentally, that the notion of what is “inalienable” seems to have undergone greater extension in Castilian than in some other Romance languages: [Butt and Benjamin \(2013, p. 29\)](#) pointed out that, while a sentence such as (2) is usual in Castilian, it has no parallel in French, for example.

- (2) *Te he aparcado el coche*  
 2SG.OBJ I have parked DEF.ART car  
 “I have parked your car”

What may be regarded as the strict function of definiteness was probably associated with the use of the demonstrative with the antecedent of a defining relative clause, a modern Castilian example of which is given in (3): there are numerous examples of such a function in Late Latin (4).

- (3) *El hombre que confundió a su mujer con un sombrero*  
 DEF.ART man REL confused OBJ his wife with a hat  
 “The man who mistook his wife for a hat”

- (4) *Et quoniam nobis iter sic erat, ut per valle illa media qua tenditur per longum, iremus [...]*  
 (*Peregrinatio Egeriae*, 43,4)  
 “And since our way was such that we went through the /that middle valley which stretched out ahead [...]”

<sup>2</sup> For what may be regarded as a pragmatically oriented account of such a change in markedness between deixis and anaphora related to the emergence of the Romance definite article, see [Kabatek \(2012, pp. 82–83\)](#).

This function is in fact closely related to that of anaphoricity, since anaphoricity may be construed as presupposing an understood defining relative clause such as “which we have already mentioned”. Indeed, it can be seen that in (4) the demonstrative fulfils both of these functions simultaneously: *illa* appears with the antecedent (*valle*) of a relative clause (*qua tenditur per longum*), but this noun has been previously mentioned in the discourse and so the reference is also anaphoric.

The definite function also includes nouns that are defined by adjectives (5a) or adjectival phrases (5b), which can be considered as reduced relatives.

- (5) a. *el libro amarillo*  
 DEF.ART book yellow  
 “the yellow book” (= “The book which is yellow”)
- b. *el tren de Málaga*  
 DEF.ART train of Málaga  
 “the Málaga train” (= “The train which goes to Málaga”)

The use of the definite article to indicate the problematic notion of genericness must be considered separately. Genericness is almost certainly also related pragmatically to anaphoricity since it depends on shared cultural knowledge of what can constitute a class (or, rather, the totality of a class). Nonetheless, the notions are different. With nouns pragmatically understandable as denoting a generic concept, there is potential ambiguity between a generic and anaphoric reference of the definite article in Castilian, which only the discourse context will resolve: in *Me gusta el vino, el vino* could be understood as wither anaphoric (“the wine”, the wine already mentioned) or generic (“wine”, wine in general) (see Butt and Benjamin 2013, p. 31): I reached similar conclusions concerning the multiple values of the reflexive in Pountain (2000c). Genericness can be expressed by both the plural (6a) and, less freely (see Chesterman 1991, pp. 32–39), by the singular (6b), although the latter usage is actually attested as early as the 13th century (6c):

- (6) a. *Los ingleses [PL.] tienen fama de ser muy flemáticos*  
 “English people have the reputation of being very phlegmatic”
- b. *El cuclillo [SG.] pone sus huevos en nidos ajenos*  
 “The cuckoo lays its eggs in other birds’ nests”
- c. [...] *mas cruel & mas dannoso que es el lobo [SG.] en la grey de las oueias en la noche.* (CdE: Alfonso X, *Estoria de España* I, S.XIII)  
 “[...] more cruel and damaging than is the wolf in the flock of sheep at night”

We may also regard the use of the definite article with abstract nouns (*la vergüenza* “shame”, *la belleza* “beauty”) and mass nouns (*la leche* “milk”, *el hielo* “ice”) as essentially generic, since these nouns denote general concepts. As can be seen in Table 2, the generic values of the definite article appear after its anaphoric values; generally speaking, it is in these various generic values that the Romance definite article and the English definite article do not correspond (the only point in common is the generic use of the singular (6b) and (6c), which is in fact the first such usage to be attested with any regularity).

The development of these essentially pragmatic functions is perhaps the most significant factor in the process of capitalization or adfunctionalization of ILLE. However, ILLE also came to have a range of nominalizing functions (Company Concepción 1991, p. 418): it is used with adjectives (7a), infinitives (7b) and, rather later, with clausal complements (7c) (the first such example I have found in CdE is from the 16th century (7d)):

- (7) a. *los*                    *curiosos*  
 DEF.ART.PL            curious.PL  
 “The curious [people]”
- b. *el*                    *murmurar*    *de*                    *la*                    *f fuente*  
 DEF.ART                murmur.INFof            DEF.ART            fountain  
 “The murmuring of the fountain”
- c. *el*                    *que*                    *no*                    *sepa*                    *nadar*                    *me*                    *extraña*  
 DEF.ART                COMP                NEG                know                swim.INF                me                surprises  
 “The [fact that] he can’t swim surprises me”
- d. [...] *por tanto, no tienen ningún título justo por el que puedan exigir y recibir ese incremento.*  
 (CdE: Luis de Molina (1535–1600), *Tratado sobre los préstamos y la usura* (1568))  
 “therefore, they have no justification for being able to demand and receive this increase”

Finally, it should be noted that there is apparently a good deal of idiosyncrasy (at least from a comparative point of view: see Butt and Benjamin 2013, pp. 28–29) in the subsequent use of the definite article in modern Castilian, especially in prepositional phrases: consider, for example, the lack of parallelism between *en la práctica* “in practice” but *en Ø teoría* “in theory” and the apparent semantic contrast between *en la cama* y *en Ø cama* “in bed” (the latter is often said to imply illness).

Similarly, many uses of the definite article in modern Castilian that depend on particular syntactic contexts are also essentially idiosyncratic and liable to variation. Such idiosyncrasy can be observed with names of languages (*habla Ø francés* “(s)he speaks French” but *habla bien el francés* “(s)he speaks French well”), days of the week (*a partir del domingo* “from Sunday” but *hoy es Ø domingo* “today is Sunday”) and names of countries (*Ø Francia* “France” but *la India* “India”).

### 2.1.2. The Indefinite Article

The history of the indefinite article is fundamentally different from that of the definite article, since, while Lat. *unus* “one” underwent a significant expansion of functions, it never lost its numerical value: it is therefore inappropriate to speak of exaptation in this case, and its extension can be considered a case of adfunctionalization pure and simple. Until the 14th century, it maintained a specific and referential function, which was in accordance with its value as a numeral. It was only in the 15th century that the derivative of *unus* began to be used to signal new information that did not necessarily have a specific reference. In Golden Age Spanish, its extension to what is sometimes called (Garachana Camarero 2009, p. 401) a “metaphorical” value can be observed (8a), which included use with proper nouns (8b): in Table 3, as a simple but eloquent indication of this development, I give the figures derived from the CdE for the string *es un(a) N*.

- (8) a. *Él es un ángel en la tierra, cierto,*  
*y vive entre nosotros de manera,*  
*como en las soledades del desierto* (CdE: Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547–1616),  
*El rufián dichoso*)  
 “He is an angel on earth, for sure, and lives amongst us as in the solitude of the desert”
- b. *Fijaos qué fuerza tiene la razón que, después de conocerla, sois un Cicerón o un San Pablo.*  
 (CdE: Jerónimo Jiménez de Urrea (1510–1574), *Diálogo de la verdadera honra militar* (1542))  
 “Consider what force reason has, for after becoming aware of it, you are a Cicero or a Saint Paul”

In addition, in the 16th century, the indefinite article extended to many of the contexts in which the definite article could already be used: it appears with unique reference entities (again with a “metaphorical” meaning (9a)), and as a nominalizer with infinitives and adjectives (9b–c).

- (9) a. *su hermosura y gracias extremadas son hoy en día un sol que alumbrá el mundo* (CdE: Jorge de Montemayor (1520–1561), *Los siete libros de la Diana*, 1540)  
 “Her beauty and extreme graces are today a sun which gives light to the world”
- b. *si restituir es un volver quanto se tomó y dañó [...]* (CdE: Tomás de Mercado (?–1575), *Summa de tratos y contratos*, 1545)  
 “If making restitution is (a) giving back of what was taken and damaged [...]”
- c. *un triste que siempre llora* (CdE: José de Valdivielso (1560–1638), *La serrana de Plasencia*, 1599)  
 “a sad person who is always crying”

Indicative statistics are difficult to provide, however: in particular, it did not prove practical to isolate instances of *un(a)* followed by an adjective without an accompanying noun. Table 4 gives the figures for the string *un* followed by an infinitive: while these inevitably include some lexicalized infinitives, the general direction of change is very clear.

**Table 3.** The string *es un(a) N* in CdE (raw figures and frequency per million words).

	<i>es un(a) N</i>
1200s	90 (13.40)
1300s	10 (3.75)
1400s	61 (7.47)
1500s	1936 (113.65)
1600s	1649 (133.54)
1700s	2526 (257.32)
1800s	7665 (397.21)
1900s	17,458 (764.96)

**Table 4.** *un + infinitive* in CdE (raw figures and frequency per million words).

	<i>un + infinitive</i>
1200s	11 (1.64)
1300s	2 (0.75)
1400s	15 (1.84)
1500s	240 (14.09)
1600s	98 (7.94)
1700s	46 (4.69)
1800s	183 (9.48)
1900s	260 (11.39)

What is most striking in the evolution of the indefinite article, partly because it confirms its independence from its original numerical value and partly because it is a particularly prominent feature of Castilian (though the phenomenon is attested both formerly and currently in other Romance varieties, see Carlier (2001, pp. 81–84) for Old French, Ledgeway (2011, p. 410) and Vincent (2017)), is the appearance of the plural *unos/as*, which represents another important stage in the capitalization of *unus*, and, indeed, in its grammaticalization as an article. Table 5 shows a veritable explosion of this plural in the 16th century, although its modern use appears to be attested as early as the 13th century (10a). The majority of examples prior to the 16th century, however, seem to be of *unos/as N* in opposition with *otros/as N* (10b); *unos/as* could also appear with the definite article, especially if it marked anaphoric reference (10c).

**Table 5.** Appearance of unos/unas N in CdE (raw figures).

	unos/unas N †	algunos/as N †	unos/unas N as % of total
1200s	326	1045	23.78%
1300s	16	626	2.49%
1400s	85	4119	2.02%
1500s	4916	8984	35.37%
1600s	2875	4815	37.39%
1700s	2213	5944	27.13%
1800s	4002	7566	34.60%
1900s	6773	8568	44.15%

† sample of 1000 nouns.

- (10) a. *Esse anno priso Autuman Rey de los Alaraues unas tierras que son llamadas por sus nombres [...]* (CdE: Alfonso X, *Estoria de España I*, 13th cent.)  
 “That year Autumn King of the Arabs captured lands which are called [...]”
- b. *Unas tierras dan vino, en otras dan dineros* (CdE: Gonzalo de Berceo, *La vida de San Millán de la Cogolla*, 466a, 13th cent.).  
 “Some lands yield wine, in others they give money”
- c. *Et los unos panes auien nombre sacerdotales./Los otros panes leuiticos.* (CdE: Alfonso X, *General estoria I*, 13th cent.).  
 “And one kind of bread was called priestly [and] the other kind of bread [was called] Levitical.”

Table 5 also gives the figures for *algunos/as* N and the percentage of *unos/unas* N of the combined total of *unos/unas* N and *algunos/algunas* N, from which the more or less constant effect of *unos/unas* N and its steady competition with *algunos/algunas* from the 16th century onwards can be seen.

## 2.2. Representation of Covert Distinctions

Having established the general lines of the expansion of the functions of the Castilian articles, we now consider the second characteristic of capitalization, the extent to which the introduction of the articles made overt distinctions which were previously covert.

The most obvious distinction is that between the anaphoric value of the definite article referring to an established discourse topic and the non-anaphoric value of the indefinite article introducing a new topic, which is, moreover, the most fundamental and longest established general functional contrast between the two articles. A clear early example is (11), where *una niña* is used to mark the first mention of the little girl in the discourse; once introduced, she is then referred to anaphorically as *la niña*:

- (11) *Una niña de nuef años a oio se parava [...]*  
*Esto la niña dixo e tornós' para su casa* (*Poema de Mio Cid*, 40; 49, 13th cent.?)  
 “A little nine-year-old girl appeared before their eyes [...]  
 This is what the girl said, and [then] she went back to her home.”

This does not mean to say, of course, that in the absence of articles Latin had no recourse for expressing anaphoricity in the case of necessity: we have seen that this was one of the functions of the Latin demonstratives, and that the “weak” demonstrative *is*, for which in a sense *ille* was a substitute (see André and Fruyt 2012), also discharged this function. Anaphoricity is also dependent on word order: Lyons (1968, p. 392) called attention to the fact that the topic of a sentence is usually “definite”, whether or not such definiteness is explicitly marked. He commented on the Latin sentences in (12) that in (12a) and (12b) the topic is determined by word order, so that the expected value of *liber* “book” in (12a), where it is in final position, is that it is not the topic (and non-anaphoric), while in (12b), where it occurs initially, it is the topic (and anaphoric).

- |      |    |   |                            |                            |
|------|----|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| (12) | a. | <i>Est</i><br>is<br>"John has a book"           | <i>Johanni</i><br>John.DAT | <i>liber</i><br>book.NOM   |
|      | b. | <i>Liber</i><br>book.NOM<br>"John has the book" | <i>est</i><br>is           | <i>Johanni</i><br>John.DAT |

(See also (Bauer 2009) on the relation between case and definiteness in Latin.) The article in fact very often seems to be a superfluous element, since it expresses functions that can very well be deduced from the discourse context. It is important to stress this, because within Romance linguistics there is a long tradition that associates the development of the definite article with the supposed typological passage from synthesis (Latin) to analysis (the Romance languages). Alvarez Martínez (1986, p. 18), quoting Abel (1971, p. 1), went so far as to say that the creation of the article is a central problem of Romance linguistics and indeed of general linguistics because it allows synthetic languages to be distinguished from analytic languages. Harris (1978, p. 70) similarly opined that the evolution of the articles as markers of specificity is "in accordance with the general tendency towards explicitness and towards preposed category marking". Some scholars have accordingly been tempted to wonder how Latin functioned without an article: Meillet and Vendryes (1966, p. 591) said that the absence of the article makes itself felt ["se fait sentir"] in cases such as (13):

- (13) *Frigida pugnabant calidis, humentia siccis  
mollia cum duris, sine pondere habentia pondus* (Ovid, *Met.*, I, 19–20)  
"Things which were cold fought against things which were hot, things which were wet against things which were dry, things which were soft against things which were hard, things which were of no weight with things which were weighty"

However, in reality, what, if anything, was lacking in Latin were adjectives corresponding to the notions of *sine pondere* and *habentia pondus* and there is actually no difficulty at all in understanding what Ovid wanted to express. As Pinkster points out:

In spite of the absence of the definite and indefinite article, in the Latin texts it is in a very large number of cases clear whether an NP is definite or indefinite. (Pinkster 1990, pp. 93–94)

Pinkster mentioned unique reference entities, proper nouns, inalienable possession and the anaphoric reference of a second mention noun as cases in which the presence of an article is in fact superfluous, and in similar vein Chesterman (1991, p. 4) quoted the opinion of Gardiner (1932, p. 47) according to whom the article "is mere useless ballast".

### 2.3. The Creation of New Expressive Possibilities

The view that the article is a redundant category is worth pursuing a little further in relation to capitalization, since it often seems that capitalization is concerned with the creation of categories that from a functional point of view can to a certain extent be regarded as superfluous. In the cases of capitalization I have already analyzed (the rise of the copula *estar*, the reflexive as an exponent of the middle voice, and the introduction of a neo-neuter article), the distinctions which these developments appear to make explicit, and the new expressive possibilities they create, are very far from being universal, and this is precisely why they become distinctive features of Castilian, giving it an individual "cut". However, while a similar case might be made in a broad comparison between languages with articles and languages without articles, a definite article deriving from a demonstrative has been perceived as a common enough feature for Greenberg (1978) to establish his "cycle of definiteness", and even for this evolutionary pathway to be regarded by some as universal (Faingold 2003, p. 39). It seems clear that Castilian is broadly at Stage II of the Greenberg cycle (the article is largely grammaticalized and determined by the syntactic context, but there is some residual contrast between the presence and absence of the article) and has not yet reached Stage III (the article is merely a nominal marker with no distinctive function). While, then, there is a degree of redundancy in the article at Stage II, there is still

opportunity for its exploitation to create new expressive possibilities, as I show below. It is precisely at this point that the differences between closely related languages emerge: Harris (1980, p. 82) concluded that French is also at Stage II of the Greenberg cycle; however, French has clearly moved further than Castilian towards Stage III, and a number of the new expressive possibilities identified in this section for Castilian are simply unavailable to French.

We turn, therefore, to the third characteristic of capitalization: that it appears to allow new expressive possibilities or more “felicitous” or economical modes of expression. We should again remember that, as far as the articles are concerned, we do not have a binary distinction between definite and indefinite, but a tripartite distinction among definite, indefinite and lack of determination or zero article, a possibility that has always been available in Castilian (cf. Kabatek 2012, p. 85).

The area in which one can put the most effective argument for the introduction of new expressive possibilities in Castilian by comparison with Latin and indeed by comparison with other languages is not in the opposition between definite and indefinite article as such but in the oppositions definite article/zero article and indefinite article/zero article, at a fairly advanced stage of the development of the articles. For example, in the complements of the copular verb *ser* “to be”, the absence of the article usually denotes literal membership of a class or category (14a), while the presence of the indefinite article implies a value judgement (the so-called “metaphorical” value of the indefinite article) (14b). These sentences are difficult to gloss in English except by lengthy paraphrase, since in English the indefinite article is always obligatorily present (“Juan is a politician”); to render the full sense of (14b) a different verb must be used (“John behaves like a politician”) or an adjective introduced (“John is a real politician”). While (14a) is an objective statement, (14b) is a value-judgement, i.e. (14b) is not literally true, and (14b) does not imply (14a).

- (14) a. *Juan es  $\emptyset$  político*  
 b. *Juan es un político*

Another contrastive context for the indefinite and zero articles is in the complements of verbs such as *tener* “to have” and *comprar* “to buy”: here the presence of the indefinite article (15a) is unmarked because it represents the normal pragmatic expectation (“Do you know that our friend Juan has bought a car?”). The implication of (15b), on the other hand, is once again more difficult to render in English. Alonso (1933, p. 198) paraphrased it by saying that it is the category to which the object bought by Juan belongs that is at the forefront of the speaker’s mind, and represents a change in status; for this, an appropriate English gloss is “Do you know that John has become a car owner?”

- (15) a. *¿Sabes que nuestro amigo Juan ha comprado un automóvil?* Alonso (1933, p. 198)  
 b. *¿Sabes que nuestro amigo Juan ha comprado  $\emptyset$  automóvil?*

Examples similar to (15b) can be identified from quite early in the Castilian textual record: Company Concepción (1991, pp. 406–7) called attention to contrasts between the definite and zero articles such as those in (16). (16a), similar to (15a), has a straightforward objective reading; the only complication in giving an English gloss is that we should understand the sword (and, for that matter, the neck of the victim) as inalienably possessed. (16b), similar to (15b), has a different nuance that is not fully expressed by the simple English gloss given: it refers to the moment at which the Cid became a knight and hence implies his symbolic taking up of his sword, a change in his status; it is a formulaic expression in this epic.

- (16) a. *dio muy grant ferida con el espada en el pescuezo* (Primera Crónica General, 118a7, 13th cent.)  
 “He dealt a very great blow with [his] sword on [his] neck”  
 b. *en buen ora cinciestes  $\emptyset$  espada* (Poema de Mio Cid, 41, 13th cent.?)  
 “In a good hour you girded on [your] sword”

A final area in which we may speak of the creation of a new expressive possibility is in the opposition between the plural indefinite article *unos/unas* and the zero article. *Unos/unas* individualizes nouns which appear in the plural: *unas gafas* denotes a single entity (“a pair of spectacles”), *unas*



*vacaciones* a single instance (“a holiday”) (De Bruyne 1995, p. 62): such a value is also attested in Old and Middle French and in Occitan (Ledgeway 2011, p. 410). Butt and Benjamin (2013, p. 47) noted that *unos/unas* “can add a modest note”, perhaps because it implies a limited quantity, not just the vague “some”, as in (17).

- (17) *Mira estas fotos—son unos vistas tomadas en Guadalajara* (Butt and Benjamin 2013, p. 47)  
 “Look at these photos: they are [(just) a few] shots taken in Guadalajara”

With figures, *unos/unas* indicates an approximate quantity:

- (18) a. *Ø doscientas personas*  
 “two hundred people [exactly]”  
 b. *unas doscientas personas* and  
 “about two hundred people”

with percentages there is a similar opposition between the definite and indefinite articles:

- (19) a. *el 20% de los alumnos*  
 “20% [exactly] of the students”  
 b. *un 20% de los alumnos*  
 “[approximately] 20% of the students”

#### 2.4. Impact on the Grammatical System

Although within the grammatical tradition articles are usually isolated as a category apart, it is clear that they are part of an extensive system of nominal premodifiers, or determiners, with which they are closely related. The articles, then, could not in themselves have been a motivating factor in the creation of the class of determiners; it is more probable that they became part of an already existing system, even though they reinforced and extended it; this system would continue to extend progressively with the introduction of ever more elements. As Tables 6–8 show, “introductory” *cierto* “(a) certain”, indefinite *algún* “some” and anaphoric *dicho* “the aforementioned” have been embedded in the language for a long period, while introductory *determinado* “(a) certain”, indefinite *varios* “several” and anaphoric *mencionado*, *referido* and *citado* “the aforementioned” are of more recent date (the English glosses give simple semantic equivalences; they are not necessarily equivalent in register or frequency of occurrence). Once again, such figures are not very rigorous, but they do indicate the general lines of development.

Table 6. “Introductory” determiners in Castilian in CdE (raw figures).

	<i>cierto/a/os/as</i> N †	<i>determinada/os/as</i> N
1200s	303	0
1300s	289	0
1400s	1384	12
1500s	3516	48
1600s	1068	14
1700s	1658	189
1800s	6247	269
1900s	5138	1062

† sample of 1000 nouns.

The interaction of the articles with other determiners is indeed one of the most interesting aspects of the history of the Romance article from the point of view of capitalization, since it creates even more expressive possibilities within this wider system, as I show below.

**Table 7.** Indefinite determiners in Castilian in CdE (raw figures).

	<i>algún/alguna</i> N †	<i>algunos/algunas</i> N †	<i>varios/as</i> N †
1200s	4303	1045	4
1300s	1097	626	7
1400s	4348	4119	30
1500s	10,261	8984	844
1600s	5555	4815	931
1700s	7399	5944	3277
1800s	7999	7566	2697
1900s	6523	8568	6702

† sample of 1000 nouns.

**Table 8.** Anaphoric determiners in Castilian in CdE (raw figures).

	<i>dicha/os/as</i> †	<i>citada/os/as</i> N	<i>referida/os/as</i> N	<i>mencionada/os/as</i> N
1200s	156	0	0	0
1300s	247	0	0	0
1400s	4587	0	0	0
1500s	3459	4	24	2
1600s	834	2	94	0
1700s	2922	190	149	72
1800s	2411	166	109	92
1900s	1013	114	44	66

† sample of 1000 nouns.

#### 2.4.1. With Demonstratives

The fundamental impossibility of combining an article with a demonstrative in both Spanish and English (*\*el este libro/\*the this book; \*un este libro/\*a this book*) is easily understood. The definite article and the demonstrative duplicate similar anaphoric and deictic functions, while the indefinite article and the demonstrative are incompatible in terms of these functions. Nonetheless, in relatively recent times, the sequence *el* + N + demonstrative has been exploited in Spanish to express a new ironical nuance. It is difficult to fix the origins of this possibility with any certainty, since it seems that the construction originates in the informal spoken language which is not represented with any regularity in the written texts on which the corpora are based, but examples can be found in CdE for the 19th century: in (20) I give one of these with a deliberately extended context so that its meaning can be more fully appreciated:

- (20) Y esto no quiere decir, claro está, que se deba abandonar el lenguaje y el estilo y escribir con desatino. Pero de ello a convertirse en esclavo de un molde, vaya mucha diferencia. En mi sentir, el escollo este del molde viene, sobre todo, del deseo de originalidad. (CdE: Amado Nervo (1870–1919), *La lengua y la literatura* (1894)).

“And clearly this does not mean to say that language and style should be abandoned and that one should write loosely. But there is a big difference between doing that and becoming a slave to a particular model. In my view, this [terrible] obstacle of the model comes chiefly from the desire for originality.”

[The author is criticizing the idea of a model in writing.]

#### 2.4.2. With Possessives

In Old Castilian, both articles could combine with the possessive. As can be seen in Tables 9–11, *el* + POSS + N has always been a minority variant, with no appreciable semantic difference from  $\emptyset$  + POSS + N; but *un* + POSS + N (21a), even if it did not exactly constitute a new expressive possibility, is quite different in meaning from (*el*) + POSS + N, and was yet another more economical (“felicitous”)

means of expressing the notion of “one of” + POSS N. From the 16th century onwards, this construction is replaced increasingly by *un + N + POSS* (21b), and another possibility for expressing the same notion, though a minority variant, as can be seen in Table 11, is the analytical formula *uno/a de + POSS + N* (21c).

**Table 9.** Ø + POSS + N in CdE (raw occurrences).

	(Ø) POSS N † ††
1200s	44,388
1300s	16,471
1400s	42,865
1500s	158,796
1600s	150,815
1700s	71,314
1800s	189,395
1900s	95,535

† Based on a sample of 1000 nouns. †† It would be very difficult to calculate the frequency of Ø + POSS + N, since it is impossible to isolate just this sequence in a search. The figure given here is for the raw occurrences of POSS + N and so includes all instances of preposed determiners; even so, it is clear that Ø + POSS + N has always been the majority variant, as may be verified by subtracting from these figures the total of the figures in the tables for definite and indefinite article and demonstrative + POSS).

**Table 10.** Definite article + POSS + N in CdE (raw occurrences).

	<i>el/la</i> POSS N †	<i>los/las</i> POSS N †
1200s	2360	2077
1300s	806	838
1400s	1186	1502
1500s	285	293
1600s	42	35
1700s	96	692
1800s	55	56
1900s	9	7

† Based on a sample of 1000 nouns.

**Table 11.** Indefinite article + POSS + N in CdE (raw occurrences).

	<i>un/una</i> POSS N	<i>un/una</i> N POSS	<i>uno/una de</i> POSS N†	<i>unos/unas</i> POSS N	<i>unos/unas</i> N POSS	<i>unos/unas de</i> POSS N
1200s	74	5	18	8	0	7
1300s	3	1	7	1	0	0
1400s	15	11	6	0	1	0
1500s	349	965	230	7	24	2
1600s	88	772	174	7	28	0
1700s	27	364	216	6	9	0
1800s	100	581	799	6	15	7
1900s	13	403	1094	0	15	5

- (21) a. *tiene preso un mi hermano* (CdE: Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra, *Espejo de príncipes y caballeros*. Libro II (s.XVI))  
 “he holds one of my brothers prisoner”
- b. *Por gran ventura hallé en ella tres hijos de un hermano mío, de quien yo no había sabido en muchos años* (CdE: Pedro Fernandes de Queiros (1565–1615), *Historia del descubrimiento de las regiones australes* (1590))  
 “By good fortune I found there three children of one of my brothers, of whom I had heard nothing for many years.”
- c. *y topó en el camino uno de sus compañeros, que también iba huyendo* (CdE: José de Acosta (1539–1600), *Cartas* (1570)).  
 “and he met one of his companions on the road, who was also fleeing”

Demonstratives and quantifiers are also used in the same sense and follow a similar evolutionary trajectory, although at different paces (statistics for *algún* and *(aqu)este* are given in Tables 12 and 13).

**Table 12.** *Algún, etc.* + POSS + N in CdE (raw occurrences).

	<i>algún, etc.</i> , POSS N	<i>algún, etc.</i> N POSS
1200s	53	19
1300s	10	1
1400s	30	18
1500s	26	116
1600s	15	92
1700s	16	98
1800s	10	51
1900s	4	17

**Table 13.** Demonstrative + POSS + N in CdE (raw occurrences).

	<i>(aqu)este, etc.</i> POSS N †	<i>(aqu)este, etc.</i> N POSS
1200s	383	7
1300s	126	2
1400s	292	6
1500s	889	144
1600s	256	99
1700s	268	78
1800s	246	123
1900s	31	50

† Based on a sample of 1000 nouns.

#### 2.4.3. With *tal*

Another determiner that enters into a relationship with the articles is *tal*. This is a very interesting case, since, although combination with the article is never a majority variant, the presence of the article creates a functional opposition, which again may be the result of capitalization. *El/la tal* + N, which was fairly frequent until the 17th century, is always anaphoric (22a) and is a near synonym of the demonstrative *este/esta; el/la tal*, with no noun, is also used pronominally (22b). Up until the 18th century, *un/una tal* N had the corresponding consecutive sense of a degree (22c) or comparison (“of this kind”) (22d), but it then acquires a secondary meaning of “a certain N”, especially with proper nouns, which from this century comes to be predominant and is its present-day sense (22e). In this way, *tal* with an indefinite article shows a certain independence of *tal* with the definite article, and it cannot be said that after this century their evolution is parallel. In Table 14, the statistics obtained from CdE for the raw *el/la tal* + N, *un/una tal* + N are given, together with an estimated figure for  $\emptyset$  + *tal* + N, calculated on the basis of the total number of occurrences of *tal* N minus those of *tal* N preceded by an article: the figures for *el/la* + *tal* + N, *un/una* + *tal* + N therefore cannot be exact, but, even so, the figures are highly suggestive.

**Table 14.** *tal* in CdE (raw occurrences).

	<i>el/la tal</i> N †	<i>un/una tal</i> N	$\emptyset$ <i>tal</i> N †
1200s	33	3	4358
1300s	54	3	1784
1400s	1159	2	5146
1500s	568	219	10,090
1600s	201	21	6025
1700s	264	55	4540
1800s	352	43	9719
1900s	26	22	4514

† based on a sample of 1000 sentences.

- (22) a. *donde había sido corregidor sin haber aún sacado a su mujer del distrito de su corregimiento por haber poco tiempo que había dejado el tal oficio* (CdE: Pedro Mariño de Lobera, *Crónica del Reino de Chile*, 16th cent.)  
 “where he had been *corregidor*, without yet having brought his wife from the district of his jurisdiction because of the short space of time which had passed since he had left this office”
- b. *y si el tal, como atrás dixe, había subido a ser señor por sus hazañosos hechos, por extenso contaban sus valentías y cómo de grado en grado había subido y tenido tanta fortuna, que mereciese en su muerte ser tan honrado* (CdE: Francisco Cervantes de Salazar (1514–1575), *Crónica de la Nueva España* (1544)).  
 “And if such a person, as I said earlier, had risen to the nobility through his glorious deeds, they recounted his brave acts and how he had risen rank by rank and acquired such a great fortune that he deserved to be so honoured on his death.”
- c. *Y en llegando le da un tal golpe de través encima el yelmo que muy lexos de allí le hizo saltar muchas centellas* (CdE: Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra, *Especulo de príncipes y cavalleros*. Libro III, S.XVI).  
 “And when he reached [him] he gave him such a sideways blow on his helmet that he made sparks fly a great distance”
- d. *No pudo Numisio resistir a una tal confabulación de voluntades, y convino en trasladarse a Roma con su mujer y su cuñado* (CdE: Joaquín Costa (1846–1911), *Último día del paganismo y primero de lo mismo*, 1878).  
 “Numisio could not resist such a conspiracy of wills, and he agreed to move to Rome with his wife and brother-in-law.”
- e. *Refiere que el primero que procuró averiguarla por este método fue un tal Felipe Guillén, boticario de Sevilla* (CdE: Martín Fernández de Navarrete (1756–1844), *Disertación sobre la historia de la náutica y de las ciencias matemáticas que han contribuido a sus progresos entre los españoles*, 1800).  
 “It reports that the first person who tried to verify it by this method was a certain Felipe Guillén, a pharmacist in Seville.”

### 3. Conclusions

The extension of the functions of the Castilian articles traced in outline here exemplify capitalization or serial adfunctionalization. This is particularly clear in the case of the indefinite article, which still includes its original value as a numeral. The definite article, it is true, loses some of the deictic force of the demonstrative from which it derives (and accordingly contrasts functionally with the new Romance demonstratives), but it continues another of the fundamental functions of the demonstrative, that of anaphoric reference. In the course of their history to date, both articles have developed a range of additional, though related, functions. The process is therefore comparable to that undergone by *estar* and the reflexive (non-exaptive) and to the neo-neuter *lo* (exaptive).

As regards the other properties that I have identified as typical of capitalization, I have demonstrated that the articles make overt some distinctions that were previously covert, chiefly and most importantly the distinction between anaphoricity or “definiteness” and non-anaphoricity or “indefiniteness”. At the same time, it is also clear that, in many, if not the majority, of their functions, the articles are a superfluous element whose value depends on the discourse context or pragmatic conditions. The possible ambiguity of the definite article between anaphoricity and genericity in fact does not present difficulties of interpretation.

It is also clear that the expansion of the articles brought about the creation of new expressive possibilities, mainly the opposition between the indefinite article and the zero article.

The effect that the articles have had on the grammatical system is more difficult to evaluate. The articles play their part in the emergence in Romance of a DP (Determiner Phrase) structure (Ledgeway 2011, p. 409); it does not seem that the articles created the system of determiners, however, but rather that they broadened it and opened the way for the incorporation (and maybe also coining) of other elements, such as the more explicit anaphoric expressions of modern Castilian. It is also possible that the dependence of the development of the indefinite article on that of the definite article can be overestimated, since from the 16th century the indefinite article has shown a marked originality by

comparison with the definite. It is perhaps in the interaction of the articles with other determiners that we see the clearest impact of a structural kind.

The history of the articles is therefore a topic of great interest for a theory of adfunctionalization, despite the many challenges it also poses.

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Article

# Indefinite Article + Possessive + Noun in Spanish: A Case of Refunctionalization?

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**Abstract:** The phenomenon under discussion is an example of a grammatical change that can be explained by refunctionalization, and as such, can be understood as the acquisition of a new meaning by an ‘endangered’ grammatical construction, which is reassigned to express another value. Refunctionalization involves the development of a new function (in this case a syntactic-semantic one). When an item loses its function, or is marginal within a system, it can be lost (as happens with the construction under study in Standard Spanish), it can be ‘saved’ as a marginal element (as in some areas of American Spanish varieties) or it can be reused for other purposes (as in the Central American Spanish varieties). The latter case presents new discursive values. Hence, this construction should be understood as an example of reusing grammatical functionally opaque material for new purposes.

**Keywords:** Spanish; syntax variation; <indefinite article + possessive + noun> construction; refunctionalization

## 1. Introduction

Naming and classifying grammatical phenomena is useful for acquiring a better understanding of them. Theory may help us understand better the phenomenon we are studying, but what claims for a more or less far-ranging theory is the occurrence of the construction itself. The Spanish linguistic construction <indefinite article + possessive + noun> (e.g., un.MSG su.M/FSG/PL amigo.MSG ‘a his/her/their friend’), has been awakening a fair amount of interest, at least in the last two decades.

Refunctionalization (or exaptation) is a specific kind of adaptation (Heine 2003; Norde 2009). Briefly, exaptation happens when a grammatical form  $G_1$  derives from a form without grammatical meaning  $G_0$  (less grammatical). Adaptation happens when a grammatical form  $G_1$  derives from a more grammatical form  $G_2$ . We define the notion of refunctionalization (or exaptation) as the process in which a grammatical element, which is close to disappearing, acquires a new ‘meaning’, and is eventually relocated within the grammatical system in order to express another value or another function. Adfunctionalization (or capitalization), on the other hand, is the addition of a new value to the already existent meaning/function of an element. Both processes help us understand better how grammatical material is formed and maintained within languages and they also help us ‘name’ the construction under discussion (‘un su amigo’).<sup>1</sup>

Refunctionalization can take place when a grammatical form loses almost all its original semantic content and is newly employed as a semantically distinct form (‘reanalysis of function’ à la Heine 2003). It happens also when the item in question does not have a function (i.e., ‘linguistic junk’), although it

<sup>1</sup> Other terms that have been employed are exaptation (Lass 1990, 1997; Norde 2002; Vincent 1995), capitalization (Pountain 2000), regrammaticalization of desemantized forms (Greenberg 1991), functional renovation of old forms (Brinton and Stein 1995), degammaticalization (Heine 2003; Norde 2002, 2009), hipoanalysis (Croft 2000), etc. These different terms illustrate the terminological confusion that exists, since they do not refer to different types of change (Narrog 2007).



might not necessarily be totally 'junk' (Lass 1990). The target of exaptation may be an already existent category (Traugott 2004). In contrast to the typical processes of grammaticalization, refunctionalization can be a discontinuous change (or 'a jump', Giacalone Ramat and Hopper 1998; Smith 2011). The cases in which the meaning of a construction is displaced to a specific context are also considered instances of exaptation (like 'un su amigo').

Interestingly, the apparition of a certain phenomenon can be both the result of refunctionalization and of adfunctionalization: for instance, it might be due to refunctionalization for one specific variety X (e.g., Central American Spanish), and due to adfunctionalization for another variety Y (e.g., Historical and Standard Spanish). The 'obsolete' material may be lost or might be used again in order to express an existent grammatical category, or in order to encode a brand new category.

The whole process is related to the development of morphological material that is difficult to acquire—it is this inadequate acquisition that enables the possibility of reanalysis for that trait (Willis 2016).

The main purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that <indefinite article + possessive + noun> construction in Central American Spanish can be explained as a case of refunctionalization.

## 2. Application of the Term and Interest in the Construction

The main question is whether the history of the 'un su amigo' construction—as a process of grammatical change—can be explained by refunctionalization (or exaptation). As previously stated, exaptation implies the development of a new function which, in this case, would be both syntactic and semantic. When an element loses its function or it becomes marginal within a system, it may either disappear (which is what has happened with the 'un su amigo' construction in Standard Spanish), survive as a marginal element (as in some areas of American Spanish varieties like Northern Argentina) or it might be used anew for other communicative purposes (as in South Mexico and Central America varieties). This construction is an example of reutilization of functionally opaque grammatical material for new purposes. The aforementioned construction would have been assimilated into the vocabulary as a starting point to exaptation.

The stages involved in this paper deal with the history of the Spanish language (both Historical and Standard Spanish and Central America varieties) and the different values of the construction.

It is crucial to note that the exaptated construction shows 'conceptual novelty'—the speaker analyzes a semantic property found in the context as an inherent property of the lexical unit (Croft 2000). Exaptation is distinct from grammaticalization inasmuch as, in the latter, a lexical element acquires a grammatical function and suffers formal changes within this process, while, in the former, an old and fading grammatical form is retained and assigned a new function (Vincent 1995).

Exaptation and grammaticalization are both based on reanalysis and lead to the formation of grammatical elements—the difference lies in the direction of the process. The reasons for these processes have to be looked for in the communicative needs of the speakers and most of the time can be traced to a tendency to gain clarity of expression. These phenomena produce both an enrichment of the available discursive tools and a progressive grammaticalization of new values within new contexts (Company Company, Concepción 2005), as will be seen in Section 4. Referential values are weakened, while textual and discursive values end up strengthened.

At least two general questions have determined the interest in the study of this construction:

- (1) Is it a case of syntactic borrowing? The answer is no, since it is not documented exclusively in areas with either a strong indigenous language influence or a high index of bilingual speakers. García Tesoro (2011, p. 206), in the only work that has been concerned with Maya speakers, demonstrates that the structure under study "shows itself with a similar frequency of utilization both in monolingual and bilingual speakers" (author's translation).
- (2) Is the value in medieval and modern Spanish the same? The answer is also no—a new communicative purpose is attested in modern Spanish (Central America varieties). As we know, possession is culturally determined; it is a 'biocultural' domain (Carlson and Payne 1989; Seiler 1983). Nowadays, it is the appreciation that the speaker makes of a specific situation that determines the use of the

construction, which places the possessee on focus and marks it as a relevant syntactic constituent: a pragmatically and perceptively relevant entity. That is, the construction moves from a textual meaning to a discursive meaning (Company Company, Concepción 2005; Palacios Alcaine 2004) as we will see.

### 3. Some Remarks about the Construction

As we know, the ‘un su amigo’ construction is an overspecified structure that conveys the value of inherent possession, that is, in which ‘the owned cannot be thought of without the owner’. Recalling previous studies, Pato (1999, 2002), García Tesoro (2002, 2011), Palacios Alcaine (2004), Nieuwenhuijsen (2005, 2007), and Company Company, Concepción (2005, 2009), the construction:

- Is documented in all Mesoamerica, from Southern Mexico to Panama.
- Is not a stigmatized construction in those varieties.
- Is not a trait exclusive to popular level.
- Is neither exclusive nor specific of indigenous (autochthon) speakers.
- Is part of the standard register within Central American Spanish.
- May be explained without having to appeal to ‘contact’ or ‘convergence’ between Spanish and Maya languages (Company Company, Concepción 1995, 2005; Martin 1985; Pato 2002).
- There are not studies that have delimited its sociolinguistic profile (and the differences within the different communities) yet cf. (Pato 2002).
- Is attested throughout the whole history of the Spanish language.

On the other hand, its frequency within the corpuses we have consulted or compiled is extremely variable. For example, there are 1149 cases (from 13th to 16th centuries) in CORDE (Corpus diacrónico del español) and 52 cases (30 of them in Guatemala and 11 in Mexico) in CREA (Corpus de referencia del español). García Tesoro (2002) works with 81 cases from interviews (Guatemala); Palacios Alcaine (2004) works with 60 literary cases from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras; Nieuwenhuijsen (2005) uses 629 cases from Corpus del español (339 of them from the 16th century); Silva Ceceña (2005) studies 252 cases; Company Company, Concepción (2005, 2009) analyzes 97 cases (in a primary corpus) and 96 from narrations and interviews of Central American indigenized Spanish (Chiapas and Guatemala); Nieuwenhuijsen (2007) found 173 examples within the press of Guatemala («La Hora») and Mexico («La Jornada»); and Elsig (2015) used 120 examples from the PRESEEA Guatemala Corpus. The data regarding frequency is relevant to support general conclusions about the construction.

The construction has been very well defined in previous works. The following is just a brief résumé. We know that its extension went from masculine to feminine (‘un su > una su’), from singular to plural (‘un su > unos sus’), and apparently from 3rd person to 1st and 2nd person. Nieuwenhuijsen (2007) indicates that the instances in the 3rd person are the most numerous, Company Company, Concepción (2009) finds the same tendency (up to 86%), and Pato (2002) concurs. The construction also changed from introducing an entity and delimitating it (with reference to other similar entities) to introducing topical and important entities that are going to subsist within the discourse. It also extended from [+human] nouns to [−human] nouns, that is, it has suffered a semantic demarcation (Company Company, Concepción 2005, 2009; Nieuwenhuijsen 2005; Palacios Alcaine 2004; Pato 2002).

Moreover, its use can be ‘measured’ in informational and argumentative terms. First of all, the use of this construction motivated by the context, i.e., the <indefinite article + possessive + noun> construction acts as an emphaser of narrative discourse, as will be seen in the following section. The construction also acquires a textual meaning (discursive value), dependent on the discourse and independent from the external situation.

#### 4. Different Values of Indefinite Article + Possessive + Noun Construction

##### 4.1. Partitive Value

The main meaning of this construction is 'one of/among several', which is attested since Medieval Spanish (Company Company, Concepción 2005; Keniston 1937; Palacios Alcaine 2004; Pato 1999, 2002; Serradilla Castaño 2007). It appears with [+human] nouns in Medieval Spanish (cf. 1a), and also in Central America varieties (cf. 1b Costa Rica, 1c Guatemala, 1d Belize):

- (1) a. El lombardo adoleció de dolencia mortal, et un su amigo que había, desque lo vio en la muerte, consejor que se confesase en Sancto Domingo [D. Juan Manuel, El Conde Lucanor, Ex. XIV, c. 1335, in (Pato 2002)].

"The Lombard man suffered from a fatal illness, and his friend that he had, when he saw him in death, advised him to confess his sins in Santo Domingo"

- b. A las diez preguntas dijo este testigo que sabe lo contenido en ella porque un su hermano se lo dijo [«Información de méritos y servicios de Miguel Sánchez de Guido», CORDE, Costa Rica, 1566].

"To those ten questions this witness said that he knows what is contained in it because his brother told him"

- c. E: ¿Ha corrido alguna maratón? I: Yo tengo un mi hijo que tiene como vicio correr y participa en todas las maratones, y yo era su único fanático [«D frente», Francisco M. Martínez, Prensa Libre (Guatemala) 04-10-2004].

"E: Have you ever run a marathon? I: I have my son whose vice is to run and participates in all marathons, and I was his only fan"

- d. Soñaba el entierro de mi abuelito, y que cuando abrían el cajón no era mi abuelito el que estaba, era un mi tío, en realidad fue el que se murió después . . . [Belizean Spanish, English and Creole Corpus, M-35, West, in (Fuller Medina 2016)].

"I dreamed my grandfather's funeral, and when they opened the drawer it was not my grandfather who was in it, it was my uncle, actually he was the one who later died . . . "

##### 4.2. Iterative Value

The construction also holds an iterative or habitual value. In this case the information is known and shared by the speaker and the hearer (García Tesoro 2002; Palacios Alcaine 2004; Pato 2002). The possessive relationship is established by the possessive, not by the context. It appears with [–animate] nouns in Central America varieties (cf. 2a–b Guatemala):

- (2) a. Clemente siempre andaba con los huesos de su hijo en una su bolsa [H-20, ladino, monolingüe, in (Pato 1999, 2002)].

"Clemente was always with the bones of his son in his bag"

- b. «El caso de un fantasma (espanto) que regala dinero». Pues eh . . . dicen que antes, por allí por la . . . por allí por los Ucaliptos, era la . . . el lugar donde tenía [el espanto] un su sitiecito [C. A. Lara Figueroa, Cuentos y consejas populares de Guatemala, 1990, p. 70, in (Palacios Alcaine 2004)].

"The case of a ghost (fear) that gives money away'. Well, uh . . . they say that earlier, over there by the . . . over there by the Eucalyptus, that was the . . . the place where it [the ghost] had its place"

### 4.3. *Emphatic Value*

The emphatic, enhancement or intensifier values of the construction are used in order to indicate related or important concepts (Company Company, Concepción 2005, 2009; García Tesoro 2002; Nieuwenhuijsen 2005, 2007; Palacios Alcaine 2004; Pato 2002). It is also used for marking decreasing size ('smallness or insignificance') and affectivity (Martin 1985; Pato 2002). The presence of the diminutive favors the construction (Nieuwenhuijsen 2007). It is habitually attested with [-animate] and [+countable] nouns. It conveys pragmatic, quantitative or qualitative information (Palacios Alcaine 2004), as we see in South Mexico and Central America varieties (cf. 3a Chiapas, 3b Guatemala):

- (3) a. A don Límbano le encargamos unos nuestros cotorritos, cuando tengan cría los que compró, que nos tome en cuenta porque nos gusta mucho los pajaritos [«Las Comadres». Diario de Comitán (Chiapas, México), 06-09-2005].

"We ask Don Límbano for a few small parrots, when the birds that he bought breed, he should take us into account because we love little birds"

b. El papá . . . este . . . le regaló unos centavos al niño pobre y la mamá le regaló unos sus centavos al niño rico. Agarraron camino . . . Pero en eso el rico le dice: –Mirá, yo cargo bastante dinero. –Yo no tengo, contestó el pobre . . . [C. A. Lara Figueroa, Cuentos populares de encantos y sortilegios en Guatemala, 1992, p. 67, in (Palacios Alcaine 2004)].

"The dad . . . mm . . . he gave some pennies to the poor kid and the mother gave a few cents to the rich kid. They started their way . . . But the rich kid says: –Look, I carry enough money. –I do not have any, answered the poor kid . . . "

### 4.4. *Discursive-Pragmatic Value*

The discursive pragmatic value of the construction is attested in narrations, tales and also in the opinion section (such as letters/messages from hearers or readers) of mass media. It marks special relevance and acts as discursive focus (Palacios Alcaine 2004). It presents important entities that have referential persistence throughout the narration (Company Company, Concepción 2005). It is attested with any kind of noun, and it has no semantic restrictions in Central America varieties (cf. 4a–c Guatemala). The nuance of 'affectivity' may be maintained. The main problem with this value lies in how to differentiate the kind of context in which it appears, a key feature for the aim of 'un su amigo' exaptation. The referential persistence mentioned is also an important contextual feature (cf. 4c, nonliterary example).

- (4) a. Ella que iba a preguntar a una casita que había allí con una su ventanita, cuando vio por la ventana, estaba el príncipe. Pero él le dijo que si ella no entraba por la ventana entonces no lo volvería a ver nunca, entonces ella saltó la ventana y allí agarró al príncipe y se abrazaron y vivieron felices [C. A. Lara Figueroa, Cuentos populares de encantos y sortilegios en Guatemala, 1992, p. 37, in (Palacios Alcaine 2004)].

"She was going to ask [something] in a little house that was over there, with its window, when she saw through the window that the prince was there. But he told her that if she did not come through the window then she would not see him ever again, so she jumped through the window and grabbed the prince and they hugged and they lived happily"

b. Eran muy pobres, tenían una su vaquita que ordeñaban . . . m . . . d'eso vivían, de su lechita [C. A. Lara Figueroa, Cuentos populares de encantos y sortilegios en Guatemala, 1992, p. 130, in (Palacios Alcaine 2004)].

"They were very poor, they had a cow that they milked . . . m . . . they made a living out of that, of its milk"

c. No será, Don Estuardo, que usted lo que busca es un su puestecito en el gobierno, por eso habla mucho, por eso anda criticando todo, por eso critica a la misma ‘cobardía chapina’. Tenga cuidado, no hable mucho, porque lo van a acusar de a saber ni qué, y usted está patojo. Si en Guatemala las cosas no van a cambiar, hombre [Estuardo Zapeta, «¡Viva la cobardía chapina!», *La Hora* (Guatemala), 21-04-2003].

“It would not be, Don Estuardo, that you are looking for a small position in the government, that’s why you talk so much, why you criticize everything, why you criticize the ‘Chapina cowardice’. Be careful, do not talk a lot, because they will accuse you of who knows why, and you are still a kiddy. Things are not going to change in Guatemala, man”

As we saw in previous examples, the structure acquires another nuance (a connotative nuance), far beyond its literal meaning. Such a new meaning depends on the actual context and triggers various pragmatic inferences, a discourse-pragmatic value. That is why previous knowledge of the situation is required to foster its discursive processing. Among the variables determining the environment of discourse the following have been singled out: text organization, source of information, attitudes of the speaker (subjectivity), speaker–hearer interactions (intersubjectivity), situation of discourse, and world knowledge (cf. for example [Kaltenböck et al. 2011](#)). A discussion which I reserve for future research cf. ([Pato 2015](#)).

## 5. Final Considerations and Conclusions

The construction under analysis can be explained thanks to grammaticalization theory. Opaque (and obsolete) grammatical material, which cannot be spontaneously understood, might be reused for new purposes in new varieties as phenomena of the narrative discourse ([Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983](#)). The possessive construction considered here is associated to structures of focus and topic—the construction marks also a discursive topic ([Company Company, Concepción 2005](#); [Pato 2015](#)).

In refunctionalization processes, the speakers create a grammatical model where there was previously none. The construction gets to convey a (new) value (see examples in 4), different from the one it used to have in other stages of the evolution of the language (see examples in 1 to 3) ([Harris and Campbell 1995](#); [Willis 2010](#)). The new values do not arise from the properties of the old ones: it is not a matter of acquisition and adaptation of the old system, rather, a new system is being created ([Willis 2016](#)).

Exaptation is not necessarily deemed to contribute to create a new function in the system—what is important is that there is a new function of the opaque (and obsolete) trait in the process of exaptation ([Willis 2010, 2016](#)).

On the other hand, polyfunctionality of contexts and constructionalization ([Traugott and Trousdale 2014](#)) also have a role in the process. The forms (‘un + su’) maintain their basic meaning, although in certain cases the possessive may not be necessary; polysemy lies within the contexts (what is meant in specific contexts), so the locus of this grammatical change would be the context. That is to say, the value of the construction is inferred from the discursive context. Therefore, we are faced by a change triggered by specific contextual use.

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Article

# Refunctionalization and Usage Frequency: An Exploratory Questionnaire Study

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the relationship between refunctionalization and usage frequency. In particular, it argues that (a) refunctionalization is more likely for low-frequency construction than high-frequency constructions, and that (b) high-frequency patterns are more likely candidates as models for refunctionalization processes than low-frequency patterns. It proposes that folk etymology processes be characterized as a type of refunctionalization process because in folk etymology, obsolescent and semantically void morphemes are replaced with morphemes that actually serve a function in language. This assumption allows for an empirical investigation of refunctionalization using an exploratory questionnaire study. The results indicate that usage frequency indeed plays a role in folk etymology processes, and consequently, refunctionalization. In particular, participants were more likely to accept false etymologies when the proposed etymon had a high usage frequency than when it had a low usage frequency. In summary, the present study proposes a way to study refunctionalization processes in synchrony.

**Keywords:** language change; historical linguistics; refunctionalization; frequency effects; folk etymology; Spanish

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## 1. Introduction

Given that “*refunctionalization*”, the process by which a linguistic construction obtains a discourse-pragmatic function other than its original function, is a concept from historical linguistics, studies of refunctionalization normally adopt a diachronic perspective. Such diachronic studies usually identify the original discourse-pragmatic function of the construction, compare this original function to the function of the construction in later stages of the language in question, and hypothesize as to the reasons for this specific refunctionalization process.

In this paper, I explore the possibility of studying refunctionalization and the speakers’ motivation for such refunctionalization processes in synchrony. In particular, I investigate two hypotheses regarding refunctionalization derived from the standpoint of usage-based linguistics. First, it can be assumed that refunctionalization processes are more likely for low-frequency constructions than high-frequency constructions because in order for refunctionalization processes to become necessary, the construction in question has to become (near-)obsolescent. Second, when searching for models for the new function of the construction, speakers might rely to a greater degree on high-frequency patterns than on low-frequency patterns. I propose that folk etymology processes can be characterized as a type of refunctionalization process because in folk etymology, obsolescent and semantically void morphemes are replaced with morphemes that actually serve a function in language. This assumption allows for an empirical investigation of the motivation of refunctionalization processes using an exploratory questionnaire study. The questionnaire asked participants whether they would accept the assumption that a target word was derived from a proposed, false etymon. It therefore allowed analyzing the participants’ decision to accept or reject the folk etymology dependent of the usage



frequency of the target word and the proposed etymon, as well as other factors. The results from the questionnaire survey indicate that as in other refunctionalization processes, there is indeed a relationship between usage frequency and folk etymology, although not all of the assumptions are validated.

This paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, I discuss the relationship of usage frequency and refunctionalization processes, establishing the two hypotheses mentioned above. In Section 3, in turn, the relationship between refunctionalization and folk etymology is discussed. I propose that folk etymology be viewed as an instance of a process of refunctionalization. Section 4 describes the questionnaire survey conducted in order to study usage-based determinants of folk etymology. The results from the questionnaire survey are discussed in Section 5. The paper closes with a critical assessment of the findings and the methodology in the concluding Section 6.

## 2. Usage Frequency as a Determinant of Refunctionalization

In this paper, I will take the term “refunctionalization” to refer to the historical process by which a linguistic construction—a word, collocation, or grammatical pattern—obtains a discourse-pragmatic function other than its original function. As an example, consider the historical trajectory of the Swedish plural suffix *-on* (Norde 2009, pp. 181–83). As summarized in Norde and Van de Velde (2016, pp. 9–10), *-on* originally served as the nominative and accusative plural of neuter *an*-stems. Probably due to the fact that fruits such as *hiūpon* “rosehips” and *smultron* “wild” were usually referred to in the plural, the *-on*-suffix obtained a new function over time. In Modern Swedish, *-on* serves as a derivational suffix that is used to form fruit names such as *hallon* “raspberry” or *lingon* “lingonberry”. Note that such processes have been referred to using a multitude of terms (cf. Norde and Van de Velde 2016, pp. 10–11 for a summary). For instance, I could have easily used the related notion of “exaptation” (Lass 1990) in this paper in order to refer to this kind of historical mechanism.

The example of the Swedish *-on* suffix serves to illustrate the relevance of usage frequency for historical refunctionalization processes. First, there is an intrinsic connection between the usage frequency of the refunctionalized construction and the refunctionalization process. Norde and Van de Velde (2016, p. 10) note that Old Swedish *-on* is a relatively infrequent plural suffix, since most plurals were formed using a zero morpheme. In other words, refunctionalization appears to occur with obsolescent constructions, i.e., constructions that are being replaced by another construction in language change, a fact that has been frequently argued for in the literature (Lass 1990, pp. 81–82; Narrog 2016, pp. 98–99; Willis 2010, p. 151). In Rosemeyer (2014, p. 95), I argued that this effect is due to the nature of conserving effects in language change. It is well known that in processes of obsolescence in language change, instantiations of the replaced construction that are of relatively high usage frequency typically resist the change longer (Bybee 2006, 2010 et passim). As a result, obsolescing constructions are usually restricted to a very limited inventory of types. The low productivity of obsolescing constructions is necessarily correlated to the loss of their original grammatical function. For instance, consider the loss of subjunctive mood in Canadian French (Poplack 2001; Poplack et al. 2013). In comparison to European French, the subjunctive is used considerably less frequently in Canadian French. Especially in oral speech, the subjunctive is often replaced with the indicative (Poplack 2001, pp. 406–7). Poplack’s analysis of the determinants of the use of subjunctive mood in Canadian French reveals the existence of frequency asymmetries due to conserving effects. Thus, although the token frequency of the standard subjunctive variant is elevated, virtually all its uses are concentrated among a handful of highly favored matrix verbs collocated with a small cohort of frequent and irregular embedded verbs. Outside of these few contexts, in which its use has become ritualized, selection of the subjunctive is very rare. (Poplack 2001, p. 414)

This state of affairs involves the subjunctive no longer being used in all of the contexts in which its use would have been necessary given its original discourse-pragmatic function (the irrealis, i.e., the expression of “imagined, projected, predicted or otherwise unreal situations or events”, cf. Poplack 2001, p. 406). Given that there are cases in which the irrealis is expressed using the indicative

mood, in a sense the Canadian French subjunctive no longer fulfills the function of expressing the irrealis. Indeed, in a newer study, Poplack et al. (2013, p. 188) find that “any apparent semantic effect [i.e., irrealis, MR] was an epiphenomenon of the overriding effect of the lexical identity of the matrix”. It is this fracturing of the original discourse-pragmatic function that allows for refunctionalization; given the indecisiveness of speakers as to the semantics of obsolescing constructions, they might opt to assign these constructions a new function in discourse.

The relationship between usage frequency and refunctionalization processes described in the last paragraphs can be reformulated as Hypothesis 1 below.

**Hypothesis 1.** *Refunctionalization is more probable for low-frequency constructions than for high-frequency constructions.*

The usage frequency of the refunctionalized construction is not the only way in which frequency might affect the refunctionalization process. Rather, it seems plausible to assume that when speakers refunctionalize an obsolescing construction, they take grammatical patterns or functions of high usage frequency as models. As an example, consider auxiliary selection (*he comido* “I have eaten” vs. *soy venido* “I am come”) in Old and Early Modern Spanish, as analyzed in Rosemeyer (2014). Following a number of previous studies such as Mackenzie (2006) and Rodríguez Molina (2006), I conducted a quantitative analysis of the alternation in Old Spanish. This analysis suggests that even though *haber* “to have” and *ser* “to be” occur in comparable syntactic contexts (i.e., in frequent collocation with the past participle), they often have a different function. Whereas *haber* + PtcP has the temporal function of an anterior, *ser* + PtcP usually has a resultative function; it expresses the resultant state of a finished event. However, after the beginning of the 15th century *ser* + PtcP was gradually replaced by *haber* + PtcP, leading to its eventual demise in the 18th century. This obsolescence process leads to interesting changes in the use of *ser* + PtcP that suggest the existence of a refunctionalization process. In particular, the functional opposition of *haber* + PtcP and *ser* + PtcP in terms of the distinction between anterior and resultative constructions was gradually dissolved, with *ser* + PtcP being increasingly used as an anterior construction. Crucially, this refunctionalization process is not random; rather, *ser* + PtcP copied the discourse-pragmatic function of anteriority from the *haber* + PtcP construction that was very frequent in comparable usage contexts. In other words, the refunctionalization of *ser* + PtcP was a result from the actualization or analogical spread of *haber* + PtcP (see De Smet 2012 for a comprehensive discussion of actualization in language change).

As a second example, consider the changes in the paradigm of Romance oblique first- and second-person singular pronouns described in Smith (2006). In Latin, the opposition between the pronouns ME and MIHI > MI was one of case; whereas ME expressed accusative case, MIHI expressed dative case. However, due to the overall loss of the Latin case system in Proto-Romance, the two pronoun forms lost this function, and in some languages (Spanish, Northern French, and Italian dialects), came to be refunctionalized. In Modern Spanish, for instance, it is possible to use pronouns of both types in one sentence with the same reference and the same case. In (1a) *me* and (*a*) *mí* refer to the same referent and are datives. The difference between the two pronouns resides in the fact that whereas *me* is unstressed, *a mí* is stressed. The function of *a mí* is “disjunctive” in the sense that it serves as a focus expression; it eliminates all other possible candidates that might have been addressed. In this sense, strong personal pronouns such as *a mí* are no longer marked for case, as evident from the fact that whereas the use of a weak pronoun alone is acceptable (1b), the use of a strong pronoun alone is considered to be ungrammatical in most cases (Real Academia Española 2010, pp. 319–20) (1c).

(1)

- a.     *Me*        *lo*                    *ha*                *dicho*        *a*        *mí*.  
to.me    it                    have.PRS.3SG   say.PTCP   to        me  
“She said it to me (not you).”
- b.     *Me*        *lo*                    *ha*                *dicho*.  
to.me    it                    have.PRS.3SG   say.PTCP  
“She said it to me.”
- c.     ?Lo        *ha*                    *dicho*        *a*        *mí*.  
it        have.PRS.3SG   say.PTCP   to        me  
“She said it to me (not you).”

It is possible that not only the usage frequency of the refunctionalized forms, but also the usage frequency of the function they came to adapt had an influence on the realization of the refunctionalization process. As a basic information-structuring device, the use of focus is ubiquitous in Spanish (and many, if not all, other languages). In this sense, it might be possible to argue that there was a higher likelihood for speakers to use the distinction between focus and background as a model for the refunctionalization of the two types of personal pronouns than other, less frequent patterns in the language.

In line with these considerations, we can hypothesize that when an obsolescent construction is refunctionalized, the linguistic pattern that serves as a model for the new function occurs in a comparable usage context (i.e., there is some semantic similarity between the refunctionalized construction and the source pattern) and has a high usage frequency.

**Hypothesis 2.** *When refunctionalizing a construction, speakers typically refer to patterns as models for the new function that (a) occur in comparable usage contexts and (b) have a high usage frequency.*

### 3. Folk Etymology as Refunctionalization

As stated in the introduction, this paper aims at giving experimental proof for Hypotheses 1 and 2. In this section, I will argue that the process of folk etymology is an adequate testing ground for the study of the influence of usage frequency on refunctionalization. Blank (2001) defines folk etymology as

a type of reanalysis. Due to their formal phonetic similarity, speakers relate two words to each other. This reanalysis always contradicts the real etymology of the reanalyzed word. (Blank 2001, p. 91, transl. MR)

Olschansky (1996) gives a more detailed definition of folk etymology:

Folk etymology is a process in which a synchronically isolated and as such unmotivated word or word constituent is attributed to a word that is phonetically similar or (partially) identical [ . . . ] in a way that is incorrect from an etymological and diachronic perspective. Consequently, the word or word constituent receives a new motivation and interpretation, and is de-isolated. (Olschansky 1996, p. 107, transl. MR)

The quote from Olschansky makes obvious that the type of reanalysis involved in refunctionalization is not syntactic but semantic reanalysis, i.e., a meaning change. To give an example, the German word *Hebamme* “midwife” derives from Old High German *HEVIANNA* “old woman who lifts a child”. Whereas the first part of the compound *HEVI-* remounts to the verb *heben* “lift,” the origin and exact meaning of the second part of the compound *-ANNA* is unknown (Kluge 2003). In later times, the morpheme *-ANNA* was replaced with the German word *Amme* “nurse,” leading to the creation of the Modern German word *Hebamme* “midwife”.

The example illustrates that folk etymology is in the first place a formal change in that the phonetic substance of the target morpheme *-ANNA* is changed in accordance with the supposed etymon (*Amme*).

Semantic factors are often irrelevant for this process as the meaning of the alleged etymon does not necessarily have to be compatible with the overall meaning of the target word, as shown by Maiden (2008, pp. 311–19). Consequently, “speakers are not seeking to ‘explain’ the meaning of a word, but to give it a familiar inner structure.” (Maiden 2008, p. 315). In this way, folk etymology does not give a *semantic motivation* to (parts of) words. However, at least to some degree, folk etymology can be characterized as a refunctionalization process. Note that in our example, at least one of the morphemes forming the original no longer has a meaning in language and is in this sense devoid of a function.<sup>1</sup> By substituting the morpheme with another morpheme, speakers arguably also confer the meaning of the alleged etymon to the resulting lexeme. As argued by Maiden (2008, p. 317), although the meaning of the morpheme *butter* is irrelevant for the meaning of the compound *butterfly*, upon hearing the compound *butterfly*, his “pre-theoretical native-speaker intuition about this compound is that the first element is the formative *butter*”. The experimental studies in Libben and De Almeida (2002) and Jarema (2005, pp. 47–51) cited by Maiden confirm this intuition in that speakers appear to indeed parse formatives such as *butter* in *butterfly* as the word *butter* with its specific semantics. Returning to our example of German *Hebamme*, we can argue that the reanalysis of the original morpheme –ANNA did indeed lead to a refunctionalization of HEVIANNA in that it obtained a new semantics and consequently, function. It is in this sense that folk etymology serves the function of reincorporating “orphaned words” into the lexicon (Blank 2001, p. 92).

If folk etymology can be characterized as a kind of refunctionalization process, we can use it to test the two hypotheses on the influence of usage frequency on refunctionalization established in Section 2. Regarding the question of whether or not speakers will produce a folk etymology process, we can assume that the usage frequency of the reanalyzed element plays an important role. In many folk etymology processes, the reanalyzed element is no longer used independently in the language and its meaning is no longer identifiable. In other words, the element has been affected by an obsolescence process. In line with Hypothesis 1 established in Section 2, this makes the prediction that participants are more likely to accept the false etymology if the target word has a low usage frequency.

We can also try to make predictions regarding the elements that are used as models for the reanalyzed element in folk etymologies. As suggested by the studies cited above, speakers typically select false etymons that bear a phonological resemblance to the target morpheme. A second prediction is therefore that folk etymology processes become more likely if there are elements that are formally similar to the target morpheme. However, we can also assume an influence of usage frequency in that, in line with Hypothesis 2, speakers are more likely to establish a false etymology if the alleged etymon has a high usage frequency.

#### 4. Questionnaire Study

In this section, I describe the exploratory questionnaire study<sup>2</sup> conducted in order to test Hypotheses 1–2.

##### 4.1. Materials

The questionnaire study aimed at establishing the influence of usage frequency on folk etymology processes, and consequently, refunctionalization processes, in Modern Spanish. Speakers were presented with a target word from Modern Spanish. They were then presented with an invented, false etymon for this target word and asked whether they thought it possible that the target word derived from the alleged etymon.<sup>3</sup> They were given three possible answers: “Yes,” “No,” and “I don’t know

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, instances such as this one might be the closest to Lass’ (1990) notion of *junk morphology* that can be found in a language.

<sup>2</sup> All participants were informed about the aims of the study and the anonymity of their responses, and they provided their consent.

<sup>3</sup> It would, of course, have been possible to also include factual etymologies as a control group, or even give the participants the choice between the false and the factual etymology. For the sake of simplicity of interpretation of the results, I did not consider this option in this experiment. However, I do believe that it would be viable in follow-up studies.

the word(s)”. In the case of the first answer, the participants thus accepted the folk etymology. In the case of the second answer, they rejected it. Cases in which the participants selected the third answer were eliminated from subsequent analysis.

I selected 30 Spanish target words on the basis of Dworkin (2012). The selection process was mostly guided by the possibility of finding a possible false etymon that was phonologically and semantically plausible for the participants of the experiment. An entire list of the materials can be found in the Appendix A (Table A1). I extracted the usage frequency (per million words) of each of the target words and the proposed etymons from the 20th century part of the *Corpus del Español* (Davies 2002, over 20 million words).

#### 4.2. Procedure

I created a questionnaire on *Google Docs* that is available in its entirety in the Appendix A (Table A2). The questionnaire was structured in four parts. After a brief introduction (Part 1), in Part 2 the participants were given a number of background questions about their sex, age, native tongue, and education. In Part 3, the participants were presented with the 30 questions about the target words. The order of the questions was randomized in order to neutralize priming effects. The questionnaire closed with a brief confirmation text (Part 4).

The questionnaire was distributed via Facebook, several classes in the Humanities Departments at the Universitat de Barcelona, as well as classes organized by the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) in Madrid. Sixty-seven participants took part in the questionnaire study, of which 42 were female and 25 were male. The results from 11 participants that were not native speakers of Spanish were judged unreliable and therefore eliminated from subsequent analysis, leaving a total of 56 participants.

#### 4.3. Results

When analyzing the results from the questionnaire study, I detected an unexpected and unwanted strong positive correlation between the usage frequencies of the target words and the usage frequencies of the proposed etymons ( $r = 0.79, p < 0.001$  \*\*\*). A closer look at the distribution of the two frequency measures shows that this correlation hinged on the target word *mañana* “tomorrow”, for which the false etymon *año* “year” was given. While *mañana* has by far the highest usage frequency of all target words, *año* by far has the highest usage frequency of all of proposed etymons (see Figure 1). *Mañana* can therefore be characterized as an outlier.

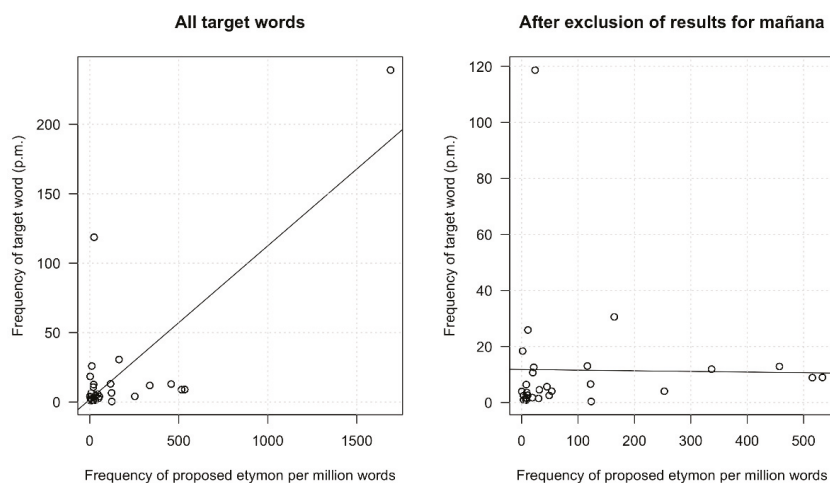


Figure 1. Correlation between the usage frequencies of the target words and the proposed etymons.

Since (a) I aimed at including both usage frequency of target words and usage frequency of proposed etymon as predictor variables in a logistic regression analysis, and (b) it is a prerequisite for logistic regression analyses that the predictor variables be independent from each other, I eliminated the results for the target word *mañana* from the analysis. This procedure also eliminated the correlation between the two predictor variables in the data (see the right plot in Figure 1). I therefore did not eliminate the results for the target word *prensa*, which also has a high usage frequency (118.7 p.m.), from the data. See Figure A1 in the Appendix A for an overview of the frequencies of acceptance for each of the target words.

Mixed-effects regression models (Baayen 2008, chp. 7; Pinheiro et al. 2018) are an adequate tool for the analysis of data from experiments such as questionnaire studies. The quality of experimental data frequently suffers from the fact that the group of experiment participants is a random sample from the global population. Each of these participants may display idiosyncrasies regarding the variable investigated in the experiment. In the case of this questionnaire study, some participants were overall more likely to answer YES to the questions about the etymology posed to them than other participants, a fact that our predictor variables, such as usage frequency, cannot explain. Mixed-effects regression models address this problem by including both *fixed effects* (the traditional predictors, i.e., repeatable factors) and *random effects* (variables such as participant, which are not repeatable). In addition to calculating the coefficients for the predictor variables, a mixed-effects regression model will calculate a random intercept for each level of the random variables, thus greatly enhancing the statistical resolution and controlling for unwanted variation due to the fact that the participants were chosen randomly and might display individual preferences.

I calculated a logistic mixed-effects regression model in R (R Development Core Team 2015) over the responses of the participants to the questions regarding the etymology of the target words (variable REFUNCTION with the outcomes “yes” or “no”). The random variable was PARTICIPANT, allowing the model to control for interpersonal variation. Table 1 summarizes the predictor variables used in the model. I decided not to include a variable measuring the education of the participants because a large majority had university education. I did however include variables referring to the length of the target words and proposed etymons (TW.LETTERS and PE.LETTERS), as well as an interaction effect between the two variables as an approximant of the importance of formal similarity between target words and proposed etymons.

**Table 1.** Summary of predictor variables.

Variable Name	Short Description	Levels
AGE	Age of participant	<20, 20–30, >31
SEX	Sex of participant	f, m
LINGUIST	Whether or not the participant has university education in linguistics	yes, no
TW.LETTERS	Length of target word in letters	(numeric, z-standardized)
PE.LETTERS	Length of proposed etymon in letters	(numeric, z-standardized)
TW.FREQUENCY	Frequency of target word per million	(numeric, z-standardized)
PE.FREQUENCY	Frequency of proposed etymon word per million	(numeric, z-standardized)

In the following description of the results from the regression model, I provide plots of the effects because these are easier to interpret for readers without knowledge of regression models. The full results from the regression model can be found in the Appendix A (Table A3). The effect plots were created using the package <effects> in R.

With a *c* index of concordance = 0.74, the model reaches a rather moderate fit to the data that hints at the fact that important factors are missing from the analysis that explain the participants' decisions in the survey.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.3.1. Social Indicators

Of the social indicators, only the variable LINGUIST had a significant effect on the participants' choices. AGE and SEX appeared to be irrelevant. As illustrated in the effect plot (Figure 2), participants with a knowledge of linguistics were significantly more skeptical regarding the proposed etymologies.

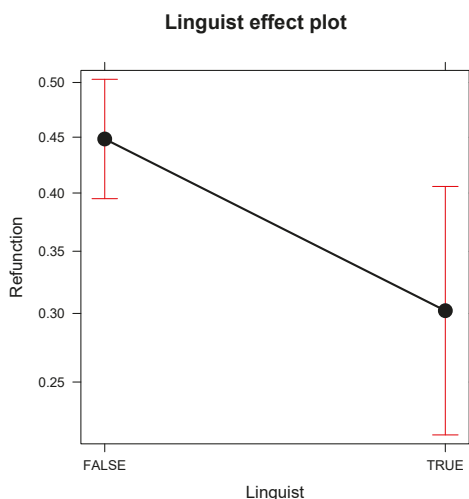


Figure 2. Effect plot for LINGUIST.

#### 4.3.2. Length of Target Word and Proposed Etymon

Interestingly, both the length of the target word and the proposed etymon in letters had significant and differing effects on the participants' judgment on the proposed etymologies. Whereas participants were more likely to accept the false etymology when the target word was longer (Figure 3, left plot), for longer proposed etymons, they were less likely to accept the false etymology (Figure 3, right plot).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Baayen (2008, p. 244), who claims that “a value above 0.8 indicates that model may have some real predictive capacity”.

<sup>5</sup> Recall that the values for all numerical variables in the analysis were z-standardized. The values on the x-axis in all of the graphs in Figures 3–5 refer to these normalized values and not the original numerical values.

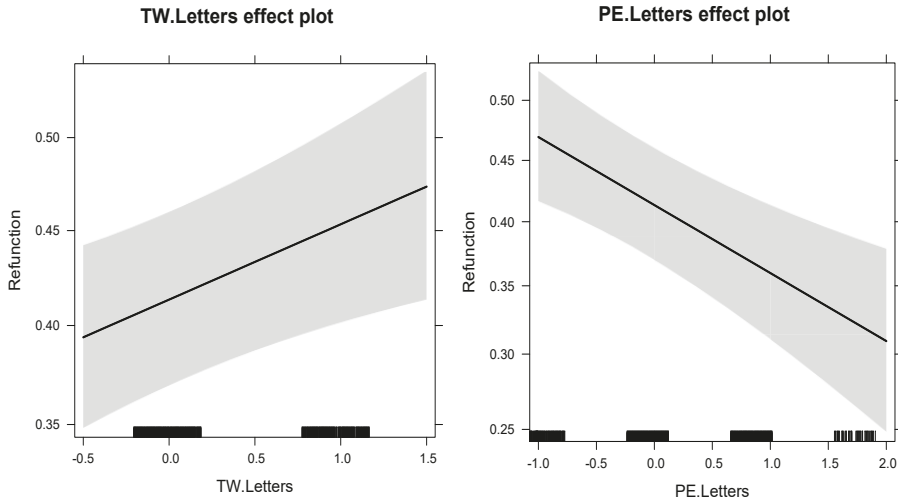


Figure 3. Effect plot for TW.LETTERS and PE.LETTERS.

Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated the existence of an interaction effect between the two word-length indicators. Figure 4 illustrates this moderating effect of TW.LETTERS on PE.LETTERS. The finding that shorter proposed etymons are judged to be better etymons was restricted to cases in which the target word was also short (the lines marked as  $-0.99$  and  $-0.01$ ). If the target word was long (the lines marked as  $0.97$  and  $1.95$ ), the effect was reversed; participants were more likely to accept longer proposed etymons than shorter proposed etymons.

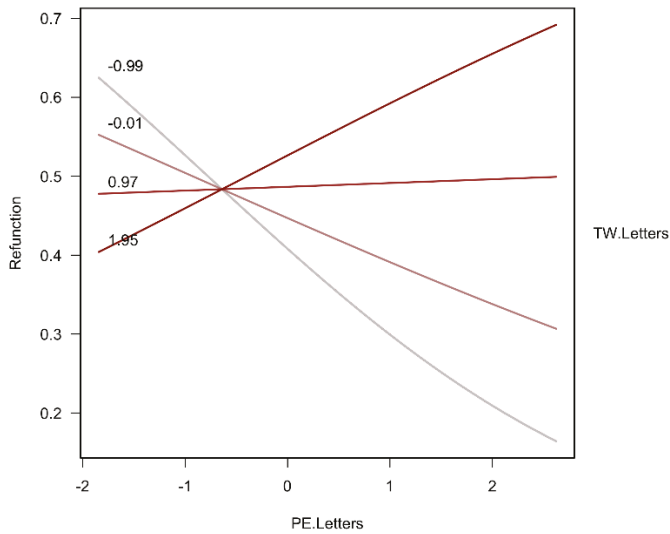


Figure 4. Effect plot for TW.LETTERS:PE.LETTERS (interaction effect).



### 4.3.3. Usage Frequency of Target Word and Proposed Etymon

The regression did not find a significant effect for the usage frequency of the target word on the participants' judgments on the false etymology (see Figure 5, left plot). In contrast, there was a significant effect of the usage frequency of the proposed etymon (Figure 5, right plot). Thus, participants were significantly more likely to accept the false etymology for high-frequency false etymons than for low-frequency false etymons.

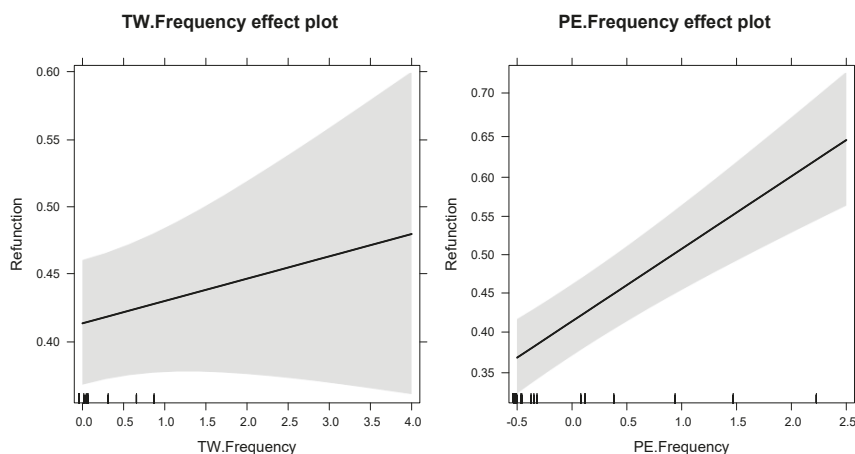


Figure 5. Effect plot for TW.FREQUENCY and PE.FREQUENCY.

## 5. Discussion

The results described in the last section confirm Hypothesis 2 in that participants were more likely to accept the false etymology when the proposed etymon was of high usage frequency than when it was of low frequency. This suggests that in processes of folk etymology, speakers will more frequently recur to high-frequency words than to low-frequency words as models. This observation is in line with usage-based approaches to language change; high-frequency words are more salient in a language than low-frequency words and therefore have a higher degree of cognitive accessibility than low-frequency words.

In contrast, Hypothesis 1—the assumption that refunctionalization and likewise, folk etymology processes, are more likely for low-frequency target forms than high-frequency target forms—was not confirmed in my analysis. This result can possibly be explained by the artificial experimental setup. Crucially, participants were only asked whether they accepted the false etymology for a target word. In real-life processes of folk etymology, speakers' motivations for folk etymology are very different. Given that the decision to produce a folk etymology process was, as it were, imposed on the participants, this might have influenced their decision processes regarding whether or not to accept the proposed etymology. In other words, the questionnaire rather measured which false etymons were judged to be better etymons than others than whether or not a folk etymology process should take place.

Additionally, the regression analysis suggested that folk etymology processes were more likely for shorter proposed etymon words and longer target words. It is well known that shorter words are typically more frequent and therefore have a higher degree of cognitive accessibility (Bybee 2010, pp. 20–21). Consequently, one could argue that the participants were more likely to accept shorter proposed etymons because of their higher degree of cognitive accessibility. However, given that the results for target words point in the opposite direction, it appears to me that it is incorrect to invoke cognitive accessibility as the relevant parameter. Rather, it appears that the participants have

an understanding (either intuitive or due to their training as linguists) that due to derivation or composition processes, words that are historically derived from certain source words tend to be longer than these source words.

The interaction effect between the length of the target word and the length of the proposed etymon analysis appears to reveal that structural similarity also had an influence on the participants' decisions to accept a proposed etymology. Participants were more likely to accept a proposed etymology if (a) both the target word and the proposed etymon were short or (b) both the target word and the proposed etymon were long.

On a final note, the regression model was not able to explain much of the variance in the results, as indicated by the relatively low value of the *c* index of concordance. This lack of statistical resolution suggests that the analysis was lacking crucial parameters. In particular, there were no parameters measuring the degree of formal and semantic similarity between the target words and the proposed etymons. It seems likely that by including psycholinguistics measurements of the degree of similarity between these items it would be possible to greatly enhance the statistical resolution of the analysis and uncover more effects on the participants' behavior in the questionnaire survey.

## 6. Conclusions

In this paper, I hypothesized that usage frequency plays an important role in refunctionalization processes in that refunctionalization is more likely for low-frequency constructions than high-frequency constructions (Hypothesis 1), and that high-frequency constructions are better models for refunctionalization processes than low-frequency constructions (Hypothesis 2). I proposed that folk etymology can be regarded as a type of refunctionalization process and that it can therefore be used in order to empirically test these assumptions. The results from the questionnaire study on folk etymology supported some of the assumptions. In particular, participants were more likely to accept false etymons for the target words if the proposed etymons had a high usage frequency, confirming Hypothesis 2. The experiment was however not able to confirm Hypothesis 1. I also found an effect of the length of the target word, as well as the length of the proposed etymon. It was also found that participants with a background in linguistics fared significantly better in the survey than participants without knowledge of linguistics.

It must be noted that these findings are preliminary and should therefore be taken with caution. In particular, the low degree of variance explained by the regression analysis indicates that the study was missing crucial parameters that may relativize some of the results from the analysis. Further studies on the reasons for folk etymology processes should consider including psycholinguistic measurements of the degree of formal and semantic similarity between target words and proposed etymons. These measurements might also provide the experimenter with a more principled way of selecting the stimuli. Lastly, there might be experiment types that are better suited than questionnaire studies for such an analysis. One could, for instance, imagine an experiment in which the reaction of participants to false etymologies is measured using reading times or even fMRI. Longer reaction times should then indicate more problems with the acceptance of the false etymology. Such response types would serve to diminish the degree to which participants actively contemplate the likelihood of the proposed etymology, and consequently increase the reliability of the experimental results.

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**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. Target words and proposed etymons.

Target Word	Etymology (Dworkin 2012; Real Academia Española 2014)	Proposed Etymon
<i>Acechar</i> "to stalk"	lat. * ASSECTARE "attend to" (Dworkin 2012, p. 102)	<i>echar</i> "to throw"
<i>achacar</i> "to blame"	arab. TASAKKA "blame" (Dworkin 2012, p. 102)	<i>atacar</i> "to attack"
<i>ademán</i> "gesture"	arab. AD-DAMAN "legal guarantee" (Dworkin 2012, p. 46)	<i>Mano</i> "hand"
<i>adorar</i> "to adore"	lat. AD-ORARE "towards-pray" (Dworkin 2012, p. 161)	<i>oro</i> "gold"
<i>albañil</i> "bricklayer"	arab. AL-BANNA "the construer" (Dworkin 2012, p. 112)	<i>Baño</i> "bathroom"
<i>almirante</i> "admiral"	arab. AMĪR "commander" (Dworkin 2012, p. 90)	<i>mirar</i> "to look"
<i>alojar</i> "to lodge"	sp. LONJA "portico, porch" (Dworkin 2012, p. 146)	<i>lugar</i> "place"
<i>amainar</i> "to weaken, flag"	goth. AF-MAGINON "lower the sails" (Dworkin 2012, p. 72)	<i>marginal</i> "marginal"
<i>apagar</i> "to turn off"	lat. PACARE "pacify, quiet" (Dworkin 2012, p. 55)	<i>pagar</i> "to pay"
<i>azafata</i> "stewardess"	arab. AL-SAFĀT "basket" (Dworkin 2012, p. 109)	<i>zarpar</i> "to set sails"
<i>bagaje</i> "baggage"	fr. BAGAGE "baggage" (Dworkin 2012, p. 127)	<i>vagar</i> "to wander"
<i>barrer</i> "to sweep"	lat. VERRERE "sweep" (Dworkin 2012, p. 46)	<i>barro</i> "mud"
<i>bigote</i> "mustache"	ger. BEI GOTT "with god" or fr. BIGOT (Dworkin 2012, pp. 77–78)	<i>gota</i> "drop"
<i>bisoño</i> "greenhorn"	it. BISOGNO "need" (Dworkin 2012, pp. 151–52)	<i>sueño</i> "dream"
<i>bochorno</i> "extreme heat"	lat. VULTURNUS "south wind" (Dworkin 2012, p. 49)	<i>horno</i> "oven"
<i>borrasca</i> "storm (at sea)"	probably it. BURRASCA "storm" (Dworkin 2012, p. 145)	<i>rascar</i> "to scratch"
<i>bostezar</i> "to yawn"	lat. OSCITARE "open the mouth wide" (Dworkin 2012, p. 52)	<i>voz</i> "voice"
<i>carabela</i> "type of ship"	ptg. CARAVELA "type of ship" < greek κάραβος "light boat" (Real Academia Española 2014)	<i>vela</i> "to sail"
<i>cerveza</i> "beer"	celtic CERVISIA "beer" (Dworkin 2012, p. 28)	<i>hervir</i> "to boil"
<i>debilidad</i> "weakness"	fr. DEBILITÉ "weakness" (Dworkin 2012, p. 132) < PIE *BEL "power, strength"	<i>bilis</i> "bile"
<i>despejado</i> "cloudless"	ptg. DESPEJAR "pour" (Dworkin 2012, p. 188)	<i>espejo</i> "mirror"
<i>enojar</i> "anger"	o.provenz. ENOJAR "anger" (Dworkin 2012, p. 125)	<i>ojo</i> "eye"
<i>escopeta</i> "shotgun"	it. SCHIPETTO "firearm" (Dworkin 2012, p. 152)	<i>escupir</i> "to spit"
<i>esgrimir</i> "to wield a weapon"	o.provenz. ESGREMIR "wield a weapon" (Dworkin 2012, p. 125)	<i>grima</i> "chills"
<i>eslabón</i> "link (of a chain)"	goth. SNÖBÓ "link" (Dworkin 2012, p. 72)	<i>eslavo</i> "slave"
<i>espuela</i> "spur"	goth. SPAÚRA "spur" (Dworkin 2012, p. 71)	<i>esposo</i> "husband"
<i>iguana</i> "type of saurian"	taino IGUANA "type of saurian" (Dworkin 2012, p. 200)	<i>guante</i> "glove"
<i>jarabe</i> "syrup"	arab. SHARB "syrup" (Dworkin 2012, p. 84)	<i>jarro</i> "jug"
<i>mañana</i> "morning"	v.lat. *MANEANA "morning" (Dworkin 2012, p. 56)	<i>año</i> "year"
<i>prensa</i> "press"	cat. PREMIER "press, squeeze" (Dworkin 2012, p. 194)	<i>prender</i> "to take"

Table A2. Questionnaire design.

Original Text	English Translation
<p><b>1. Introduction</b></p> <p>¡Hola! Muchas gracias por cooperar en nuestro EtimoTest. Pretendemos examinar el conocimiento que tienen de la etimología—el origen de las palabras—los hablantes nativos del español.</p> <p>A menudo, las nuevas palabras se basan en otras palabras ya existentes en la lengua. Por ejemplo, el adjetivo barato deriva del verbo baratar (“trocar, comprar a bajo precio”). La palabra escarnimiento (“desengaño”) deriva del antiguo verbo escanir (“hacer burla de alguien”). A veces tenemos una intuición sobre la palabra que fue la base para una nueva palabra; otras veces, en cambio, no la tenemos.</p> <p>Para examinar tu nivel de conocimiento de la etimología de las palabras, te presentaremos 30 palabras españolas. Para cada una de ellas, te ofrecemos una palabra base como solución. En algunos casos, esta palabra es la palabra base correcta; en otros casos, no. Te preguntaremos si es posible que la palabra derive de la palabra base, y te daremos tres opciones: SÍ, NO, y NO CONOZCO LA(S) PALABRA(S). Por favor, selecciona esta última opción solo si no conoces una de las palabras. En total, el EtimoTest dura alrededor de 10 minutos.</p> <p>Un aviso importante: por favor rellena el cuestionario sin utilizar recursos como diccionarios, google, etc. Así invalidarías los resultados de tu EtimoTest.</p> <p>Antes de empezar, tenemos que hacerte unas breves preguntas sobre tu persona. Te garantizamos que tus respuestas van a ser tratadas con la máxima discreción.</p>	<p><b>1. Introduction</b></p> <p>Hi! Thank you very much for participating in our EtimoTest. We want to investigate the knowledge of etymology—the origin of words—of native speakers of Spanish.</p> <p>Frequently, new words are based on other words that already exist in a language. For instance, the adjective barato “cheap” derives from the verb baratar “to bargain, buy at a cheap price”. The words escarnimiento “punishment” derives from the old verb escanir “make fun of somebody”. Sometimes we have an intuition about which word served as a basis for the new word, sometimes we do not.</p> <p>In order to examine your level of knowledge of the etymology of words, we will present you with 30 Spanish words. For each one of these, we offer you an origin word as a solution. In some cases, this word is the correct origin word, in some cases it is not. We will ask you if it is possible that the word derives from the origin word, and we will give you three options: YES, NO, and I DO NOT KNOW THE WORD(S). Please select this last option only if you do not know one of the words. The EtimoTest will last around 10 min.</p> <p>One important point: please fill out the questionnaire without using dictionaries, Google, etc. In doing so, you would invalidate the results of your EtimoTest.</p> <p>Before we begin, we have to ask you a few questions about yourself. We guarantee you that your answers will be treated with maximal discretion.</p>
<p><b>2. Background questions</b></p> <p>2.1 ¿Cuál es tu sexo? Femenino Masculino</p> <p>2.2 ¿Cuál es tu edad? Menos de 20 años Entre 20 y 30 años Más de 30 años</p> <p>2.3 ¿Eres hablante nativo del español? Sí No</p> <p>2.4 ¿Cuál es tu nivel de educación? Estudios Primarios Educación Secundaria Obligatoria Bachillerato Educación secundaria post obligatoria Estudios universitarios (Grado/Máster/Posgrado/Doctorado)</p> <p>2.5 Sí estás realizando/has realizado estudios universitarios, ¿cuál era la asignatura/las asignaturas?</p>	<p><b>2. Background questions</b></p> <p>2.1 What is your sex? Feminine Masculine</p> <p>2.2 What is your age? Less than 20 years Between 20 and 30 years More than 30 years</p> <p>2.3 Are you a native speaker of Spanish? Yes No</p> <p>2.4 What is your level of education? Estudios Primarios Educación Secundaria Obligatoria Bachillerato Educación secundaria post obligatoria Estudios universitarios (Grado/Máster/Posgrado/Doctorado)</p> <p>2.5 If you are studying/have studied at a university, what was the study subject?</p>

Table A2. Cont.

Original Text	English Translation
<b>3. Test</b>	<b>3. Test</b>
¿Es posible que la palabra [TARGET] derive de la palabra [PROPOSED ETYMON]?	Is it possible that the word [TARGET] derives from the word [PROPOSED ETYMON]?
Sí	Yes
No	No
No conozco la(s) palabra(s)	I do not know the word(s)
[30 questions in total, randomized order]	[30 questions in total, randomized order]
<b>4. Confirmation text</b>	<b>4. Confirmation text</b>
Esta ha sido la última pregunta. ¡Muchas gracias por tu participación en el EtimoTest!	This has been the last question. Thank you very much for your participation in the EtimoTest!

Table A3. Full results from the logistic regression model.

Variable	Level	Betas	Odds	SE	ZVAL	p
(Intercept)		0.00	1.00	0.30	0.10	0.994
<i>Reference level</i>						
AGE	<20			0.31	-0.58	0.562
	21–30	-0.18	0.84	0.32	-1.39	0.164
SEX	Feminine			0.20	0.74	0.458
	Masculine	0.15	1.16			
<i>Reference level</i>						
LINGUIST	FALSE			0.27	-2.33	0.020
	TRUE	-0.63	0.53			*
TW.LETTERS		0.16	1.18	0.06	2.86	0.004
PE.LETTERS		-0.23	0.80	0.06	3.77	0.000
TW.FREQUENCY		0.07	1.07	0.06	1.17	0.243
PE.FREQUENCY		0.38	1.46	0.06	6.35	0.000
TW.LETTERS: PE.LETTERS		0.25	1.29	0.07	3.77	0.000
Number of observations = 1629 C index of concordance = 0.74 Somers' dxy = 0.47 AIC = 2082.2 BIC = 2141.5						
MODEL EVALUATION						
p values: * = <0.05, ** = <0.01, *** = <0.001						

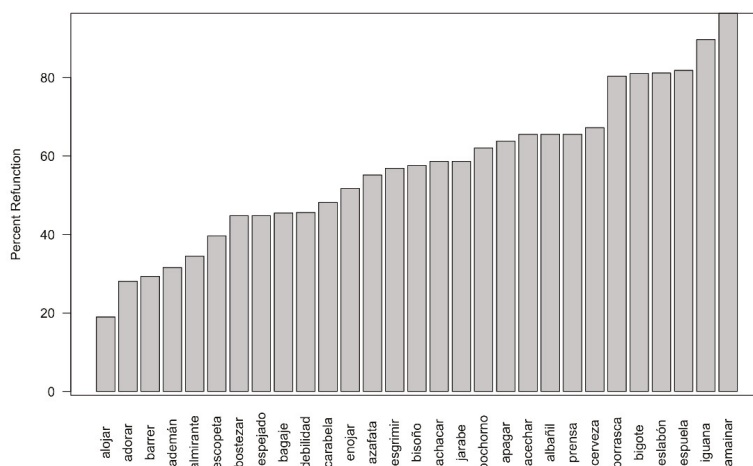


Figure A1. Proportion of accepted proposed etymologies by target words.

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Article

# Exaptation, Refunctionalization, Decapitalization—BE + Past Participle with Intransitive Verbs in Mediaeval and Early Modern Spanish

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**Abstract:** The chapter presents the current state of research concerning the development of the BE + past participle constructions from Latin to Spanish. Starting from the description in Rosemeyer (2014) and the theoretical background collated in Kailuweit and Rosemeyer (2015), it will be shown that the functional change does not follow traditional grammaticalization paths. Several concepts that deal with cases contradicting traditional grammaticalization theory will be discussed. ‘Exaption’ (Lass 1990, 1997), focusing on total defunctionalization does not account for the fact that the resultative value of the BE + past participle construction, marginal in Latin, becomes central in Mediaeval Spanish. ‘Refunctionalization’ Smith (2008, 2011) captures this aspect in a more appropriate way. However, the development of the construction could be also conceived as the opposite of what Pountain (2000) describes as ‘capitalization’: a process of ‘decapitalization,’ by which a feature is exploited, not for wider, but for more restricted purposes.

**Keywords:** past participle construction; auxiliaries; resultatives; exaptation; refunctionalization; capitalization

## 1. Introduction

The formation of compound tenses in Romance languages with the periphrasis HAVE + past participle has been considered a prototypical case of grammaticalization (Schwenter 1994; Squartini and Bertinetto 2000; Detges 2001), following a grammaticalization path that seems to be universal (Bybee et al. 1994). In line with Harris (1982), Detges (2001) pointed out that four stages have to be distinguished. At the first stage, the value of the construction is resultative, marking the present state resulting from past action. At the second stage, the construction marks a continuous or repeated series of events that started in the past. At the third stage, the construction refers to a past event with present relevance (anterior in Bybee et al.’s 1994 terminology) and at the fourth stage, it attains an aorist function denoting a past event without present relevance. While in standard Spanish HABER + past participle has only reached the third stage, AVOIR + past participle in spoken French has gone further on to the fourth stage, taking over the function of the simple past that is excluded from oral registers.

As far as the development of BE + past participle from Latin to Romance languages is concerned, the situation is quite complex. At first glance, there is no change at all. The structure BE + past participle already exists in classical Latin, expressing perfect passive (*amatus est*) and the perfect of the so-called deponent verbs (*locutus est, profectus est*) (Vincent 1982, pp. 85–86). According to Vincent (ibid., p. 86), these verbs favored “the development of periphrastic expressions like *\*ven(u)tum est*,” because etymologically they go back to medio-passives in Indo-European and, therefore, do not assign the role of a prototypical agent to their subject. Many deponent verbs denote a change of state that the



subject-argument undergoes (*gradior* ‘I step’, *morior* ‘I die’, *nascor* ‘I am born’, etc.). Hence, a more or less formal and functional continuity from Latin to Romance, as far as BE + past participle is concerned, has been claimed in the literature (Yllera 1980; Vincent 1982; Harris 1982; Aranovich 2003).

However, Jacob (1994, pp. 363–65) pointed out that passive construction with BE + past participle in Romance languages has a presence-orientated resultative function incompatible with the preterite value of the formally analogous Latin periphrastic passive. According to Jacob (*ibid.*, p. 365) and Mackenzie (2006, pp. 132–35) the same holds for deponent verbs. Jacob (*ibid.*, p. 363) highlighted the fact that a regression from preterite to resultative would contradict all common grammaticalization theories.<sup>1</sup>

The objective of this short chapter is basically theoretical. I will cast some new light on the development of BE + past participle from Latin to Early Modern Spanish. I will do so by discussing some data I extracted from the CORDE-corpus,<sup>2</sup> but essentially on the basis of the studies of Rosemeyer (2014, 2015) and, regarding Latin and Proto-Romance data, Cennamo (1997, 2001, 2008). My central claim is to take up the main topic of the present volume. Given a particular counter-example to the unidirectionality of a grammaticalization path, I shall discuss conceptual alternatives of description, for example, exaptation (Lass 1990, 1997; Narrog 2007), refunctionalization (Smith 2011) and capitalization (Pountain 2000).

## 2. BE + Past Participle—A Criterion for Unaccusativity?

In the last few decades, the fact that many modern European languages exhibit an alternation between the auxiliaries HAVE and BE in compound tenses of intransitive verbs has become a central topic of linguistic research. Starting with Perlmutter (1978) *Unaccusative Hypothesis*,<sup>3</sup> auxiliary selection has been discussed as the main criterion for the distinction of an unaccusative (verbs selecting BE) and an unergative class (verbs selecting HAVE) (Alexiadou et al. 2004; Aranovich 2007; Kailuweit and Rosemeyer 2015). Although BE-selection is not a necessary criterion for unaccusativity, it is deemed a sufficient one. If we consider, in line with Sorace (2000) and Legendre and Sorace (2003), that unaccusativity is gradient,<sup>4</sup> it is possible that BE-selection situates an intransitive verb nearer to the unaccusative pole (see Table 1).

BE-selection characterizes unaccusative core verbs, not only in modern Italian and French, but presumably in all languages using the BE/HAVE opposition to mark split-intransitivity in compound tenses. Having lost the use of BE + past participle in their standard varieties, Ibero-Romance languages seem to reflect the distribution of ÊTRE/AVOIR we find in contemporary standard French (Kailuweit 2011, 2015) at the mediaeval and early modern stage. The most prototypical verbs occurring with BE + past participle are verbs of change of location and verbs of change of state, while verbs of controlled processes select exclusively HAVE.<sup>5</sup> The following examples from Medieval Spanish may illustrate this contrast:

(1)	<i>Et</i>	<i>eillos</i>	<i>ain,</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>Heran</i>	<i>llegados,</i>	<i>qua lndo</i>	<i>vino</i>	
	and	They	yet	Not	be.PST.IPFV.3PL	arrive.PTCP.M.PL	when	come.PST.PFV.3SG	
	<i>al</i>	<i>rey</i>	<i>mandado</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>Absalon</i>	<i>matara</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>todos</i>	<i>los Hijos</i>
	to.the	king	message	that	Absalon	kill.PST.IPFV.SBJ.3SG	to	all	the sons
	'And they had not yet arrived, when the King received a message which said that Absalon was killing all of the sons'								
	(Bible E8/6, 13th c., see Rosemeyer 2015, p. 234)								

<sup>1</sup> As Jacob (1994) pointed out, Herzog (1910, p. 136) has commented on the surprising fact that the use of the construction BE + past participle in the Mediaeval Romance languages seems to be a functional regression compared to its Latin origin.

<sup>2</sup> Real Academia Española Corpus diacrónico del español. [<http://corpus.rae.es/cordenet.html>].

<sup>3</sup> This is not the place to give an exhaustive résumé of the discussion on ‘unaccusativity’. See Levin and Hovav (1995); Alexiadou et al. (2004, eds.); Bentley and Eythórsson (2004); Mackenzie (2006).

<sup>4</sup> This crucial insight from Sorace (2000) approach is taken up, for instance, in Bentley and Eythórsson (2004); Mateu (2009); Kailuweit (2011); and Rosemeyer (2014).

<sup>5</sup> See Benzing (1931), Yllera (1980), Elvira (2001), Aranovich (2003) and Rosemeyer (2014) for Spanish, Cardoso and Pereira (2003) and Guilherme (2009) for Portuguese and Battle (2002) and Mateu (2009) for Catalan.

(2)	<i>Quando</i>	<i>el</i>	<i>ouo</i>	<i>fablato</i>	<i>folgo</i>	<i>el</i>	<i>espíritu</i>	<i>Deillo</i>
	When	he	have.PST.PFV.3SG	speak.PTCP.M.SG	rejoice.PST.PFV.3SG	the	spirit	of.him
	‘When he had spoken, he was happy’ ( <i>Bible E8/6</i> , 13th c., see <a href="#">Rosemeyer 2015</a> )							

The spread of HAVE in the history of Spanish seems to follow [Sorace \(2000\)](#) auxiliary selection hierarchy ([Benzing 1931](#); [Aranovich 2003](#); [Mateu 2009](#); [Rosemeyer 2014](#)). However, the claim that earlier stages of Ibero-Romance languages code an opposition of unaccusativity and unergativity via auxiliary selection is based on the assumption that the BE + past participle and the HAVE + past participle construction with intransitive verbs are functionally equivalent, that is, instances of verbal perfect (anterior). As [Mackenzie \(2006\)](#) and [Rosemeyer \(2014\)](#) have shown, this assumption is by no means evident.

### 3. ESSE + Past Participle < SER + Past Participle

In classical Latin, the periphrastic perfect of deponent verbs—as well as the perfect in general—has the main function of indicating the accomplished process, even if the result of this process is still given:<sup>6</sup>

Le perfectum [ . . . ] correspond en gros à la valeur du parfait grec indiquant le résultat acquis d’un procès et à celle de l’aorist grec ; il recouvre à la fois l’un et l’autre, sans avoir la valeur propre de chacun des deux : son rôle est d’indiquer le procès accompli. ([Meillet and Vendryes 1924](#), p. 248)

In (3) the absolute construction referring to advanced age indicates that the perfect *mortua est* denotes the process of dying and not the fact of being dead.

(3)	<i>Prouecta</i>	<i>aetate</i>	<i>mortua</i>	<i>est</i>
	move.forward.PTCP.F.SG.ABL	age.ABL	die.PTCP.F.SG	be.PRS.3SG
	‘Being aged, she died’ ( <i>Cicero</i> , <i>Tusculanarum disputationum libri quinque</i> )			

The same type of construction appears in Early Modern Spanish. In (4) the *de*-PP refers to the cause that operates in the process of dying (‘to die from’). On the contrary, the *por*-PPs in the Mediaeval Spanish example (5) indicate the reasons for being dead (‘to be dead because of’).

(4)	<i>Ella</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>Muerta</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>un</i>	<i>mal</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>tenía</i>
	She	be.PRS.3S	die.PTCP.F.SG	from	A	illness	that	have.PST.IPFV.3SG
	‘She has died from an illness that she had’ ( <i>CORDE</i> , López de Tortajada 1646) <sup>7</sup>							

(5)	<i>La</i>	<i>Bestia</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>muerta</i>	<i>por culpa</i>	<i>De</i>	<i>ningun</i>
	The	Beast	not	be.PRS.3S	die.PTCP.F.SG	because	of	no
	<i>omne</i>	<i>mas</i>	<i>por</i>	<i>enfermedat</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>abino</i>	
	man	but	by	illness	that	him	come.to..PST.PFV.3SG	
	‘The beast is not dead because of a man but because of an illness that came to him’ ( <i>CORDE</i> , Fuero de Teruel, c. 1300)							

These examples may illustrate [Mackenzie \(2006\)](#) approach, worked out and proven through a large corpora analysis by [Rosemeyer \(2014\)](#). [Mackenzie \(2006\)](#), pp. 131–39) put forward the hypothesis

<sup>6</sup> See [Ramos Guerreira \(2009\)](#) for a current overview of the functions of the Latin Perfect. The basic assumptions of [Meillet and Vendryes \(1924\)](#) are still valid.

<sup>7</sup> [Rosemeyer \(2014\)](#) argues convincingly that early Modern Spanish begins around 1425. Hence, the objection of an anonymous reviewer that example (4) may have been copied from an older version stemming from the 16th century does not affect the argumentation.

that, firstly, the perfect of Latin deponent verbs underwent “syntactic reanalysis”<sup>8</sup> (ibid., p. 133) and that secondly, a “cyclical pattern of development” (ibid., p. 139) occurred that converted the copula + verbal adjective<sup>9</sup> (again) into a perfect (see Table 2).

He justified his claim by arguing that in the Proto-Romance period, synthetic perfect forms were created (*sequi, mori, nasci*, etc.) even for those verbs which “exhibit a deponent-style E-perfect”<sup>10</sup> (ibid., p. 133).<sup>11</sup> This process led to a “generalization of the synthetic perfect” on the one hand and, on the other hand, a “reorganization of the membership of the class of intransitives that entered into the periphrastic construction” (ibid., pp. 133–34). Latin deponent verbs with an activity aktionsart, such as *fabulari* (‘to speak’), were ruled out, and presumably prototypical unaccusatives such as *venire* (‘to come’)<sup>12</sup> were included (ibid., p. 134). According to Mackenzie (2006), the maintenance of the periphrastic construction with a semantically more homogeneous group is due to a functional split. The synthetic perfect functions as an anterior while the periphrastic construction is reanalyzed as a copula + verbal adjective construction with a “resultant-state” type of meaning. Mackenzie (ibid., pp. 134–35) conceded that there are examples of BE + past participle from Mediaeval Romance languages that suggest an anterior reading. However, most occurrences should be analyzed as resultative constructions. According to Mackenzie (ibid., p. 136), the resultative reading is supported by the distribution of perfect and imperfect forms with an aspectual, rather than anterior, meaning due to the temporal context. Finally, the copular analysis explains the “otherwise surprising omission of the reflexive pronoun” (ibid., p. 137) in constructions such as *es levantado* that reads rather ‘is on his feet’ and not ‘has got up’.

Some additional criteria should be taken into consideration. In their analysis of the decline of the BE-perfect construction in Canadian French, Sankoff and Thibault (1977, pp. 85–94) proposed a number of criteria to distinguish BE + past participle as an anterior and as a copula construction. Adverbials referring to the manner in which an event is realized are evidence against the copula + adjective interpretation. Adverbials expressing the motivation of a subject referent for an action favor an eventive interpretation. Finally, if the construction does not denote a resultant state that persists at reference time, it has to be interpreted as an anterior.

Mackenzie (2006) only illustrated his findings with a couple of examples. Hence, his claim that the “vast majority of the examples in the mediaeval corpus” exhibit a resultant-state type of meaning remains intuitive. Rosemeyer (2014) has applied the mentioned criteria systematically to vast corpora of Spanish data of the mediaeval and early modern period. Following Detges (2001), he asserts that there is a metonymic link between anteriors and resultatives (ibid., p. 49): a resultant state has been brought about by a previous event and a previous event may lead to a resultant state that persists at reference time. Therefore, the interpretation is ambiguous in the absence of any of the markers discussed in Sankoff and Thibault (1977) and Mackenzie (2006). Nonetheless, meticulous interpretation and statistical analysis led Rosemeyer (2014, p. 37) to the claim that, “in its prototypical use, Old Spanish *ser* + PtcP does not express anteriority.”

<sup>8</sup> We will understand ‘reanalysis’ as “a mechanism which changes the underlying structure of a syntactic pattern and which does not involve any immediate or intrinsic modification of its surface manifestation” (Harris and Campbell 1995, p. 61, the definition goes back to (Langacker 1977)).

<sup>9</sup> We find the idea of a surprising development from a preterite function to a copular + verbal adjective construction as early as in Herzog (1910, pp. 135–41).

<sup>10</sup> By “E-Perfect” Mackenzie (2006) refers to a BE + past participle construction. See also Legendre and Sorace (2003) use illustrated in Table 1.

<sup>11</sup> The formulation is misleading. Mackenzie focusses on the form, not on the function. He refers to the existence of an ESSE + participle construction of these verbs in Mediaeval Romance that formally seem to continue the deponent-style analytic perfect without having this function (any more).

<sup>12</sup> In line with Sorace (2000), Mackenzie (2006) considers change of location verbs as well as change of state verbs prototypical unaccusatives.

**Table 1.** Auxiliary selection in French and Italian (adapted from Legendre and Sorace 2003, p. 227).

Auxiliary	Selected	Verb Classes
French	Italian	
E <sup>13</sup>	E	Change of location: <i>arrivare/arriver, venire/venir</i> and so forth.
		Change of state
E	E	a. Change of condition: <i>morire/mourir</i> , etc.
E*	E	b. Appearance: <i>apparire/apparire</i> , etc.
E*	E	c. Indefinite change in a particular direction: <i>salire/monter, scendere/descendere</i>
A	E*	<i>appassire/faner, peggiorare/empirer</i> , etc.
A	E*	Continuation of pre-existing state: <i>durare/durer</i> , etc.
		Existence of state:
A	E	a. <i>essere/être</i>
A	E*	b. <i>esistere/exister, bastare/suffire</i> à
		Uncontrolled processes
A	A*	a. Emission: <i>risuonare/résonner</i> , etc.
A	A	b. Bodily functions: <i>sudare/suer</i> , etc.
A	A*	c. Involuntary actions: <i>tremare, trembler</i> , etc.
A	A*	Motional controlled processes: <i>nuotare/nager</i> , etc.
A	A	Non-motional controlled processes: <i>lavorare/travailler</i> , etc.

**Table 2.** Development of ESSE + past participle from Latin to Romance (Mackenzie 2006, p. 139).

Phase 1	Latin <i>mortuus est</i> (perfect)
Phase 2	Early Romance <i>morz est, muetro es</i> and so on (copula-adjective)
Phase 3	Modern Romance <i>est mort, ha muerto</i> and so on (perfect)

In addition, Rosemeyer proved that in Early Modern Spanish, the opposition between SER + past participle and HABER + past participle “was reanalyzed as an opposition between two auxiliaries for one and the same construction, the anterior” (ibid., p. 255). Due to the metonymic relation of anteriors and resultatives, the SER + past participle-construction underwent a functional change, probably supported by the spread of HABER + past participle to less prototypical verb classes in terms of Sorace (2000) Auxiliary Selection Hierarchy (see Table 1). The growing restriction of SER-selection to high frequency verbs of change of location (entrenchment) led to the formulation of a new rule: when confronted with the choice between SER + past participle and HABER + past participle, use SER + past participle if you wish to express a past change of location event (ibid., p. 234). In Kailuweit (2015), I claimed that an analogous process took place in French between the 17th and 19th century, leading to considerable loss of the ÊTRE + past participle construction with verbs of change of state and a fossilization of the ÊTRE + past participle construction with verbs of change of location. As in Early Modern Spanish, the remaining cases of BE + past participle are not restricted to resultative readings.<sup>14</sup>

In light of the theoretical questions discussed in this volume, the details of this second reanalysis may not be as pertinent as those of the first. While the second reanalysis follows the grammaticalization path for perfects observed in an extensive number of languages, the fact that the opposite process seems to have taken place from Latin to Romance is puzzling.

<sup>13</sup> E refers to a BE + past participle construction, A to a HAVE + past participle construction.

<sup>14</sup> It is interesting to note that Cennamo (2008, p. 132) suggests on the basis of Old Neapolitan data that change of location is rather a peripheral than a core category of unaccusativity. On the one hand, this confirms the findings of Mateu (2009) and Rosemeyer (2014) for Old Spanish, on the other hand it seems to indicate that in Old Neapolitan the reorganization of BE-selection we find in Early Modern Spanish and 17th to 19th Century French did not take place.

#### 4. Discontinuity

Being aware of the striking contradiction to established grammaticalization theories, Jacob (1994) denied any continuity from Latin deponent perfects to the Old Spanish SER + past participle construction. He pointed out that the resultative construction does not need any historical motivation since it consists of the combination of the copula BE and an adjectivized past participle (ibid., p. 363).<sup>15</sup> However, it remains unclear why the association of the copular BE + past participle construction with the formally identical perfect construction of deponent verbs was lost.

In line with Jacob (1994), Cennamo (2008, p. 125) rejected the hypothesis of a formal and functional continuity between analytic perfects of Latin deponents and Romance BE + past participle constructions. Nonetheless, as Cennamo (ibid.) pointed out, the discontinuity is not an effect of the loss of deponents, as one might suggest, but, on the contrary, it is due to generalization of deponent perfect structure in Late Latin.<sup>16</sup> According to Cennamo (ibid., p. 121), a central change took place in the transition from Latin to Romance as far as the encoding of transitivity, grammatical voice and relation was concerned. The data that Cennamo (2008) compiled show puzzling equivalences and interchangeability among voice forms. Hence, the active may be used in passive function and the passive may occur in active function. Therefore, the passive no longer consistently marked the undergoer<sup>17</sup> argument and the active no longer marked the actor argument in subject function. A form, such as *amatus sum* in (6), could have four different interpretations out of context:

- (6) *amatus sum*
- a. 'I was loved/I have been loved' (passive)
  - b. 'I loved/have loved' (active) (= *amavi*, active perfect)
  - c. 'I am beloved' (*amatus* = adjective; predicative construction)
  - d. 'I am (being) loved' (= *amor*)
- (cf. Cennamo 2008, p. 121)

Hence, Jacob (1994, p. 363) hypothesis of an always-accessible copular interpretation of *be* falls short of a satisfactory description. As the data in Cennamo (2008) show, in contexts where BE + past participle continues to be associated with perfective readings, a copular analysis is excluded.

An additional problem came up with the loss of the case system. As long as case-marking the nominative could be distinguished from the accusative, speakers could easily identify the semantic roles of verbal arguments. Hence, the loss of the voice system illustrated in (6) did not substantially impair communication. Nonetheless, case-marking started to operate on an active-inactive basis (Cennamo 2008, p. 122). The accusative appeared in subject function, to mark the undergoer argument of intransitives, such as anticausatives and other verbs denoting change of state or location, passives and impersonals. Accusatives could be found inclusively with non-agentive activities and even mark the actor of transitive verbs, although the nominative form continued to be the canonical case for subjects. Hence, case-marking no longer helped to consistently identify the semantic roles of verbal arguments. A construction showing the prior form of the passive voice such as *puellam amata(m) est* (7) out of context could be ambiguous between an active interpretation with *puellam* marking the actor (7a) or, with two arguments, the undergoer (7b). It could also have a passive interpretation, with *puellam* marking the undergoer (7c–d):

<sup>15</sup> We find this construction in Classical Latin as well as in Modern French, Italian, English or German. Modern Spanish, however, uses *estar* (<STARE) as a copula. See Pountain (2000) for an account of the process that led to the functional extension of ESTAR + past participle substituting SER + past participle as a resultative construction.

<sup>16</sup> Flobert (1975, pp. 410–19) calls this process *deponentization*.

<sup>17</sup> I refer to RRG macroroles (actor and undergoer) to indicate semantic functions (see Van Valin 2005). Cennamo (2008) uses the formalism common in typological studies (O/SO and A) in an equivalent way.

- (7) *puellam amata(m) est*
- a. ‘The girl has loved’ (puellam = A)
  - b. ‘She has loved the girl’ (puellam = U)
  - c. ‘The girl was/has been loved’ (puellam = U)
  - d. ‘The girl is (being) loved’ (puellam = U)
- (cf. Cennamo 2008, p. 123)

The interaction of the two phenomena (the loss of the voice opposition and case-marking indicating syntactic and semantic status), illustrated by *puellam* in (7), leads to significant changes taking place in the encoding of the argument structure of the clause in the transition from Latin to Romance: the generalization of the synthetic perfect, the grammaticalization of HABERE + past participle marking the Actor function of the subject with transitive and, in the long run, also intransitive constructions and, last but not least, the reanalysis of BE + past participle marking the undergoer argument of a resultative construction with intransitive verbs, especially those denoting change of state (Mackenzie 2006; Cennamo 2008; Rosemeyer 2014).

Note that the findings contradict not only the continuity of a perfect use of ESSE + past participle to SER + past participle but also the continuity of a copula function of *esse* in combination with the verbal adjective that formally continues the past participle. The well documented cases of active readings of forms of the *amatus sum* type (Cennamo 1997, 2001, 2008)<sup>18</sup> seem to indicate that values attributed to ESSE + past participle in Classical Latin have become defunctionalized.<sup>19</sup> Table 3 resumes the findings of the last two sections of this chapter:

Table 3. Development of SER + past participle < ESSE + past participle.

Classical Latin	Late Latin	Mediaeval Spanish	Early Modern Spanish
ESSE + PtcP	ESSE + PtcP	SER + PtcP	SER + PtcP
(U-marking) (Resultative) Anterior Aorist	Defunctionalization?	U-Marking Resultative (Anterior)	U-Marking Anterior

### 5. Exaptation, Refunctionalization, Decapitalization

As we have seen, the development of Latin ESSE + past participle to Mediaeval Spanish SER + past participle contradicts the common assumption of a grammaticalization path from resultative constructions to aorist constructions. Actually, the development seems to be more or less the other way round. While the analytic perfect of Latin deponent verbs had an aorist and an anterior reading and appear to be only marginally ambiguous allowing a resultative reading, Mediaeval Spanish SER + past participle constructions are clearly not aoristic and have to be interpreted in most cases as resultative constructions. An anterior reading only marginally comes into play. However, this development does not seem to be a motivated reversal of the grammaticalization process but rather a reset after a period of defunctionalization.

In the following, I will briefly discuss three concepts brought up in the last years in the context of questioning the irreversibility and unidirectionality of grammaticalization paths: exaptation, refunctionalization and capitalization. My objective will be to show that the development of BE + past

<sup>18</sup> An anonymous reviewer criticised that my argumentation depends too much on the works of Cennamo and the references she adduces. However, as Latinists confirmed to me, her references are valid and even more current studies of Latin Grammar, such as Baños Baños (2009), do not contradict her findings. Since my claim in this paper is primarily a theoretical one, this is not the place to add wider bibliographic and empirical support to confirm her findings. See Drinka (2017, pp. 139–40) for a recent affirmative summary of Cennamo (2008).

<sup>19</sup> I use the term ‘defunctionalization’ in line with Smith (2011, p. 269) as “the loss of value or function of an opposition.”

participle from Latin to Spanish, sketched out in the last two sections of this chapter, is not an idiosyncratic case but a specific type of counter-example to grammaticalization theory that could be described with the help of the aforementioned concepts. I shall, however, invert the concept of capitalization introduced by Pountain (2000) and discuss a process that I call ‘decapitalization’.

The concept of ‘exaptation’ was introduced by Lass (1990, 1997) as a limited alternative to grammaticalization in specific functional domains. Exaptation makes use of the general concept of reanalysis that I have already used in the contribution and will not discuss on its own.<sup>20</sup> In Lass’ terms, exaptation, adapted from biology where it “denote[s] the co-optation during evolution of structures originally developed for other purposes”<sup>21</sup> is “a kind of conceptual renovation, as it were, of material that is already there but either serving some other purpose, or serving no purpose” (Lass 1997, p. 316). As Narrog (2007) shows, Lass’ examples for linguistic exaptation, the re-use of Indo-European ablaut inter alia, are not always convincing and even if they are, they could be easily considered isolated counter examples to the unidirectionality of grammaticalization. However, Narrog (2007) himself proves that causativization at several stages of Japanese as well as in a couple of unrelated languages occur in a systematic way that contradicts the claim of grammaticalization theory and could be better described in terms of exaptation.

In his 1990 paper, Lass highlighted the possibility that languages recycle morphological material that does not serve to code a functional distinction anymore and therefore could be considered ‘junk’. According to Cennamo (2008) findings, this seems to be precisely the case for ESSE + past participle in Late Latin. Apparently, both functional values coded by this construction in Classical Latin were jettisoned; the passive function (*amatus sum* opposed to *amavi*) as well as the perfect function (*amatus sum* opposed to *amor*). But instead of being dropped, the form persisted and was recycled as a present tense passive marker for transitive<sup>22</sup> and a resultative marker for intransitive verbs.

Nonetheless, the concept of morphological junk has been criticized in the literature.<sup>23</sup> As Narrog (2007, p. 7) pointed out: “it is rarely the case that linguistic structure is completely functionless or useless.” Lass himself conceded in 1997, that “the most common kinds of exaptation [...] are not based on co-optation of junk. ‘Useful’ [...] features can be adapted too” (Lass 1997, p. 318).

In this line of thinking, we could account for the fact that the construction ESSE + past participle—even if it allows for an active transitive reading at some point in history—is not completely functionless. The conjugated form of *esse* still codes the categories of person and number.<sup>24</sup> Presumably, speakers recognized these categories easier in the case of *esse* as an irregular verb than in the case of regular conjugated full verbs affected by phonetical abrasion on their endings.

In a more recent paper, Smith (2011) took up the discussion on exaptation on the bases of Lass (1997). He pointed out that there is a conceptually significant distinction between cases of exaptation including loss of the original function and others with a new function grafted onto the original one (Smith 2011, p. 305). Following Smith, the first case should be labelled refunctionalization, the second adfunctionalization. Since the main function of ESSE + past participle in Classical Latin, the perfect function including an aorist reading, is lost leading to defunctionalization, the recycled use of the forms in a resultative construction could be described as an instance of refunctionalization in Smith’s terms.

However, according to Smith (2011), refunctionalization as the acquisition of a new value or function by a morphological opposition, does not recycle morphological ‘junk’ but equals a process

<sup>20</sup> I will follow Narrog (2007, p. 3) who considers reanalysis a more powerful mechanism that include grammaticalization and other systematic processes of grammatical change.

<sup>21</sup> A typical example are feathers, originally thermoregulatory devices of warm-blooded proto-birds, that only later were capitalised for flight (Lass 1990, p. 80).

<sup>22</sup> Of course, passive constructions of transitive verbs could have a resultative meaning, too.

<sup>23</sup> See references in Narrog (2007).

<sup>24</sup> However, some forms were substituted by forms of *sedere*.

that has been described in the history of art and architecture as “skeuomorphy” (*ibid.*, pp. 275–76). A ‘skeuomorph’ is a “feature which starts off as functional, loses its functionality and becomes decorative—that is, in some sense, cultural (*ibid.*, p. 277).” They still have content, that is, they are more in tune to people’s expectations, so objects or buildings designed with skeuomorphs would be more aesthetically pleasing than those without skeuomorphs. Applied to the case of refunctionalization, skeuomorphy explains a vestigial continuity between the old and the new function:

Whilst the original functional distinctions disappear, the formal oppositions that used to express them seem to retain a vestige of abstract content—they become, in the terminology introduced earlier, skeuomorphy, not junk—and, where one of the items is discarded or the opposition assumes a new function, it is this vestigial content that seems to determine what developments take place. (Smith 2011, p. 314)

If we follow Smith’s argumentation, our description of the development of ESSE + past participle in Late Latin has to be revisited. It is not an instance of total defunctionalization. It seems to be that the marginal resultative function of the Classical Latin ESSE + past participle construction is maintained as a vestige. I suppose that it is in line with the findings of Cennamo (2008) to say that ‘resultativity’ attains the more abstract value of affect or concern. After the loss of the perfect and the passive value of the structure, this abstract vestigial content explains its refunctionalization in a new organized system of argument marking, where ESSE + past perfect highlights the undergoer function of the argument in contexts of change of state and change of location.

Let me conclude this section by bringing one last concept into play: capitalization introduced by Pountain (2000) in order to describe processes of weak grammaticalization without phonetical reduction:

Use of the term ‘capitalization’ is an attempt to label the historical process by which a linguistic feature which already exists in a language comes to be substantially exploited for wider purposes, sometimes simply making overt distinctions which were previously covert but sometimes apparently creating new expressive possibilities. (Pountain 2000, p. 295)

I would like to raise the question of whether Pountain’s considerations could be useful for describing a somehow inverted process that, consequently, has to be labeled ‘decapitalization’. If we substitute ‘wider purposes’ with ‘tighter purposes’, the first part of Pountain’s definition seems to fit well to our case. While in Classical Latin, ESSE + past perfect had a (dominant) perfect and aorist value and appeared only marginally as a resultative, in Mediaeval Spanish, SER + past participle is mainly a resultative construction. Hence, it has been decapitalized. The process of decapitalization turns overt distinctions into covert ones. The overt perfect value of ESSE + past participle in Classical Latin was (almost) covert in Mediaeval Spanish and appeared only marginally in the data. The apparently new expressive possibility of marking an undergoer argument became central. However, *mutatis mutandis*, the function of marking an undergoer continued the semantic properties not only of passives but also of deponent verbs, although in a more systematic way.

What would be the added value of a concept labeled ‘decapitalization’ in the theoretical field discussed in this volume? While ‘capitalization’ seems to operate in the same direction as grammaticalization, ‘decapitalization’ works counter-directional to grammaticalization. As we have seen, the fairly well-established concept of exaptation refers to a wide range of counter-directional processes. According to Smith (2011), at least two forms of exaptation have to be distinguished: refunctionalization and adfunctionalization. As far as refunctionalization in Smith’s terms is concerned, the defining criterion is ‘skeuomorphy’, a highly technical concept of art history that, in my opinion, is not completely convincing in the field of linguistics. In art history, skeuomorphy refers to elements that are maintained as decorative elements, although having lost their original functions. Smith (2011, p. 277) himself conceded that ‘decorative,’ “is not a term usually associated with serious



studies of language.”<sup>25</sup> However, it seems to be more problematic to substitute, as Smith does, ‘decorative values’ in art history with ‘a vestige of abstract content’ in linguistics.

My claim is that we could better deal with this type of linguistic change if we consider the vestigial abstract value as a remnant of a process of decapitalization. Let me discuss this concept briefly. My considerations are, of course, inspired by Pountain’s concept of capitalization. However, it seems to be fruitful to have a look at the use of ‘decapitalization’ in economics and social science. According to Padley (1986, p. 183), ‘decapitalization’ means “the loss of capital for accumulation” or as Van Brabant (1987, p. 388) puts it: “the stock of capital shrinks over time.” In my opinion, it would be more enlightening to use this concept metaphorically in historical linguistics than the opaque term ‘skeuomorphy’, especially in cases of a decrease in structural distinctions. Other grammatical changes from Latin to Romance might be described as decapitalization, too; for example, the loss of the case system. The morphemes *-a(m)*, *-u(m)* and *-as*, *-os* decapitalized their functional load. While denoting case, number and gender in Latin, they only refer to number and gender in Romance languages. But, of course, this is only speculative suggestion, which has to be discussed more in detail in an additional study.

## 6. Conclusions

In this chapter, I based my argument on the studies of Cennamo (1997, 2001, 2008) and Rosemeyer (2014), in order to show that the development of BE + past participle from Classical Latin to Mediaeval and Early Modern Spanish neither exhibits functional continuity nor equals the development of HAVE + *past* participle. While HAVE + past participle embarks upon a grammaticalization path that is held universally, BE + past participle seems to take the opposite path at the first stage, regressing from an aoristic construction in Classical Latin to a resultative construction in Mediaeval Spanish. Since this development contradicts with common insights on grammaticalization, the continuity of the construction from Latin to Spanish has been denied. Exaptation theory (Lass 1990, 1997) seems to be a theoretical framework that deals with processes of linguistic change that exhibit only continuity on the formal side, while on the functional side, it comes to total defunctionalization. The morphemes left—in our case the BE + past participle structure—appear to be morphological ‘junk’ that might be recycled in order to adopt new functions. However, functional discontinuity does not seem to be complete in many cases. As Smith (2008) pointed out, it is more probable that when functional opposition is jettisoned, a vestigial abstract content remains on the marked element. In our case, it is the resultative value, marginal for Classical Latin ESSE + past participle that is maintained, presumably as a more abstract feature of affect or concern. This abstract feature determined refunctionalization by paving the way to a new functional load for SER + past participle in Mediaeval Spanish: the marking of an undergoer subject. The fact that the perfect and aorist functions of ESSE + past participle are jettisoned while the marginal resultative value becomes central in Mediaeval Spanish, as well as in other Mediaeval Romance varieties, should be described as decapitalization. The concept of ‘decapitalization,’ with its connotations stemming from economics and social science, denotes that in a given situation of linguistic change, a feature could be exploited for tighter purposes. In the development from Latin to Proto-Romance, this seems to happen not only to ESSE + past participle but also to the nominal endings expressing gender, number and case. Further research will have to clarify to what extent the concept of ‘decapitalization’ is useful for describing processes of functional reduction in language change, not only in the special case of the development of Proto-Romance, but also for a wider set of unrelated languages.

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<sup>25</sup> In my opinion, this is not the core of the problem. Aesthetic aspects should not be neglected in language history.

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Article

# Refunctionalization. First-Person Plural of the Verb *Haber* in the History of Spanish

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**Abstract:** In this paper, the first-person plural diachronic behaviour of the verb form *habemos* with an existential value is analysed to explore its recovery in current Spanish as a case of refunctionalization. The latter is understood as timely cooptation of a form, which begins with any of the form's characteristics. It is known that the cooptation's origin might be directly, indirectly or not at all related to the previous or original use of the form. Results shown here are based on the analysis of constructions in which the first-person plural verb form of *haber* is used with a possessive meaning, as an auxiliary, and as existential between the 13th and 21st century. While grammaticalization theory pays attention to processes that culminate with grammatical enrichment of words or constructions, the verb form *habemos* with an existential meaning does not show that behaviour. It is explained as a case of refunctionalization or, at least, specialization.

**Keywords:** refunctionalization; specialization; reanalysis; first-person plural of *haber*; existential verb form *habemos*

## 1. Introduction

It is well known that the verb *haber* has played a main role in several changes throughout the history of the Spanish language. From Latin to Spanish, it gradually changed from being a possessive transitive verb (1), used with that same meaning in Old Spanish (2a), to being an auxiliary (2b) and an existential verb (2c), until it finally was reduced to an auxiliary level and a plain verb within the existence domain.

(1)	<i>HOSTI</i> enemy-NOM SG (Virgilio, <i>Eneida</i> , II, v. 290) "The enemy has walls."	<i>HABET</i> have-PRS 3SG	<i>MUROS</i> walls-ACS PL		
(2) a.	<i>enviar</i> to send-INF <i>do</i> where ( <i>Cid</i> , v. 1271) "I want to send you to Castilla where we have inheritances."	<i>vos</i> you-ACUS2P <i>avemos</i> have-PRS1P	<i>quiero</i> want-PRS1S <i>heredades</i> inheritances	<i>a</i> to	<i>Castiella</i> Castilla
b.	<i>rogo-l</i> beg.PST3S-DAT3SG  <i>que lo</i> that	<i>que</i> that  <i>auie</i> it-ACS3SG	<i>non</i> not  <i>acabado</i> AUX-IPFV3SG	<i>dixiese</i> tell-PST.SBJC3SG  finished-PTCP	

<i>fasta que</i> until CONJ	<i>los otros</i> the others	<i>ouiesen</i> AUX-IPFV.SBJC3P			
<i>cerca d-acabadas</i> near of-finished-PTCP (CG, 12a)	<i>sus</i> POSS-3PL	<i>obras</i> works			
"S/he begged her/him not to tell that s/he had finished until the others were about to finish their works."					
<i>Nos</i> we	<i>habemos</i> AUX-PRES1P	<i>mandado</i> ordered-PTCP	<i>a</i> to-DAT		
<i>nuestro</i> POSS-1P	<i>amado</i> beloved	<i>clerigo</i> priest	<i>Michelet de</i> Michelet from	<i>Mares</i> Mares	
<i>que</i> that	<i>ficiesse</i> make-PST.SBJC3S	<i>adobar</i> to tan-INF	<i>los dichos</i> the mentioned	<i>altares</i> altars	
(Gastos de la catedral de Pamplona, 1400, Spain, CORDE, s.v. <i>habemos mandado</i> )					
"We have ordered our beloved priest Michelet of Mares to prepare the aforementioned altars."					
<i>Conosciendo</i> Knowing	<i>esto</i> this	<i>e</i> and	<i>sabiendo</i> realizing	<i>que</i> that	
<i>habemos</i> AUX-PRES1P	<i>de</i> PREP	<i>ir</i> to go-INF	<i>a aquella</i> to that	<i>vida</i> life	
<i>perdurable</i> everlasting	[ ... ] <i>tenemos</i> AUX-PRES1P	<i>por</i> by	<i>derecho</i> law	<i>de</i> PREP	
<i>lo</i> it-ACU3S	<i>emendar</i> amend-INF	<i>a</i> to	<i>Dios</i> God		
(Real Monasterio de Santo Domingo, 1291, Spain, CORDE, s.v. <i>habemos de</i> )					
"By knowing this and realizing that we must go to that everlasting life [ ... ] we consider (that) we must redeem ourselves before God."					
c. <i>ssi</i> if	<i>en</i> in	<i>la</i> the	<i>iglesia</i> church	<i>mayor</i> main	<i>non</i> not
<i>ouyesse</i> there be- IPFV.SBJC3S	<i>obispo</i> bishop	<i>et</i> and	<i>el cabillo</i> the chapter		
<i>della</i> of.ART	<i>rogase</i> beg-IPFV.SBJC3S	<i>a</i> to	<i>otro</i> someone else		
<i>que</i> that	<i>por</i> by	<i>y</i> there	<i>pasasse</i> go by-IPFV.SBJC3S	<i>que</i> that	
<i>lo</i> it-ACUS3S	<i>ffiziesse</i> do-IPFV.SBJC3S				
(Setenario, 161.24)					
"If in the main church there weren't a bishop and if the council of the church begged someone else to go there, let him do it."					

The replacement process from *haber* to *tener* has merited detailed studies in which the change has been explained using grammaticalization theory (Garachana Camarero 1994, 1997; Hernández Díaz 1999, 2006a, 2006b), which has also been used to explain the extension and generalization of *haber* as the prototype of existential verbs (Hernández Díaz 2007). It is well known that the change of *haber* from a transitive to an existential verb has reduced its paradigm to the third-person singular, since the rest of the grammatical paradigm turned out to be unnecessary because it was opposed to the new impersonal meaning of *haber*. Once the paradigm was reduced, *haber* was classified in grammar books as a third person verb (Bello 1997, §781–84; Gili Gaya 1943, §62; Seco 1989, §8.2.2; Real Academia Española 1973, §3.5.7.c y d; RAE/ASALE Real Academia Española & Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española, §41.6a, b).

Notwithstanding the new morphologic characterization of the verb, agreement between the noun phrase, designating what I call ‘existing entity’ and the verb, has consistently been rejected by grammarians (Bello 1997, §781–784; Gili Gaya 1943, §62; Seco 1989, §8.2.2 footnote; Real Academia Española 1973, §3.5.7.c, d; RAE/ASALE Real Academia Española & Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española, §41.6b, c, d, e). This rejection proves that the noun phrase has been reanalysed as the syntactical subject, because, even though existential sentences using *haber* are not classified as intransitive structures, they are closer to that classification than to that of transitive structures in speakers’ minds. As we can see in example (3), agreement is a limited phenomenon in terms of frequency but it is a persistent phenomenon diachronically speaking.

(3)

<i>Habían</i> There are-IPFV3P	<i>algunos</i> some	<i>hechiceros</i> sorcerers,		
<i>ministros</i> ministers	<i>del</i> of.ART.S.	<i>diablo</i> devil	<i>que</i> that	<i>los</i> ACUS-3P
<i>inducían</i> incite-IPFV3P	<i>en</i> PREP	<i>algunos</i> some	<i>supersticiosos</i> superstitious	<i>errores</i> mistakes
<i>(Apologética historia sumaria, 1527–1550, Spain, CORDE, s.v. habían)</i>				
“There were some sorcerers, ministers of the devil who led them into some superstitious mistakes.”				
<i>todavía</i> still	<i>creo</i> believe-PRES1S	<i>que</i> that	<i>habrán</i> thereareFUT3P	<i>muchos</i> many
<i>que</i> that	<i>se declararán</i> declare-FUT3P	<i>por</i> in favor of	<i>V. M.</i> Your Majesty	
<i>(Historia de Felipe II, c.1619, Spain, CORDE, s.v. habrán)</i>				
“I still believe that there will be many who will declare themselves in favor of Your Majesty.”				
<i>aunque</i> thoug	<i>hubieron</i> therearePST3P	<i>algunos</i> some	<i>indios</i> indians	
<i>hicieron</i> make-PST3POS-3P	<i>sus</i>	<i>tiros,</i> shoots,	<i>nada</i> nothing	<i>hizo</i> do-PST3S
<i>(Diario de la sublevación del año 1781, c. 1781, Bolivia, CORDE, s.v. hubieron)</i>				
“Though there were some Indians, [and] they shot, s/he did nothing.”				

Apart from the agreement in example (3), there are cases in the first-person plural verb form of *haber* that use the presumably disappeared existential meaning of *habemos*. Some examples of these cases are displayed in (4), where reanalysis of the noun phrase as a subject is updated and there has been a refunctionalization, because the discussed verb form *habemos* experienced a change in function that goes beyond the syntactic description level. The phenomenon involves recovering an element

from the brink of extinction in standard Spanish, which acquired a new semantic and pragmatic meaning, as I will show in this paper.<sup>1</sup>

(4)	<i>Vea</i> Look-IMP2S	<i>esto</i> this	<i>no</i> not	<i>es</i> be-PRES3S		
	<i>Rionegro,</i> Rionegro	<i>donde</i> where	<i>sí</i> indeed	<i>habemos</i> there bePRES1P		
	<i>muchos blancos,</i> many whites	<i>por</i> by	<i>los</i> the	<i>cuatro</i> four	<i>costaos</i> sides	
	<i>(La marquesa de Yolombó, 1928, Colombia, CORDE, s.v. habemos muchos)</i> “Look: this is not Rionegro, where there are many of us whites indeed, entirely white.”					
	<i>la organización</i> the organisation	<i>no</i> not	<i>solicitó</i> request-PST3S	<i>los permisos</i> the permissions	<i>para</i> for	
	<i>la venta de alcohol,</i> the sale of alcohol,	<i>por tanto</i> therefore	<i>hubimos</i> there be-PST1P	<i>varios</i> several		
	<i>expositores</i> expositors	<i>que</i> who	<i>nos quedamos</i> keep-PST1P	<i>con</i> with	<i>el</i> the	<i>viaje</i> trip
	<i>(Blog “Identidad y futuro,” 2015, Chile)</i> “The organisation did not request the permissions for the sale of alcohol; therefore, there were many of us speakers who did not make the trip.”					
	<i>¿cómo</i> How	<i>se</i> IMPER	<i>consigue</i> get-PRES3S	<i>un experto?</i> an expert	<i>Aquí en</i> here in	<i>la</i> the
	<i>nube docente</i> cloud	<i>habremos</i> teaching there	<i>varios</i> many			
	<i>listos</i> ready	<i>a</i> to	<i>apoyar-nos</i> support-INF-ACUS1P			
	<i>(Webpage, 2015, México)</i> “How can someone get an expert? Here in the teaching cloud there will be many of us to support each other.”					

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to analyse first-person plural diachronic behaviour of *habemos*, with an existential meaning, to show its resurgence in current Spanish language as a case of the refunctionalization and exaptation phenomena. I understand the latter as timely cooption of a form, a process that begins with any of the form’s characteristics, according to Lass (1990, p. 80). It is well

<sup>1</sup> I know that the verb form *habemos* is used in some Spanish varieties. Castillo Lluch and Octavio de Toledo (2016) show that there exists documentation in recent oral corpuses from Spain and America where *habemos* is used not only as an existential but also as an auxiliary verb. However, its use and presence is marginal, especially as an auxiliary and it is considered as not typical in standard Spanish. Its presence as an existential has other syntactic and semantic implications. I believe that the different uses among varieties of Spanish show a different behavior; here, I am trying to show that its existential use entailed a different process from its grammaticalization as an auxiliary, which deserves an explanation based on refunctionalization and specialization—occurring recently—which are sociolinguistic nuances that deserve to be carefully studied. According to Bentivoglio and Sedano (1989), Blas Arroyo (2016), Castillo Lluch and Octavio de Toledo (2016), Claes (2014, 2016) Hernández Díaz (2005, 2006b), Pato (2016) and Vaquero (1978), the concordance is related with sociolinguistic variation. Particularly, Claes (2014) suggests that the associations between the pluralization of *haber* and social groups vary more significantly depending on the respective speech communities.

known that the cooptation's origin might be directly, indirectly or not at all related to the previous or original use of the form; in any case, it constitutes a conceptual innovation.

Exaptation changes, unlike any other changes, are characterized by renewing or *recycling* so called 'historic junk' in languages. Recycling starts with abandoned forms—at some linguistic analysis level—because they have lost their function (Lass 1990; Narrog 2007; Traugott 2004). Although it is true that morphological material rarely stops fulfilling its function, there are cases in which its function is partially lost or is kept only marginally. This, as we shall see in this paper, is the case for the verb form *habemos* in the history of the Spanish language.

### 3. Corpus

Results shown here are based on the analysis of 47,883 constructions in which the first-person plural of *haber* (*habemos/avemos, hemos*) is used with a possessive meaning, as an auxiliary and as an existential, in the period between the 13th and the 21st century (cf. Appendices A and B). However, as we know, possessive meaning was lost during the 16th century and, contrastingly, the verb form *habemos* is hardly registered as existential verb in writers preceding the 20th century.<sup>2</sup> This difficulty is undoubtedly related to the generalized disapproval of *haber* concordance by normative grammar; it is also due to the textual typology represented in the linguistic corpus and the methodology used in the creation of the linguistic atlases (cf. Castillo Lluch and Octavio de Toledo 2016).

Cases were extracted from the *Corpus Diacrónico del Español* (CORDE) by the Real Academia Española (RAE). Additionally, cases corresponding to the 20th century were complemented with data from the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA), also by the RAE. 21st century cases were gathered using Google and the webpage Socialmention.com ([www.socialmention.com](http://www.socialmention.com)), which is used to perform real time searches in social networks and internet. The plurality in the corpus is caused by the difficulty faced in registering the *habemos* form/expression in standard Spanish, though the form/expression is highly productive in oral exchanges and in chats, which have a very similar format to that of a conversation and support it despite being in written form.

The data considered in this study are 6457 cases of *habemos* or *avemos*, as a possessive or as an auxiliary verb, 41,167 cases of *hemos* expressing the same meaning and 259 cases of the verb form *habemos* as an existential verb.

As I already have mentioned, not all of them correspond to an existential use of *haber*. For contrasting purposes, in order to prove what I have proposed, I also include possessive, auxiliary and what I have called 'prescriptive uses,' as well as 'other uses' that I will explain in detail later on.<sup>3</sup> This study's scope is vast and heterogeneous in order to compare the diverse meanings of the verb form *habemos* from a diachronic perspective, for I believe that the wide variety of examples will play an important part in evidencing a contrast in quantitative terms. As we shall see, quantitative and qualitative differences in the meaning of the verb form *habemos* are crucial, for they help us understand why the existential use of this verb form is a case of refunctionalization and, in some way, a case of exaptation.

### 4. Reanalysis, Refunctionalization and Subjectivization of the Verb Form *Habemos*

As I have mentioned before, one of the changes experienced by *haber* was from being a transitive verb to an impersonal one. This change caused its paradigm to be reduced to the third-person

<sup>2</sup> Some sporadic cases are recorded after the 16th century for different reasons: (1) because they are in fixed expressions (or idioms) as *haber menester* 'to be necessary', 'to need'; (2) because they are stylistic devices that writers use to reflect or to rebuild speech of another time; for example, several cases in the corpus are from *Maladrón*, a novel written by Miguel Ángel Asturias in the 20th century but set in 1600.

<sup>3</sup> The label 'other uses', as I will explain, groups prescriptive grammar recommendations of the verb form *habemos*. It is well known that different grammarians have discouraged the concordance in the *habemos* verbal form with existential meaning. The cases in which *habemos* is used to discourage the concordance have been brought together under this label.



singular although, by participating in compound tenses and in verbal periphrases as an auxiliary verb, it managed to keep its whole paradigm identical to the one it used to have as a transitive verb.

Once *habemos* became an auxiliary verb, the first-person plural experienced a formal reduction. The change *avemos cantado* > *hemos cantado* (i.e., the phonetic reduction of the fourth person or the first-person plural of the perfect) has been carefully analysed in Bustos Gisbert and Bernal (1992) and, more recently, in Rodríguez Molina (2010, 2012). Rodríguez Molina (2012), based on Girón Alconchel (2004, p. 870), states that the alternation *hemos/habemos* (*avemos*) became less and less frequent once the transitive use of *haber* was lost. The shortened form was a more effective iconic manifestation of its use as an auxiliary. According to Rodríguez Molina, the reduction started at the beginning of the 16th century and by the 18th century *habemos* disappeared from the standard variant, although it has dialectal presence (cf. Rodríguez Molina 2012, p. 181) and the data on which this work is based are consistent with this. From the first quarter of the 16th century, the long forms are obsolete and appear mainly in legal texts, pastoral poetry and stigmatized dialects (Girón Alconchel 2004, p. 866).

The dialect variation is important in order to track the spread of change. Rodríguez Molina’s data (Rodríguez Molina 2012, p. 207) suggest that the short form (*hemos cantado*) emerges in Aragon and spreads from there. According to this author, the causes of change can be grouped as: (1) phonetic reduction after the grammaticalization of compound verb tenses; (2) essentially phonetic factors (the bilabial occlusive voiced sound loss in the intervocalic position and the syncope of the low central vowel); (3) an analogy process to preserve the reduction in the verbal paradigm.<sup>4</sup>

According to our results, reduction must have happened around the 16th century. The CORDE registers 98 cases of *hemos* used as an auxiliary verb in the 13th century, a number that increased in the following centuries and reached 4174 cases by the 16th century. Throughout this period, the frequency of *habemos* (*avemos*) and *hemos* as an auxiliary is similar but two centuries later, in the 18th century, the frequency of *hemos* is recorded at 2162—and increases to 13,000 in the 19th century and 16,503 in the 20th century. On the other hand, the frequency of *habemos* decreases; there were 81 recorded cases in the 18th century, 68 cases in the 19th century and there was a small rebound in the 20th century, when there were 145 recorded cases. These results seem significant to us.

Based on the results of Table 1, we can state that *habemos* was kept in relation to the possessive meaning and, residually, as an auxiliary verb. On the other hand, *hemos* was generalized as the prototypical auxiliary verb (see the numbers in bold print in Table 1).

**Table 1.** Possessive meanings vs. *habemos* (*avemos*) and *hemos* as an auxiliary verb.

	<i>Habemos/Avemos</i>		<i>Hemos</i>	
	Possessive	Auxiliary	Possessive	Auxiliary
XIII	7% (27/373)	93% (346/373)	8% (8/106)	92% (98/106)
XIV	10% (13/124)	90% (111/124)	6% (12/197)	94% (185/197)
XV	21% (106/496)	79% (390/496)	1% (2/459)	99% (457/459)
XVI	8% (306/3715)	92% (3409/3715)	1% (29/4203)	99% (4174/4203)
XVII	10% (135/1411)	90% (1276/1411)	2% (105/4512)	98% (4407/4512)
XVIII	2% (2/83)	98% (81/83)	7% (13/2175)	93% (2162/2175)
XIX	28% (29/97)	72% (68/97)	<0.5% (7/13,007)	99% (13,000/13,007)
XX	8% (13/158)	92% (145/158)	<0.5% (5/16,508)	99% (16,503/16,508)

<sup>4</sup> The reduction was *habemos* (*avemos*) > *hemos* and also *habedes* (*avedes*) > *habéis*.

Table 1 shows very different use frequencies for *habemos* (*avemos*) vs. *hemos* as auxiliary verb forms in the 18th, 19th and 20th century. If one compares only the auxiliary meaning of these forms, as in Table 2, it appears that *habemos* (*avemos*) is marginally used as an auxiliary verb as compared to *hemos*.

Table 2. *Habemos* vs. *hemos* as auxiliary verbs.

	<b>Habemos Auxiliary</b>	<b>Hemos Auxiliary</b>
XVIII	4% (81/2243)	96% (2162/2243)
XIX	<1% (68/13,068)	99% (13,000/13,068)
XX	<1% (145/16,648)	99% (16,503/16,648)

Considering these results, it appears that *habemos* is also bound to disappear as an auxiliary verb form, especially during the 19th and 20th century, even if one considers its presence in some Spanish dialects. As a possessive verb, its situation is similar; during the 20th century it was used sporadically in fixed phrases like the ones in example (5a). It is clear that its use as an auxiliary or as a possessive verb form has no major relevance in terms of frequency. *Habemos* was registered in cases like the ones in example (5b), which, although recent, seem to be marginal.

- (5) a. Y *cuánta* *sabiduría* **habemos menester**  
 And how much wisdom need-PRES1P
- para* *retener* *nuestros* *prisioneros*  
 for hold back-INF POS-1P prisoners
- sin* *destripar-los*  
 without gut.INF-ACUS3P  
 (*Hace tiempos*, 1935–1936, Colombia, CORDE, s.v. *habemos menester*)  
 “And how much wisdom must we need in order to retain our prisoners without gutting them.”
- Si* *de* *todo* *lo* *que*  
 If of everything PRON REL-3S
- habemos menester** *hubiese* *copia* *sobrada*  
 need-PRES1P thereisIPFV.SBJV copy extra  
 (*Misión de la Universidad*, 1930, Spain, CORDE, s.v. *habemos menester*)  
 “If there were an extra copy of everything we need.”
- b. *alguna vez* *nos* **habemos de** **apartar**  
 some time ACU-1P AUX-PRES1P move away-INF
- del* *común y simple* *modo* *de* *decir*  
 of.ART common and simple way of say  
 (*Poesía española. Ensayo de métodos y límites estilísticos*, 1950, Spain, CORDE, s.v. *habemos de apartar*)  
 “Some time we must have to move away from the common and simple way of saying.”
- mandar* *matar* *a* *un hombre ordinario*,  
 order-INF kill-INF to a man ordinary
- pone* *a* *un hombre* *tan grande* *en*  
 place-PRES3S to a man so great in

<i>el</i>	<i>estrecho</i>	<i>que</i>	<b><i>habemos</i></b>	<i>visto</i>
the	strait	that	AUX-PRESIP	seen-PTCP

(Discurso de recepción en la Real Academia Española: Pasión y muerte del Conde de Villamediana, 1964, Spain, CORDE, s.v. *habemos visto*)

“To order an ordinary man to be killed, places a great man in the situation that we have seen.”

<i>ya</i>	<i>sabéis</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>voluntad</i>	<i>que</i>
already	know-PRES2P	the	will	that

<i>la Católica Reina mi Señora,</i>	<i>é</i>	<i>yo</i>	<b><i>habemos</i></b>
the My Lady the Catholic Queen	and	I	AUX-PRESIP

<b><i>tenido</i></b>	<i>é</i>	<i>tenemos</i>	<i>al</i>	<i>bien</i>
had-PTP	and	have-PRESIP	to.ART	good

(Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar, 1963, Cuba, CORDE, s.v. *habemos tenido*)

“You know already what My Lady the Catholic Queen and I have willed to be correct.”

Despite what we have previously said, the frequency of *habemos* grows in the 21st century, when the verb has an existential meaning, because, as is widely known, the agreement of *haber* in contemporary Spanish is a general and widely spread phenomenon, even though it is not always recorded in written form.

In my opinion, as stated in a previous study on *haber*'s agreement (Hernández Díaz 2005), it is necessary to make a distinction between the creation of two different kinds of agreement, for they depend on different semantic, and, more importantly, pragmatic reasons. I am referring to the contrast in example (6).

(6) a.	<i>Lo</i>	<i>más</i>	<i>enriquecedor</i>	<i>fue</i>	<i>cómo</i>
	The	most	enriching	be-PST3S	how

<i>contaban</i>	<i>las tradiciones</i>	<i>que</i>	<b><i>habían</i></b>
relate-IPFV3P	the traditions	that	there are-IPFV3P

<i>en</i>	<i>sus</i>	<i>pueblos</i>
in	POS-3P	hometown

(Manuscript, c. 2000, México)

“What was most enriching was how they told of the traditions that they had in their hometowns.”

<i>no</i>	<b><i>deben</i></b>	<b><i>haber</i></b>	<i>fueros</i>	<i>ni</i>
not	AUX-PRES3P	be-INF	exemptions	nor

<i>privilegios</i>	<i>respect</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>este</i>	<i>problema</i>
privileges	regarding	of	this	problem

(TV, México)

“There should not be neither exemptions nor privileges regarding this problem.”

<i>No</i>	<b><i>habían</i></b>	<i>copias,</i>	<i>entonces</i>	<i>reduje</i>
Not	there be-IPFV3P	photocopies	so	reduce-PST1S

<i>los horarios</i>	<i>para</i>	<i>hacer-los</i>	<i>en</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>computadora</i>
the schedules	for	make-INF-ACUS3P	on	the	computer

(Spoken language, México)

“There were no copies, so I reduced the schedules in order to make them on the computer.”

b. **Habemos**            *muchos*            *aquí*            *que*            *somos*            *inocentes*  
 There be-PRES1P    many            here            that            be-PRES1P    innocent  
 (*Socialmention*, 2015)  
 “There are many of us here who are innocent.”

*yo*                    *sé*                    *que*                    **habemos**  
 I                      know-PRES1S    that                    there be-PRES1P

*muchos*            *que nos*            *sentimientos*    *así*                    *y*  
 many                who                feel-PRES1P    like this            and

*no*                    *tiene*                *nada*                *de*                    *malo*  
 not                    have-PRES3S    nothing            about                wrong  
 (*Socialmention*, 2015)

“I know that there are many of us who feel this way and there is nothing wrong about it.”

**habemos**            *personas*            *que*                    *por*                    *fuera*  
 there be-PRES1P    people            who                    by                      outsid

*aparentamos*    *y*                       *fingimos*            *ser*                    *humildes*  
 pretend-PRES1P    and                    feign-PRES1P    be-INF                humble  
 (*Google*, 2015)

“There are many people of us who on the outside pretend and feign to be humble people.”

In both (6a) and (6b), the reanalysis of the element governed by the existential verb *haber*, as the subject of the sentence, is evident. This mechanism was defined as follows:

The change in the structure of an expression or kind of expression, which is not related to any immediate or essential modification in its superficial expression. (*Langacker 1977*, p. 58)

As different authors have stated (*Company 2010; García 1990; Narrog 2007*), a reanalysis might or might not have repercussions in formal expression but will definitely have repercussions on a conceptual level. Reanalysis is completed, in cases like example (6), because it has happened at an internal and external level of expression and because of the way in which it manifests itself or becomes updated in the agreement.

As we know, reanalysis is a major mechanism for grammaticalization and for linguistic change in general, mainly because it is a prerequisite for the implementation of change through analogy: a process that modifies shallow evidences and that spreads reanalysis’ effects not only within the same linguistic system but also inside the speaking community. The analogy that caused the grammatical uses I am interested in was the intransitive mono-argument constructions’ formal structure, because whenever a predicate has only one argument, it will prototypically be the subject of the sentence. The first example in (6a) shows a very evident analogy because the existential verb *habían* is coordinated with *existían*, which makes the two sentences look syntactically equal in the eyes of the speaker.

The development of agreement in *habemos* is a case of refunctionalization, except for the one exhibited in (6a), because it does not only imply the reanalysis of an existing entity as the sentence’s subject but also the reuse of what is almost a junk form or a very marginal one in standard Spanish, as we have seen. Based on the results shown in Table 1, we can attest that the rotation of *habemos* and *hemos* seems to have been related, at some point, to the former’s possessive value and that, once it lost this value, *habemos* was occasionally kept as an auxiliary verb. Keeping both forms, then, turned out to be unnecessary. Therefore, *habemos* became a morphological archaic case of *hemos* but in terms of system and frequency the former was practically considered to be ‘junk.’ According to *Lass (1988*, p. 36), there are only three outcomes for a residual expression: (1) complete loss; (2) remaining as waste without a specific function; or (3) remaining and being systematically used for another purpose,

instead of being left aside. The third option is defined by Lass as exaptation and, according to the results in Table 3, that is precisely what happened to *habemos*.

**Table 3.** Recorded meaning of *habemos* (*avemos*).

		Possessive	Auxiliary	Existential	Prescriptive Use	Other Uses
XIII	CORDE	7% (27/373)	93% (346/373)	-	-	-
XIV	CORDE	10% (13/124)	90% (111/124)	-	-	-
XV	CORDE	21% (106/496)	79% (390/496)	-	-	-
XVI	CORDE	8% (306/3715)	92% (3409/3715)	-	-	-
XVII	CORDE	10% (135/1411)	90% (1276/1411)	-	-	-
XVIII	CORDE	2% (2/83)	98% (81/83)	-	-	-
XIX	CORDE	28% (29/105)	59% (62/105)	-	-	13% (14/105)
XX	CORDE	8% (11/143)	83% (119/143)	8% (12/143)	1% (1/143)	-
	CREA	3% (2/57) †	39% (22/57)	47% (27/57)	2% (1/57)	9% (5/57)
XXI	Google ††	-	2% (4/160)	63% (100/160)	34% (55/160)	1% (1/160)
	SocialM	-	-	98% (105/107)	2% (2/107)	-

† Eventhough CREA shows 58 results of *habemos*, one of these was left out because *habemos* was mistakenly typed as *habemos* (*tú y yo podríamos habemos casado*). †† I took the first 100 existential cases of *habemos*: 55 correction cases, 4 cases used as auxiliary and one more corresponding to the explanation of the Latin expression *habemus papam* (VERB + ACCUSATIVE CASE).

Even though grammarians in the 19th century identify the use of *habemos* with the meaning ‘existir’ (‘to exist’) as a mistaken agreement, results show that during the 20th and 21st century exaptation was the solution for *habemos*. This verb form was marginally used as an auxiliary or with a possessive meaning during the 19th and 20th centuries. However, during the 20th century and during the first fourteen years of the 21st century, it regained strength not only to express existence—for *habemos* with existential meaning does not merely mean that *algo está o existe en alguna parte* (‘something is or exists somewhere’)—but also as the verb form that allows the speaker to include himself as member of a group or class. Such a group exhibits a clear set of characteristics and is located inside space and time coordinates—real and metaphorical—as is shown in example (7). Thus, the recovery of *habemos* involved its refunctionalization, through subjectivization, as well. Moreover, since *habemos*, unlike other impersonal existential verb forms, was reused as an existential verb with the option to indicate the grammatical person, in some way, it might be seen as an exaptation process.

(7)	<i>De</i> In	<i>hecho,</i> fact,	<b><i>habemos</i></b> there be-PRES1P	<i>un</i> a	<i>equipo</i> team	<i>grande</i> big		
	<i>que</i> that	<i>seguimos</i> AUX-PRES1P	<i>trabajando</i> working-gerund	<i>en</i> on	<i>ello</i> it			
	( <i>Socialmention</i> 2015)							
	"In fact, we are a large team that continues to work on it."							
	<i>No generalizo</i> Not generalize-PRES1S	<i>que</i> that	<i>todos</i> everybody	<i>somos</i> be-PRES1P				
	<i>así (sic)</i> like that	<i>y</i> and	<i>se (sic)</i> know-PRES1S	<i>que</i> that	<b><i>habemos</i></b> there be-PRES1P			
	<i>personas</i> people	<i>que</i> that	<i>estamos</i> be-PRES1P	<i>orgullosos</i> proud	<i>de</i> of	<i>quienes</i> who	<i>somos!</i> be- PRES1P	
	( <i>Socialmention</i> , 2015)							
	I do not generalize that we all are like this and I know that we are people who are proud of who we are."							
	<i>Con respecto</i> Regarding	<i>al</i> to.ART	<i>trato</i> treatment	<i>que</i> that	<i>se</i> IMPER			
	<i>les</i> DAT-3P	<i>da</i> give-PRES3S	<i>a</i> to	<i>las personas</i> the people	<i>creo</i> believe-PRES1S			
	<i>que</i> that	<i>no</i> not	<i>es</i> be-PRES3S	<i>muy bueno,</i> very good,	<i>ya que</i> because			
	<b><i>habemos</i></b> therebePRES1P	<i>personas</i> people	<i>muy</i> very	<i>ignorantes</i> ignorant	<i>y</i> and			
	<i>que</i> that	<i>nos</i> AUX-1P	<i>consideramos</i> consider-PRES1P	<i>con</i> with	<i>mucha</i> so much			
	<i>suerte</i> lucky	<i>como</i> as	<i>para</i>	<i>no</i> not	<i>tener</i> have-INF	<i>ese</i> that	<i>tipo</i> kind of	<i>de enfermedad</i> illness
	( <i>Google</i> , 2015)							
	"Regarding the treatment that has been given to people, I think that it is not such a good thing, because we are very ignorant people and we consider ourselves lucky for not having that kind of illness."							
	<i>y</i> and	<i>sí (sic)</i> yes	<b><i>habemos</i></b> there be-PRES1P	<i>personas</i> people	<i>que</i> that			
	<i>somos</i> be-PRES1P	<i>como</i> like	<i>somos</i> be-PRES1P	<i>de</i> of	<i>nacimiento</i> birth			
	<i>y</i> and	<i>no</i> not	<i>podremos</i> can-FUT1P	<i>cambiar</i> change-INF				
	( <i>Google</i> , 2015)							
	"And, indeed, we are people who we are from birth and we won't be able to change."							

Going back to the results of Table 3, I deem it necessary to explain the two far right columns: 'prescriptive use' and 'other use.' The former attracts my interest because, in Google, these cases equal 34%, that is, 55 of the 160 first reported examples. I decided to classify them as 'prescriptive use' because they are, in a sense, an expansion of suggestions by grammar books to avoid agreement between the verb *haber* and a mono-argument noun phrase. These results refer to articles, pages, blogs or chats that describe this agreement as incorrect and they censure it. This shows a genuine interest in the subject, as well as the frequency of the phenomenon, for we can assume that prescription occurs as often as there is a violation of a rule. Then, to the far right, the 'other use' column gathers fixed phrases where *haber* is used with possessive meaning but it does not make any sense to classify them as truly transitive uses. Taking this into account, the refunctionalization of the verb form *habemos* seems to be almost complete. Figure 1 shows the refunctionalization of *habemos* diachronically.

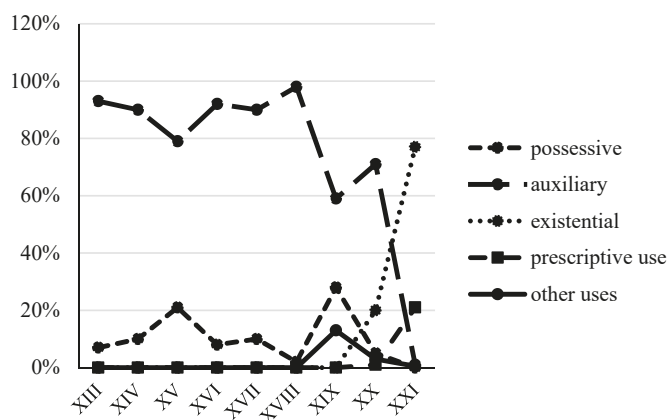


Figure 1. Meaning of *habemos* (avemos). Refunctionalization.

There is no doubt that the refunctionalization of *habemos* may be explained as a change through subjectivization, because grammatical alternatives, which are reduced to formal options dissociated from meaning in some theories, are studied in change theories as carriers of meaning. Such meaning is defined by different perception forms in a situation, rather than by different objective or fact conditions. Exposing the figurative condition of language allows us to approach rotation as part of the common pragmatic meaning of language, where we can see that change in shape also implies change in meaning.

Having observed an increasing tendency in correcting the agreement of *habemos*, we could ask ourselves why there is insistence on exaptation. The answer lies in the hypothesis ‘change in shape implies change in meaning’ because, subjectively, the advantage of *habemos* over *hay* or even over other verbs that can give constructions an existential sense, is that the speaker is able to include himself in the referred event as a directly affected member of the situation. It is worth mentioning that existential sentences with *habemos* in the corpus usually refer to events where the speaker, as part of the subject, plays the part of ‘theme.’ A theme that is somehow affected by the described situation, because sentences include theme as being part of a class with specific circumstances, frequently deemed negative (for example signs of vulnerability), as shown in italics in (8).

(8)	<b>habemos</b> there be-PRES1P	<b>personas</b> people	que who	le DAT-3S		
	damos give-PRES1P (Doña Bárbara, 1929, Venezuela, CORDE, s.v. <i>habemos personas</i> )	fiebre fever	a to	la the	calentura temperatura	
	"There are those of us who give fever to fever."					
	hay, there be-PRES3S	<b>habemos</b> there be-PRES1P	<b>todavía</b> still			
	<b>militares</b> militaries	<i>pundonorosos</i> , honorable	<i>para</i> for	<i>defender</i> defend-INF		
	<i>los intereses</i> the interests (El Papa verde, 1954, Guatemala, CORDE, s.v. <i>habemos</i> )	del of.ART	<i>pueblo</i> people	y and	<i>de la</i> of the	<i>Patria!</i> homeland
	"There are still honorable men, including me, to defend the interests of the people and of the homeland."					
	<b>habemos</b> there be-PRES1P (Proceso, 1997, México, CREA, s.v. <i>habemos</i> )	<b>maestros</b> teachers	<i>que</i> who	<i>tienen (sic)</i> have-PRES3P	<i>25años</i> twenty-five years	<i>de</i> <i>enseñanza</i> of teaching
	"There are those of us teachers that have been teaching for 25 years."					
	<b>habemos</b> There be-PRES1P	<b>muchos</b> many	<b>venezolanos</b> Venezuelans	<i>que</i> who		
	<i>estamo</i> be-PRES1P (Socialmention, 2015)	<i>inocentes</i> innocent	<i>de</i> of	<i>todo</i> all	<i>estos</i> these	<i>males</i> misfortunes
	"There are many of us Venezuelans who are innocent of all these misfortunes."					
	<b>habemos</b> There be-PRES1P	<b>miles</b> thousands	<b>de</b> of	<b>profesionales</b> profesionales		
	en in	<i>este sector</i> this sector	<i>que</i> that	<i>aunque</i> even	<i>mal</i> bad	<i>pagados</i> , payed-PTCP
	<i>exprimidos</i> used-PTCP	<i>por</i> by	<i>los</i> the	<i>empresarios</i> enterprise people	y and	
	<i>con</i> with (Socialmention, 2015)	<i>convenios caducados</i> agreements expired	<i>tenemos</i> have-PRES1P	<i>un</i> a	<i>trabajo</i> job	
	"There are thousands of us professionals in this sector that though poorly payed, exploited by the businessmen with bad contracts, we still have a job."					

Thus, the refunctionalization of *habemos* is another way in which the Spanish expresses a change of mood within the syntactic subject. This is the reason why, even though the phenomenon is constantly condemned, its presence is a fact, due to the communicative advantages it has in pragmatics.

The cooption of *habemos* to mean the 'existence of a class to which the speaker belongs or includes himself' is possible thanks to the personal inflectional morpheme. As we know, recycling of the form may be or may not directly related to its former or original use or can be used marginally. For *habemos*, we consider it is the second case because the marginal relationship lies in the personal form of the verb but it is not related to its previous possessive value. It is related to an existential value it rarely had in Latin and which increased in Old Spanish. The recycling and recovery of *habemos* to include the speaker as part of the subject is overwhelming, if we consider the most frequent combinations of *habemos*. In accordance with Google web browser results, in frequency order they are as follows: *habemos personas que ...* ('There are those of us people that ... ') (393,000 cases), *habemos gente que ...* ('There are those of us that ... ') (389,000), *habemos algunos que ...* ('There are some of us



people that ... ') (305,000), *habemos algunas que ...* ('There are some of us women that ... ') (229,000), *habemos quienes ...* ('There are those of us who ... ') (225,000 cases), *habemos hombres que ...* ('There are those of us that ... ') (221,000), *habemos mujeres que ...* ('There are those of us women that ... ') (219,000), *habemos muchos que ...* ('There are many of us that ... ') (174,000 cases).

In approaching the end of this analysis, I would like to make it clear that my approach to *haber* has been a many-angled diachronic one, inserted in grammaticalization and reanalysis theory. I would also like to add that I did not find those theories useful in explaining refunctionalization regarding the development of agreement or the special case of *habemos*, because we are not dealing with a gradual one-way phenomenon in Spanish language history. It is surprisingly odd, within these theories, to find a practically useless obsolete word regaining expressive strength. However, under light shed by refunctionalization and by subjectivization, as an exaptation case, the change turns out to be natural and transparent. Thus, I consider that the development of agreement in *haber*, specifically in *habemos*, can be partially explained from on the grounds of grammaticalization. I also consider that both grammaticalization and exaptation allow us to explain a sudden phenomenon that neither has a unidirectional behaviour, nor ends in a grammatical or more grammatical form than the one at the beginning. It is a phenomenon with a form that reinserts itself, inside the verbal paradigm by building a new paradigm, through reanalysis and refunctionalization, due to subjective and pragmatic value assessment.

## 5. Conclusions

We can conclude that it is possible to account for the diachrony of *habemos*, in the history of the Spanish language, as a refunctionalization case. Through this concept, we can explain changes that do not follow a unidirectional trajectory, are not gradual and do not end with the creation of more grammatical forms than the ones from previous stages.

In accordance with data gathered in this analysis, change—or rather the recycling of *habemos*—has been possible due to communicative advantages that other existential verbs do not have; particularly, the possibility to include the speaker in an existential sentence and as member of a group or a class with well-defined characteristics. Thus, in order to explain the whole diachrony of the verb *haber*, from possession to existential domain, we must acknowledge the relevant role played by processes such as refunctionalization, subjectivization and to some degree, exaptation.

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## Appendix A

Main corpus

CORDE = Real Academia Española, Data base (CORDE) [Online]. Corpus Diacrónico del Español. <<http://www.rae.es>> [December 2014].

CREA = Real Academia Española, Data base (CREA) [Online]. Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual. <<http://www.rae.es>> [December 2014].

Google = Internet search engine <<http://www.google.com.mx>> [January 2014].

Social M = Socialmention.com. Real-time social media search and analysis. <<http://www.socialmention.com>>. [January 2014].

## Appendix B

Virgilio = Virgilio, *Eneida*, vol. 1, Madrid: CSIC, 2009.

*Cid* = Anonymous, *Cantar de mio Cid. Texto gramática y vocabulario*, vol. 3, Ramón Menéndez Pidal (ed.), Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1944–1945.

*Setenario* = Alfonso X, *Setenario*, Kenneth H. Vanderford (ed.), Barcelona: Crítica, 1984.

CG = Alfonso X, *Primera crónica general de España*, Ramón Menéndez Pidal (ed.), Madrid: Gredos, 1955.

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Article

# Grammatical Words and Spreading of Contexts: Evidence from the Spanish Preposition *a*

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**Abstract:** The paper shows that when grammatical words are involved, *context* is then the unit of language change. Certain changes consist in an active spreading of a form to new contexts, without changing the category or grammatical status of the form; in these cases, context must be considered the unit of language change. The empirical evidence is the diachrony of the Spanish preposition *a* ‘to’. Throughout history, this preposition pervasively extended to new and different contexts, but the form *a* never changed, remaining a grammatical preposition with a basic meaning of ‘directive telicity towards a goal’ (goal maybe locative, temporal, transitivity, finality, discursive, etc.). The paper labels this kind of change as ‘context construction’, and considers it an analogical extension induced by context. Finally, to test whether the diachrony of *a* is *grammaticalization* or not, the paper reviews fourteen related theoretical concepts, checking them against the diachronic evidence of the preposition *a*.

**Keywords:** context; grammaticalization; exaptation; refunctionalization; analogical extension

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## 1. Introduction. The Theoretical Problem<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Spanish preposition *a* ‘to’ constitutes both a striking case in general syntactic diachrony and a challenge for several theoretical frameworks of language change. It especially presents a challenge for *Grammaticalization*, because the preposition underwent many syntactic changes without modifying its basic, general meaning throughout the history of Spanish, and without modifying its category status of grammatical preposition. The changes, as a whole, may be characterized as a very active spread of the preposition into new and different distributions and contexts, but the form *a* never changed, always being a grammatical preposition, and always having a basic meaning of ‘directive telicity towards a goal’, the goal may be locative, temporal, final, immediate or mediate goal of transitivity, modal goal, discourse goal, the hearer as a goal, etc. It is a case of change of contexts and not a case of change of the status of the form. There is no polysemy of *a*, there is a great context polyfunctionality, and there is also the creation of new constructions with *a*. I will label this kind of change as a ‘pattern of pervasive spreading of contexts’.

Each new context is an extension of the previous one, via metonymic or metaphorical elaborations, and each new context has gradually moved away from the locative context encoded by the classical Latin preposition *ad*, which is the etymon of the Spanish *a*. The progress as regards to the context is, then, the expected one in diachronic syntax. However, the behavior of the preposition is not the expected one in diachronic syntax, because it maintained its grammatical status, and always coded

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‘directive telicity towards a goal’; the goal being of different kinds, as I said above, locative, temporal, purposive, modal, imperative, discursive, etc. (cf. §2 below).

Table 1 (*apud Company and Flores 2014*, p. 1328) shows schematically the pervasive spreading of contexts undergone by the Spanish preposition *a* in the history of Spanish. The growing line  $a \rightarrow \mathbf{a}$ , with a bigger *a* in each step, does not mean polysemy of *a* nor changes in the preposition itself, it only means the gradual and constant diachronic spreading of the preposition to new contexts. The lines in the scheme reflect, to a certain degree, the diachronic stages of the advance of *a* to new contexts, and also reflect the cumulative or stratified effect (*Hopper 1991*) produced by any syntactic change. For simplicity, the scheme represents only ten contexts, but there are many more; the historical depth of this change, still in progress, is also very old; it begun, at least, in Late Latin.

**Table 1.** Pervasive extension of preposition *a* ‘to’ into new contexts <sup>†</sup>.

<i>a</i>	$\vec{a}$	$\rightarrow \mathbf{a}$	$\rightarrow \mathbf{a}$	$\rightarrow \mathbf{a}$	$\rightarrow \mathbf{a}$	$\rightarrow \mathbf{a}$	$\rightarrow \mathbf{a}$	$\rightarrow \mathbf{a}$	$\rightarrow \mathbf{a}$
LOC	LOC	LOC	LOC	LOC	LOC	LOC	LOC	LOC	LOC
	IO	IO	IO	IO	IO	IO	IO	IO	IO
		HDO	HDO	HDO	HDO	HDO	HDO	HDO	HDO
			TEMP	TEMP	TEMP	TEMP	TEMP	TEMP	TEMP
				FUT	FUT	FUT	FUT	FUT	FUT
					PURP	PURP	PURP	PURP	PURP
						IDO	IDO	IDO	IDO
							MOD	MOD	MOD
								IMP	IMP
									DISC

<sup>†</sup> LOC = locative; IO = indirect object; HDO = human direct object; TEMP = circumstantial temporal complements; FUT = temporal future in the periphrasis *ir a* + infinitive; PURP = purpose; IDO = inanimate direct object; MOD = modal contexts; IMP = imperative; DISC = discursive contexts.

Pervasive spreading into new and more varied contexts with no change in the category status of the form or construction involved in those contexts is not a type of change that is typically considered within the research framework of grammaticalization. In fact, the well-known classical definitions of grammaticalization in (1) posit that language change is characterized by a change in the grammatical status of a form or construction (e.g., a change from a lexical to a grammatical form, or a change from a grammatical form to a more grammatical one), and that these developments are driven by changes in contextual use, context being only the medium through which forms or constructions acquire a new grammatical status or a new grammatical category. The definitions in (2) do not mention context or take it into account at all. Probably, context is absent from many definitions because it is obvious that forms need context and actual use for changing; that is, context is taken for granted in grammaticalization, although all works point out the local nature of syntactic change, that is, they recognize that change always takes place within specific contexts (*Diewald 2002; Heine 2002*). In consequence, specialized theoretical literature does not bear in mind changes such as the one analyzed here.

- (1) a. A process by which a lexical form or construction, in specific pragmatic and morphosyntactic contexts, assumes a grammatical function or by which an already-grammatical form or construction acquires an even more grammatical one (*Kuryłowicz [1965] 1975*, p. 69).<sup>2</sup>
- b. Grammaticalization is the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions or grammatical items develop new grammatical functions (*Traugott 2001*).

<sup>2</sup> This definition is present, almost literally, in many authors since (*Meillet [1912] 1965*). (Cf. *Bybee et al. 1994*, chp. 1; *Company 2003; Heine et al. 1991*, p. 2; *Heine and Reh 1984*, pp. 20–22; *Hopper and Traugott 2003*, chp. 1; *Lehmann [1982] 1995*)

- c. Grammaticalization refers to that part of the study of language change that is concerned with such questions as how lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions or how grammatical items develop new grammatical functions [ ... ] grammaticalization refers most especially to the steps whereby items become more grammatical through time [ ... ] the change occurs only in a very local context (Hopper and Traugott 2003, pp. 1–2).
- (2) a. Grammaticalization [...] by definition is a process of language change in which an expression moves away from the lexical pole and toward the grammatical pole (Geurts 2000, p. 781).
- b. Lexical or less grammaticalized linguistic expressions are pressed into service for the expression of more grammaticalized functions (Heine 2003, p. 578).

Relating the above definitions to the Spanish preposition *a*, this word neither moved away from the lexical pole towards the grammatical pole, nor was it ‘pressed into service’ for more grammatical functions, because *a* has always served grammatical functions. Even specialized literature considers it as an element that only establishes relations between two forms or constructions (Tullio 1997, pp. 41–42). Indeed, reference grammars often analyze this preposition as an empty form, lacking any meaning (Alcina and Blecuá 1975, sct. 6.2.5). Obviously, the preposition *a* increased its frequency across the history of Spanish, because it appears in many more contexts, but an increase in frequency is not, by itself, a signal of grammaticalization. At best, heightened frequency is a symptom that there may be certain changes in progress.

The theoretical problem of the definitions of grammaticalization above is twofold: first, how is it that a word, which is already very grammatical, becomes more grammaticalized? Second, is it possible to consider context change as a kind of grammaticalization? In this paper I address these questions by analyzing the role of context in language change. In doing so I hope to establish a dialogue between the different approaches and the types of *grammaticalization* and the Spanish diachronic data of *a* while determining the extent to which context is responsible for developing the pattern of  $a \rightarrow \mathbf{a} \rightarrow \mathbf{a}$ .

This paper contains three proposals. The first is that *context* may be, in some cases, the ‘unit of change’, besides being simply a ‘locus of change’. Context is understood here neither in a restricted grammatical sense, nor in the traditional meaning of narrative blocks. Instead, *context* is defined as a form or construction + a specific distribution where the form or construction enters into + optionally, other syntagmatic and/or prosodic units co-occurring with those forms or constructions. This definition, basically, fits with the ‘construction grammar’ framework analysis (Trousdale 2012; Hoffmann and Trousdale 2013; Traugott and Trousdale 2013). The second proposal of this paper is that it is necessary to leave the word level for some types of changes, and take into account both construction and context in order to fully understand some diachronic syntactic processes. Finally, this paper proposes that forms maintain their basic, general meaning for centuries. Forms enter into new contexts but these contexts are always more or less compatible with their general meaning. This stability guarantees that the progression of language change is neither haphazard nor chaotic.

This paper is organized in four sections besides this Introduction. In Section 2, the diachronic data related to preposition *a* are presented, focusing on the new contexts and constructions in which the preposition appeared, and classifying the types of change corresponding to the new contexts with *a*. In Section 3, I summarize the various current research frameworks on *grammaticalization*, and specifically focus on the conceptual theoretical labels that relate to the Spanish diachronic data of preposition *a*. That is, in this section I try to establish a dialogue between theory and diachronic data in order to inform the diverse views on grammaticalization. In Section 4, I make a specific theoretical proposal for the kind of change consisting in pervasive spreading of contexts. Brief conclusions are in Section 5.

## 2. Diachronic Data on Preposition *a*

The basic meaning ‘directive telicity towards a goal’, which is inherent to preposition *a* ‘to’, is maintained, as I said before, in all contexts, but the ‘goal’, which formally is the term of the

preposition, may be of different types, displaying diverse semantic and grammatical nuances, forming different syntactic constructions which enter in very different contexts.

The goal, exemplified in (3–23), may be—among many other constructions—a locative complement (3), taken literally (3a) or metaphorically (3b), a temporal complement (4), a future time (5), a future time without specifying tense nor mood (6), a final purpose (7), an accomplished trajectory (8), a person which is the final locus of movement (9), a personal direct object (DO) (10), an inanimate DO (11)—DO is always the immediate goal of transitivity—, a recipient indirect object (IO) (12), which functions as the remote or ultimate goal of transitivity, an autonomous imperative event (13), a nominal construction with modal meaning (14), a nominal modality in construction with a verb (15), an adjective modality in construction with a verb (16), an adverbial modality with adverbs in *-as* (17), a future event in subordinate relative clause (18), a member acting as the goal of a comparison (19), an interrogative clause (20), a predicative construction close to a discourse marker (21), a fixed expression, an idiom, inherited from Latin (22), which should lack preposition in learned writing, because the Latin idiom is in ablative case, which internally already has a kind of preposition. The example (22) is a conclusive proof of the structural pervasive spreading of *a* to new contexts, even the most reluctant ones, such as idioms. And the goal may be also a pragmatic one, an abstract location implying abstract movement (23). There are more types of context coding the goal, but (3)–(23) are enough examples to show the diversity of constructions, of contexts, and the diachronic stability of the preposition *a*. Only (3a) shows the original etymological context coming from Latin.<sup>3</sup> The large and great variety of goals displayed in (3b–23) is the consequence of the diachronic spreading of *a* to more varied contexts along the history of Spanish.<sup>4</sup> In the examples, the verb and/or the noun and the prepositional phrase (PP) are in bold type to facilitate the identification of the construction and the context.

- (3) a. hallé que **abia enbiado a España** con çiertas personas çinquenta y çinco mill y seysçientos y ochenta y seys pesos de oro (Letter, 1525, Mexico, CORDIAM) “I found that [he] **had sent to Spain** via certain people fifty-five thousand marcs.”
- b. me **mandó a la mierda**; y me dixo que no quería venir (Legal document, 1816, Mexico, CORDIAM)  
“He **sent me to hell** and he told me he did not want to come”
- (4) que fue el dicho dia que los **mataron a la noche** (Chronicle, 1598, United States, CORDIAM)  
“that day they **killed them in [lit. to] the night**”
- (5) la condenada asma **va a darme** qué hacer (Emilia Pardo Bazán, *Un viaje de novios*, 1881, Spain, CORDE)  
“this horrible asthma **is going to give me** problems.”
- (6) y con ello no tendrá pleyto ni gastos, cino que **al comer** gastará una gallina, **al senar** un pollo (Huamán Poma, *Crónica*, 1615, Peru, CORDIAM)  
“doing it in that way, he’ll never have problems nor spending, on the contrary, **for lunch** [lit. to the eat], he’ll spend a poultry only, and **for dinner** [lit. to the have supper], a chicken only”
- (7) el portador desta que es Diego Farias va a ese pueblo **a un pleito de unos yndios** (Letter, 1583, Colombia, CORDIAM)  
“the person who carries this letter is Diego Farias, who goes to that village **to a civil action about some Indians**”

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed analysis of the diachronic spreading of contexts, the chronological data, and a state of the art on the preposition *a*, cf. Company and Flores (2014, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> For the metaphorical extensions and relationships linking all types of goals, cf. Company and Flores (2014).

- (8) Y llega el rey **a por su novia** y ve a la negra y le dice . . . (Anónimo, *Cuentos populares españoles*, ca. 1920, Spain, CORDE)  
“and here is the king coming **for** [lit. to for] **his fiancée** and sees the black woman, and then he tells her . . . ”
- (9) Et **lleguemosnos a él** et gradescamosle su bien fazer (Anonymous, *Calila*, 1250, CORDE)  
“and **we must come to him** and thank him for his well done actions.”
- (10) Y llega el rey a por su novia y **ve a la negra** y le dice . . . (Anónimo, *Cuentos populares españoles*, ca. 1920, Spain, CORDE)  
“and here is the king coming for his fiancée and **sees the black woman** [lit. sees to the black woman], and then he tells her . . . ”
- (11) los ácidos minerales **destruyen al barniz** que reviste al hueso del diente (*Gazeta de México*, 1787, *apud Company and Flores 2014*)  
“mineral acids **destroy the varnish** [lit. to the varnish] of the teeth.”
- (12) Yo no puedo entender por qué dejó v.s. de **enviar** luego mi recaudo **a el maestro Ávila** (Santa Teresa, *Cartas*, 1560–1580, *apud Company 2006*)  
“I cannot understand why you did not **send** my news **to the master Avila**”
- (13) ¡Niña, **a callar!** (Alfonso Zurro, *Farsas Maravillosas*, 1987, España, CREA)  
“baby, **shut up** [lit. to shut up]!”
- (14) ¡Con lo fácil que era, pensaba, hacer **una tortilla a la francesa!** (Camilo José Cela, *Esas nubes que pasan*, 1945, Spain, CORDE)  
“it is very easy, I thought, to make **a plain omelette** [lit. an omelette to the French way].”
- (15) Unos jóvenes, **andan a cangrejos**, metidos en un riachuelo saltarán que brilla en la hondonada (Iñaki Linasazoro, *La otra Guipúzcoa*, 1969, CORDE)  
“Some young men, **seeking crabs** [lit. walk to crabs], are into the jumping river.”
- (16) el aire olía mal, **a cerrado, a podrido, a miseria** (Almudena Grandes, *Corazón helado*, 2007, *apud Company and Flores 2014*)  
“the air smells bad, **closed, rotten, misery** [lit. to closed, to rotten, to misery].”
- (17) Cada quien toma veneno **a sabiendas**, de vez en cuando (José María Arguedas, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, 1969, Peru, CORDE)  
“everyone takes poison **knowingly** [lit. to knowingly], from time to time.”
- (18) La categorización de los motivos . . . constituye también **un punto a señalar** (José Luis Pinillos, *Principios de psicología*, 1975, España, CREA, *apud Company and Flores 2014*)  
“the analysis of causes is **a point that must be considered** [lit. a point to consider].”
- (19) Y como **a listo** (astuto diría yo) nadie le gana . . . (Jenny E. Hayen, *Por la calle de los anhelos*, 1993, México, CREA, *apud Company and Flores 2014*)  
“as **to clever**, nobody beats him.”
- (20) Por allí por la Alcarria no veis estas cosas, **¿a que no?** (Sánchez Ferlosio, *El Jarama*, 1956, España, CORDE, *apud Company and Flores 2014*)  
“there, in the Alcarria, you don’t see those things, **that’s right?** [lit. to which not?].”
- (21) **A ver** si vamos haciendo lo que nos corresponde (Spontaneous speech, general Spanish)  
“**come on** [lit. to see], we must do the correct things.”
- (22) La conductancia de un tubo es **a grosso modo** proporcional al cuadrado del potencial a que están los electrodos (Enrique Mata, *La televisión. Fototelegrafía*, 1929, Spain, CORDE)



“Conductivity of the tube is, **broadly speaking** [lit. to broad mode], proportional to . . . ”

- (23) Si no les pasa, pues bájense y ¡**la chingada!** (Gerardo María, *Fábrica de conciencias descompuestas*, 1980, México, CREA)

“If you don’t like it, get down and **fuck you** [lit. to the chingada].”

As examples (3–23) show, the term-goal of the preposition *a* may be almost any category, lexical or syntactic: a nominal, noun or pronoun, an adjective, an adverb, a non-inflected verb, a prepositional phrase, a sentence, or a complete autonomous discourse event. Constructions formed with the preposition *a* may be both argumental and non-argumental; they may be part both of nominal constructions and of verb constructions, may be both a dependent constituent and an autonomous discourse constituent, may appear both in free expressions and in lexicalized ones. That is, the preposition *a* forms the most diverse constructions and it is, probably, along with preposition *de* (Rougjest 1980), the most productive preposition in Spanish given the very different syntactic expressions that it forms.

Besides the high variety of goals that may constitute the term of a prepositional phrase with *a*, *PP-a*, almost any category may be also the governing constituent of a *PP-a*: a noun (example 24), an adjective (example 25), an adverb (example 26), a verb (example 27), another preposition (example 28), forming a prepositional sequence or a kind of composed preposition with *a*. The governing constituent and the preposition are in italics and in bold in the examples.

- (24) Iglesias apuntó a las economías asiáticas como **un ejemplo a seguir** y elogió la forma muy rápida en que salieron de la crisis (*El País*, 5 Novembre 2002, Uruguay, CREA)

“Iglesias pointed out the Asian economies as **an example to follow**, and he praised . . . ”

- (25) Lo esencial es *invisible a los ojos* (*ABC*, 16 February 1996, Spain, CREA)

“The essential things are **invisible to eyes**”

- (26) han recibido alguna o varias dosis de tratamiento antibiótico *previamente a la obtención de las muestras* (*Revista Medicina General*, 2003, Spain, CREA)

“The patients have taken various doses of antibiotic **previously to obtaining the samples**”

- (27) el fenómeno mundial del fútbol *miró a los reporteros gráficos*, sonrió (*El Tiempo*, 12 June 1997, Colombia, CREA)

“The football star **looked at the journalists** [lit. looked to to the journalists] and smiled.”

- (28) produce ciento veinte y nueve mil, y doscientas cuarenta combinaciones *de a dos sílabas* (Ramón Campos, *El don de la palabra en orden a las lenguas*, 1804, Spain, CORDE)

“[chinese language] produces two forty hundred combinations **with two syllables** [lit. of to two syllables].”

In sum, the preposition *a* goes through all Spanish grammar and goes through all lexical and syntactic categories. The reason, as I said, is that *a* progressively entered new contexts diachronically, causing an exponential growth of contexts. With no doubt, two causes might have been working to motivate such spreading to new contexts and such constructional flexibility. On the one hand, the phonological lightness of this preposition, on the other hand, its locative basic meaning, because space, as it is well-known, is a fundamental cognitive grammatical area, prone to be reworked to encode new grammatical domains, such as time, modality, quality, result, etc.

The structural pattern of pervasive spreading of contexts of the preposition *a* displays six manners of change, some of them exhibiting internal subtypes, but none of these changes affected the grammatical category of the preposition, as I said before. The etymological Latin context remains in Modern Spanish, as I said, because grammatical change is cumulative or stratified (Hopper 1991) that is, old and new distributions and contexts live together for centuries.

## 2.1. No Preposition > Preposition *a* 'to': $\emptyset > a$

This first type of change has two manifestations: a nominal one and a verbal one. The argumental functions DO and IO exemplify this first type of change well. In this case, the same function existed in the mother tongue, but the construction had the form of a noun phrase (NP) not of a PP, which is the structure which that function has in contemporary Spanish. Examples (29a) and (30a) show that DO and IO, respectively, had in Latin the form of an NP. The examples (29b) and (30b) exemplify the same argumental functions in Spanish, with an obligatory preposition *a*.

(29) a. **Iudaeos** non nocui  
ACC-DO-jewish NEG PAST-harm (Baños 2009, p. 195)  
"I have not harmed Jewish.""

b. No he perjudicado **a los judíos**  
"I have not harmed **Jewish** [lit. to the Jewish]"

(30) a. Nuntiabant hoc idem **Curioni**  
PAST-announce DO-this itself DAT-IO-propnoun-Curio  
(Allen and Greenough 1979, p. 229)  
"they announced this fact to Curio."

b. Anunciaron esto mismo **a Curio**  
"they announced this fact **to Curio**"

The verbal manifestation of  $\emptyset > a$  is related to periphrastic temporal constructions. In Old Spanish there was a two-verb construction, lacking any preposition linking them, as (31a) shows. From the 14th century onwards, this kind of periphrastic formation obligatorily takes the preposition *a*, introducing the second verb, as (31b) shows.

(31) a. Los christianos [ . . . ] esforçaron se et  **fueron ferir** en los turcos (Anonymous, *Gran conquista de Ultramar*, 1293, CORDE)  
"Christians tried harder and **went to destroy** [lit. went destroy] Turkish."

b. y éstos dejando quemar sus cosas, [ . . . ],  **fueron a herir** con gran velocidad en los del Clavero (Alonso de Maldonado, *Hechos del maestro de Alcántara*, ca. 1492, CORDE)  
"and that people, allowing to burn their things, **went to destroy** the Clavero's people quickly."

## 2.2. PP Headed by a Preposition Different from *a* 'to' > PP Headed by *a* 'to'

This change is as follows: in Old Spanish, the construction had a PP form, but the introductory preposition was another than *a*, and over the time this last preposition ousted the oldest one. There are both verbal and non-verbal expressions where the preposition *a* ousted other prepositions. The preposition ousted by *a* is usually the preposition *de* 'of, from', but other prepositions were ousted too. Examples (32), (33), (34) and (35) display this second type of change.

In (32), the inchoative-verb construction took *de* 'of' in Old Spanish (32a), but from the 15th century onwards, *a* ousted *de*. Nowadays, inchoative verbs subcategorize PP-*a* in Spanish (32b). Example (33) shows that the preposition *a* also ousted the preposition *de* even with non-inchoative verbs; (33) is an unusual context for *a*, because the rule in Spanish is that *despedir* 'to say goodbye' subcategorizes a PP headed by *de*; however, (33) is a very classic example, although somewhat rare, from the first Spanish text totally written in Castilian, *Cantar de mio Cid*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Very probably, this *a* comes from the Latin ablative preposition *ab* 'from', which lost the final consonant, and merged with the Latin accusative preposition *ad* 'to', which also lost the final consonant. Such Latin merger could have reinforced the invasive spreading of the Spanish preposition *a*.

- (32) a. Quando ellos se vieron fuera, en saluo **comenzaron de hablar** (Anónimo, *Mocedades de Rodri-go*, ca. 1400, CORDE)  
 “when they were outside, **they began to talk** [lit. began of talk]”
- b. Libado el trago de la amistad, **comenzaron a hablar** (Gonzalo Zaldumbide, *Égloga trágica*, 1910, Ecuador, CORDE)  
 “Once drunk the glass of friendship, **they began to talk**”
- (33) **Espidiénse al rey**, con esto tornados son (*Cid*, v. 1914)  
 “they **said goodbye to the king**, and came back.”

Non-verbal constructions displayed the same pattern of change, with *a* ousting other prepositions. For instance, some temporal and locative complements with diverse prepositions in general Spanish, (34a) and (35a), introduced *a* in the Argentinian dialect of Buenos Aires, and occasionally in some other American dialects, eliminating the old prepositions, as (34b) and (35b) show.

- (34) a. nos vemos **por la noche**/nos vemos **en la noche**  
 “we’ll see you **in the night** [lit. for/in the night]”
- b. nos vemos **a la noche**  
 “we’ll see you **in the night** [lit. to the night]”
- (35) a. vivo **en el 1300** de la avenida Insurgentes  
 “I live in Insurgentes avenue **at 1300** [lit. in the 1300]”
- b. vivo **al 1300** de Corrientes  
 “I live in Corrientes avenue **at 1300** [lit. to the 1300]”

Some set phrases heading a PP also changed the original preposition by *a*, such as the following cases: *de acuerdo con* ‘according with’ > *de acuerdo a* ‘according to’; *con base en* ‘with basis in’ > *en base a* ‘in basis to’; *en honor de* ‘in honor of’ > *en honor a* ‘in honor to’. Other constructions, lexicalized to some degree, but not so fixed as set phrases, displayed the same pattern in the history of Spanish: *amor de la patria* ‘love of nation’ > *amor a la patria* ‘love to nation’; *agua del tiempo* ‘water not cold’ > *agua al tiempo* ‘water not cold’. Examples in (36) show non-verbal constructions in which *a* won the function; (36a) shows the oldest construction, (36b) the newest one, although the first attestations of *a* are relatively old in these set phrases, as (36c) shows, an example from the year 1561. In many cases, both prepositions continue coexisting to encode the same construction, as in (37), showing the property of cumulative stratification of most syntactic changes.

- (36) a. El día 4 **de acuerdo con** algunos traidores, inventaron plaza en San Pedro (Legal document, 1781, Bolivia, CORDIAM)  
 “the fourth, **according to** [lit. according with] some traitors, they put a market in the main square.”
- b. en cada signo figuran las características generales de su hijo, **de acuerdo a la fecha de nacimiento**, que le darán pistas para saber cómo tratarlos (*Expreso*, 1 October 1991, Peru, CREA)  
 “every star sign displays the traits of your son, **according to** his/her birthday date, giving you ... ”
- c. tenyendo en si **de acuerdo a** la calidad de su persona (Administrative document, 1561, Peru, *cordiam*)  
 “having these things **according to** his qualities as person.”
- (37) Cada estado practica el contraterrorismo **de acuerdo con** las circunstancias del propio estado y **de acuerdo a** sus leyes (*Cambio 16*, 21 May 1990, Spain, CREA)  
 “every government exerts counter terrorism **according to** [lit. according with] its actual circumstances and **according to** the laws.”

### 2.3. Subordinate Clause Headed by Conjunction *que* > Subordinate Clause Headed by *a* 'to'

A subordinate relative clause, whose nominal antecedent is an abstract noun, meaning 'meeting', 'time', 'event', 'fact', 'conference', etc., may begin the predication with the preposition *a* when the accomplishment of the event will take place in an immediate future time, such as in (38). Until the 20th century these predicative adjective constructions only took *que* (38a), but from the 20th century onwards, the preposition *a* began competing with *que* as the introductory nexus of the subordinate clause (38b). This pattern is somewhat similar to the change of type 2.2 above, because the preposition *a* again ousted another grammatical particle, but this time it was a conjunction not a preposition.

- (38) a. **El evento, que se hará** en el auditorio del Archivo General de la Nación, está dirigido a autoridades universitarias (*El Tiempo*, 15 September 1996, Colombia, CREA)  
 "The meeting, which will take place at the National General Archive, is addressed for University authorities."
- b. Unisys de Venezuela ha organizado para esta tarde a partir de las seis **un evento a realizase** en el salón Naiguatá del Hotel Tamanaco (*El Universal*, 21 April 1993, Venezuela, CREA)  
 "Unisys from Venezuela has organized for this afternoon a meeting which will take place [lit. an event to take place] at the Tamanaco hotel."

### 2.4. Genuine Spanish Creations with the Preposition *a* 'to' from the Beginning

Many predicative and non-predicative constructions are genuine Spanish formations, displaying *a* from the very beginnings of the language. Examples above, such as (3b), *me mandó a la mierda* 'he sent me to hell'; (6), *al comer gastará una gallina* 'for lunch [lit. to the eat] he'll spend a poultry'; (7), *va a ese pueblo a un pleito* 'he goes to that village to a civil action'; (13), *niña, ¡a callar!* 'baby, shut up [lit. to shut up]'; (14), *una tortilla a la francesa* 'an omelette to the French way'; (15), *andan a cangrejos* 'seeking crabs [lit. walk to crabs]'; (16), *olía mal, a podrido, a cerrado, a miseria* 'the air smells bad, closed, rotten, misery [lit. to closed, to rotten, to misery]'; (17), *toma veneno a sabiendas* 'he takes poison knowingly [lit. to knowingly]', and (23), *y ¡a la chingada!* 'fuck you [lit. to the chingada]' are good examples of this fourth type of change.

### 2.5. Recodification of Prepositional Constructions via Insertion of the Preposition *a* 'to'

Constructions with movement verbs + preposition *por* 'for' introduced the preposition *a*, forming a prepositional sequence *a por* 'to for' in co-occurrence with movement verbs, both with directive ones, such as *ir* 'go' or *venir* 'come', and with non-directive ones, such as *pasar* 'pass through' (Company and Flores 2018).

This change took place in Peninsular Spanish only, never in American Spanish, but it is another proof of the invasion of *a*. Example (39a) exhibits the oldest and more generalized construction, (39b) shows the new construction with the insertion of *a*. The last sentences in the two examples of (39), *y lo trujeron en unas andas* 'and they brought the dead body in a stretcher' in (39a), and *Y fueron y llegaron al chozo* 'and they went and arrived to the hut' in (39b), confirm the meaning of the accomplished goal which these expressions have.

- (39) a. Y que sabiendo los naturales dél de la muerte de dicho cazique, **fueron por el cuerpo difunto** y lo truxeron en unas andas (Administrative document, 1694, Mexico, CORDIAM)  
 "the people knowing the cacique's death, **went for dead body** and brought it on a stretcher."
- b. Y dijeron: **Pos vamos a por lo nuestro**. Y fueron y llegaron al chozo (Marciano Curiel Merchán, *Cuentos extremeños*, 1944, Spain, CORDE)  
 "and they said: **go for** [lit. go to for] **our properties**, and they went and arrived at the hut."

## 2.6. Insertion of a 'to' in Learned Idioms which Must go with no Preposition

That is the case of example (22) above: *grosso modo* > *a grosso modo* 'broadly speaking [lit. to broad mode]'

Summing up, the examples and types of changes show a systematic pattern of spreading to new and more varied contexts with four basic mechanisms: (a) the preposition *a* invaded Latin non-prepositional functions; (b) the preposition appeared *ex novo* in genuine Romance constructions; (c) the preposition ousted other prepositions in certain constructions, and (d) the preposition joined other prepositions, forming a prepositional sequence or a composed preposition. And summing up again, via this pervasive spreading, the preposition *a* won eighteen new contexts, as compared to its presence in Latin.

As far as I know, the preposition *a* only lost one context, exemplified in (40). The compulsory future modal periphrasis with *haber* 'to have' plus an infinitive took *a* in Medieval Spanish, as (40a) shows, but from very early times the preposition *de* 'of, from' ousted *a* in this construction, as (40b) shows.

- (40) a. toda obra que por mano de omne **se aya a fazer** (Alfonso X, *General estoria. Primera parte*, apud [Company and Flores 2014](#))  
 "every deed of good men which **they must have to do.**"
- b. por los serbiçios que nos a fecho en las dichas yslas y esperamos que **ha de fazer** (Letter, Dominican Republic, 1499, [CORDIAM](#))  
 "for the services that he has done us in the mentioned islands and we hope **he will do** [lit. has of do] in the future."

Theoretically, the changes themselves and the six types of pattern listed above are heterogeneous. Some extensions of *a* involved reanalysis of the preposition when it appears in new contexts, and, as it is well known, reanalysis is the basic mechanism of *grammaticalization*.<sup>6</sup> Such are the cases of the encoding of DO and IO functions, because the preposition took on dative and accusative case-marking. In this case, it might be said that it was a case of traditional grammaticalization because a case-marking is arguably more grammaticalized than a grammatical preposition. Other changes did not involve reanalysis at all, seeming more such as analogical extensions via a metonymic or metaphorical basis: physical space > metaphoric space > time > attitude > quality > result, etc., or also nominal goal > event goal > discourse goal, the preposition preserving its status of a very grammatical preposition. In some other extensions, the preposition is subcategorized by the verb, and there is no choice between *a* and other preposition, but in other cases, *a* forms an oblique complement, having certain syntactic freedom. Thus, it might be said that a subcategorized preposition is somewhat more grammaticalized than a preposition heading a non-argumental complement. And yet in some other extensions, the context progress is completely gradual following the expected channel from more favorable contexts > less favorable ones, as it is the case for IO and DO. In other cases, the change seems to be so abrupt, or so sudden, that it is difficult to establish gradual phases, as it is the case of *voy por agua* > *voy a por agua* 'I go for some water' > 'I go to for some water', whose first attestation, diffusion and standardization took place in less than one hundred years ([Company and Flores 2017](#)).

In sum, from a theoretical point of view, internal heterogeneity is the main feature of the pervasive spreading of *a* to new contexts, but, with no doubt, there is a salient feature of homogeneity in all changes, which together construe a whole unique pattern: a pervasive spreading to new and different contexts—even, a systematic invasion in many cases—and the creation of new constructions with *a*.

<sup>6</sup> [Haspelmath \(1998\)](#) rejects the basicness and need of reanalysis in grammaticalization, although, in my opinion, the author does not demonstrate the point. On the contrary, for [Mendivil Giró \(2015\)](#), reanalysis is the general mechanism of any morphosyntactic change.

### 3. Theory and Data in Dialogue

In this section I will briefly revise both classical and recent definitions of *grammaticalization* and related theoretical concepts of language change. I frame the review as a check list, discussing whether or not the spreading of contexts and creation of new constructions without modifying the category status of the form fit with each theoretical definition and framework.

#### 3.1. *Traditional Grammaticalization* → NO/YES

The classical definition, in (1) above, of change from a lexical form to a grammatical form or from a grammatical form to a more grammatical one (Hopper and Traugott 2003, p. 2, and many other authors) does not fit with the spreading of *a* to new and more varied contexts, because this word did not move away from the lexical pole to the grammatical pole, and it was not pressed into service for more grammatical functions.

However, if we look at categories as not internally homogeneous, even the most grammatical ones, as in the case of a grammatical preposition, it would be possible to say that *a* underwent some kind of grammaticalization in passing from a preposition to a dative and accusative case-marking. Elaborating on the possibility that the preposition would have undergone grammaticalization, it is convenient to consider the following fact: It is not by chance that in formal frameworks, *a* (along with *de* 'of, from') is the grammatical preposition that can most easily govern its term without specifying a thematic role, although in some cases the preposition *a* can also behave as a true preposition assigning a thematic role. In sum, the formal analysis of the preposition would seem to mean that *a* is more grammaticalized in Spanish than in Latin.

#### 3.2. *Grammaticalization as "Emergent Grammar"* → YES

If "there is no grammar but grammaticalization" (Hopper 1987, 1998), any grammatical change, including analogy, is obviously grammaticalization. Hopper's position is epistemologically very interesting because all changes are a recreation of previous lexical or grammatical material. Nevertheless, definitions such as this are so vague and so broad that they lack any operative specificity to work with.

#### 3.3. *Grammaticalization as "the Emergence of Grammatical Systems"* → YES

This definition (Frajzyngier 2010; Hurford 2012, chp. 7) has the same problem as the preceding one: it lacks operative specificity.

#### 3.4. *Grammaticalization as "the Emergence of Language"* → YES

This definition (Hurford 2012, chp. 7; Smith 2011, p. 144) has the same problem as the two preceding ones, and is worse because it refers to the evolution of human language and not to the diachrony of specific grammatical systems or specific grammatical items.

#### 3.5. *Secondary Grammaticalization* → YES/NO

This subtype of grammaticalization is defined in three ways: (a) "Cases of grammaticalization affecting elements that already have grammatical function and proceed to develop a new grammatical function" (Breban and Kranich 2014); (b) "later stage processes in grammaticalization" (Breban and Kranich 2014), and (c) "The reanalysis of markers of one syntactic category into another one" (Givón 1991). None of these definitions cover the pervasive spreading of a grammatical word to new and more diverse contexts. On the one hand, definitions of secondary grammaticalization do not differ, essentially, from the second section of the definition of traditional grammaticalization: a grammatical form developing more grammatical functions; in that sense, the path preposition > case-marking could also be a secondary grammaticalization. On the other hand, the diachrony of *a* does not correspond necessarily to "later stage processes in grammaticalization", because many context extensions are very old, and because the spreading is not a case of grammaticalization. Finally, most extensions of the

preposition *a*, even in cases where they involve new constructions, do not involve reanalysis. Thus, the changes described in Section 2 are incompatible with Givón's definitions (1991).

### 3.6. Connecting Grammaticalization → YES/NO

Grammaticalization: chains of grammations, regrammations [transition from one grammatical status to another] and degrammations are seen as one connected process: change A is a precondition for B which again is a precondition for C and D (Nørgård-Sørensen et al. 2011, p. 5).

The pervasive spreading of a grammatical word to new and more diverse contexts is not strictly covered by this definition. However, this definition says that everything in a language system is connected, and in that sense, some contexts of the preposition *a* are a conditioning step for advancing to a new context. Nevertheless, the changes presented in Section 2 above are not as linear as this definition postulates, because there is a strong overlap in creating new constructions via the progression of *a* to new contexts (Company and Flores 2014). In addition, this definition lacks explanatory force, in my opinion, because almost any change would be a connecting grammaticalization, following the Saussurean principle of language as "a système où tout se tient" (Saussure 1916).

### 3.7. Exaptation 1 → NO

Lass (1990) considers exaptation a specific type of language change, not necessarily related to grammaticalization, although this proposal implies reanalysis: "Junk or garbage morphemes acquire a new function". The pervasive spreading of *a* to new contexts never implied the unemployment of the preposition; that is, *a* never was a junk particle. All changes happened without previous existence of phonetic or grammatical garbage. Actually, no change undergone by *a* emerged from prepositional residue.

### 3.8. Exaptation 2 → YES

"Conceptual invention, [...] the model itself is what's new" (Lass 1997, 318 ss.). The pervasive spreading of *a* to new contexts fits in with this second definition of exaptation. It creates a new model of changing, having context as the protagonist and the locus of change.<sup>7</sup> However, one must be careful, because exaptation seems to be a fairly polysemous concept, losing its descriptive force.

### 3.9. Exaptation 3 → NO

Morphemes may end up encoding a meaning that is unrelated, or distantly related to what they used to express. Such a functional leap of an existing form can be referred to as linguistic exaptation (Van de Velde and Norde 2016, p. 9).

Every expression with *a* preserves the basic abstract meaning of 'directive telicity towards a goal'. There never was a functional leap in the diachrony of *a*.

### 3.10. Functional Renewal → NO

An old form reappears in the grammar with a new meaning (Brinton and Stein 1995). That was never the case of *a*. This preposition has maintained the same basic abstract meaning for centuries, as described above, winning new distributions and entering to new contexts. The constructional and distributional outcomes of *a* are, in fact, new, the contexts where the *PP-a* appears are new also, but the category status of *a* never changed.

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<sup>7</sup> Traugott (2004) says that the distinction between exaptation and grammaticalization is false. I am not so sure, I think that the (in)distinction depends, to a large extent, on which definition of *grammaticalization* is chosen.

### 3.11. *Regrammaticalization* → NO

The preposition *a* is not “a desemantized item found only in a few lexical forms [ . . . ] reinterpreted in a new function” (Greenberg 1991). Actually, as I said before, *a* is probably the most productive preposition in Spanish. It was already very productive in Latin (Baños 2009; Glare 2012, *s.v. ad*), and it became more productive.

### 3.12. *Capitalization* → YES/NO

The historical process by which a linguistic feature which already exists in a language comes to be substantially exploited for wider purposes (Pountain 1997).

This definition fits in well with the increase of constructions in new contexts of *a*. However, there are two problems with the concept of capitalization. Firstly, it does not imply a pattern of progressive spreading, which is the main trait of the diachrony of *a*. Secondly, Pountain’s main example for capitalization, the Spanish auxiliary verb *estar* ‘to be, to stand’ that grows at the expense of the verb *ser* ‘to be, to exist’, implies category weakening of this last verb, which is not the case with the preposition *a* nor with the prepositions ousted by *a*. All of them continued to be prepositions in Spanish.

### 3.13. *Refunctionalization* → NO

“A process whereby a form loses its original function and takes on a new function” (Smith 2006). The preposition *a* never lost its etymological function of introducing a locative complement, and never lost its original relating prepositional function.

### 3.14. *Adfunctionalization* → NO

“A process in which a form assumes a new function alongside or in addition to its original function” (Smith 2006). The preposition *a* has always been a grammatical preposition, it never changed its category.

Some gaps and some problems are present in the definitions above. First of all, the role of context has been ignored in grammaticalization and in the related frameworks. In consequence, changes consisting in a pervasive spreading of a grammatical form to new contexts without modifying the grammatical status of the form have not been taken into account. Moreover, many definitions overlap with one another and thus lose their explanatory value and descriptive usefulness. For instance, exaptation, secondary grammaticalization, refunctionalization, functional renewal, regrammaticalization, and, in some cases, grammaticalization, are very similar to one another, and similarly, adfunctionalization and capitalization also share many common characteristics. Likewise, some concepts are polysemous, thus losing their descriptive force, although all proposals and types of changes enhance our understanding of language change, with no doubt. In sum, the concept of grammaticalization, which has so powerfully explained many changes and has connected apparently unrelated diachronic processes, “risks to become the victim of its own success”, as Breban et al. (2012, p. 2) have noted.

## 4. A Theoretical Proposal

It seems to be necessary to give its own theoretical status to changes such as  $a \rightarrow \mathbf{a} \rightarrow \mathbf{a}$ , as it does not readily conform to previously described frameworks. It is not ‘traditional grammaticalization’; it only partially conforms to ‘capitalization’ or ‘connecting grammaticalization’; and it fits with ‘exaptation’, but only in its revised second definition. Obviously, it is ‘emergent grammar’ and it is characteristic of emergence in grammatical systems, because any language change implies recreation of distribution and recreation of encoding. In a general sense, every language change exists in emergent grammar and in emergent language, as variation, change and malleability are inherent to the everyday language functioning.



In sum, it is not clear that  $a \rightarrow \mathbf{a} \rightarrow \mathbf{a}$  would be a completely different change from the ones revised in the preceding section. On the one hand, the PP-*a* shifted to new functions, in a similar way as predicted by most of the definitions above, but it always preserved its category status (except for the reanalysis as a case-marking) and the change was a pervasive extension to new contexts, two facts not considered by the concepts revised in the previous section.

The main difference and the novelty of changes regarding *a* analyzed in this paper consist, then, in the argument that *context*, not the form itself, is the protagonist of linguistic change, where context acts in specific distributions and specific constructions. Logically, context goes hand in hand with ‘constructionalization’, in the sense of ‘construction grammar’ (Trousdale 2012, pp. 171–72; Traugott and Trousdale 2013, chp. 1), as a lexeme plus morphosyntactic properties plus semantic properties. Syntagmaticity is inherent to human language. This paper adds to the literature by providing a framework for change that can be applied and extended analogically to other contexts.

In sum, the spreading of a form to new contexts with no changes in the category status of the form lacked a term until now. My proposal is that changes such as  $a \rightarrow \mathbf{a} \rightarrow \mathbf{a}$  are ‘analogical extensions induced by context’, where context is both the unit of change and the locus where the change takes place. The analogical model is not a proportional equation, as traditional analogy is, but an extension motivated by the preceding context and by the stability of the general basic abstract meaning of linguistic forms. Certain contexts emerge because they are motivated or induced by other syntactically and semantically close contexts. The change thus can be described as *context addition*.

Other changes in Spanish involving grammatical words, such as clitics and particles, follow the same diachronic pattern. That is the case of *le* ‘him’ ‘her’, *se* ‘-self’, or of some prepositions, but to a lesser extent than the preposition *a*. They continue to have the same category and the same form, and only new contexts appear (Company 2006; Company and Sobrevilla 2014).

My proposal is also that, in many cases, it is necessary to leave the word level in diachrony and consider context as the unit of change. The type of change analyzed here must be included both in general grammatical change and in constructionalization. It would be labeled as ‘context construction’, a type of construction not listed in the inventory of Hoffman & Trousdale in their handbook on Construction grammar (Hoffmann and Trousdale 2013, p. 2).

## 5. Conclusions

This paper has shown five theoretical points: first, that, under certain conditions, context is the unit of language change, when some grammatical words are at work. Context, in addition, is always the locus of change. Second, that certain changes consist in a very active spreading of a form to new contexts, without changing the category status of that form. Third, that in certain cases of language change, it is necessary to leave the word level. Fourth, that the spreading to new contexts is an analogical extension. Finally, that this type of change may be termed as spreading of context, a type of construction not included in ‘construction grammar’ nor in ‘constructionalization’ works.

The paper has also shown that spreading of context is not *grammaticalization*, demonstrating that grammaticalization has neglected the essential role of context in language change, at least in changes involving various grammatical words.

The empirical evidence to make the five proposals above has been the history of the Spanish preposition *a*, characterized by a very active diachrony, but, at the same time, by a high stability, both in category status and in meaning.

Finally, we have linked theory and diachronic data reviewing fourteen theoretical concepts related to grammaticalization, and checking them against the diachronic evidence of the preposition *a*.

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Article

# On the Latin Origins of Spanish *mediante*

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to contribute to the clarification of the linguistic and extra-linguistic circumstances that accompany the emergence and behavior of *mediante* in the first centuries of Spanish. To this end, the origin of the Latin participle *medians*, *mediantis* is examined and the evidence of its ablative form *mediante* in various contexts is also analysed and discussed. We conclude from our study that (1) the appearance of *mediante* in Latin takes place at a relatively late stage of Latin, it having entered the language as a grammatical calque from Greek; (2) in Latin, prepositional values of *mediante*, which do not necessarily originate from Latin absolute ablative clauses, are already detected; and finally, (3) discursive traditions and historical-cultural factors, in particular those developed in Patristic and Scholastic Literature, are fundamental for the understanding, not only of the evolution of *mediante* in Latin, but also of its introduction into Spanish.

**Keywords:** Latin *mediante*; grammatical calque; participle clause; prepositional value; discursive tradition

## 1. Introduction

There is no dispute that *mediante*—a so-called improper, or imperfect, Spanish preposition—is derived from the Latin present participle *medians*, *-ntis* in absolute constructions. As it entered Spanish, it must have undergone a process of grammaticalization that led to the transcategorization from participle to preposition.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond these claims, the Latin origins of *mediante* have not been well defined, nor has their development in this language been sufficiently described and explained. This suggests not only a gap in the history of Latin which deserves consideration, but also deprives us of relevant data and the arguments necessary to explain the particular process of the incorporation of *mediante* into Spanish.

In this paper, therefore, we propose not so much a detailed history of *mediante* in Latin on the basis of an analysis and discussion of Latin examples and usage, but a contribution to the clarification of the linguistic and extra-linguistic circumstances that accompany the emergence and behavior of *mediante* in the first centuries of Spanish.

To be clear, we aim to show that on the one hand, *mediare* is not a truly Latin verb. It appeared in Late Latin, having entered the language via a grammatical calque from Greek, specifically from the Bible. Nor does it seem that we should rule out the change represented by the calque in favor of one which involves a process of grammaticalization (cf. Garachana in this volume).

On the other hand, analyzing the meanings of *mediante* in its first appearances in Latin texts produces interesting and useful results which may be compared with those in the first centuries of Spanish: temporal value, when nouns denoting time are selected, and instrumental value and usages which derive from the instrumental in the remaining cases. At this point, the absolute character of the constructions in which *mediante* appears should be discussed, since, as is well known, a participle in

<sup>1</sup> The statement is commonplace in all Spanish grammars; see Sánchez López (2014). On the grammaticalization process, see, among others, Sánchez Lancis (2001–2002) and Castro Zapata (2012).

the ablative is not synonymous with an ablative absolute. We will see that the evolution of *mediante* in the direction of prepositional values does not originate in Latin absolute ablatives, but in other participial constructions, with a greater degree of integration in predication.<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, we will show that already in Latin there are signs of the prepositional values of *mediante*, the consolidation of which, nevertheless, are indissociable from the growth of this form within Scholasticism. This finding should also serve as a basis with which to reexamine the explanation of the process of change by grammaticalization that is suggested for Spanish.

Finally, this paper aims to stress the importance of discursive traditions and historical-cultural factors in the evolution of linguistic units. The trajectory of Latin *mediante* allows us to distinguish two key moments on which we will focus: its appearance in the Patristic Period (between the 2nd century AD and the year 753), and the period represented by Scholasticism, (especially High Scholasticism, of the 13th and 14th centuries). By way of the Church Fathers, *mediante* entered Latin through a grammatical calque through contact with Greek. But the extension of *mediante* no doubt corresponds to the Scholastic period, when the syntactic reanalysis of this form occurred, as well as its establishment as a grammatical instrument for, among other things, the expression of cause. The repeated and intentional use of *mediante* in Scholasticism reveals once again the close link between linguistic change and discursive traditions (cf. Company 2008; Kabatek 2005; Llopis Cardona 2015). Thus, it seems appropriate for the explanation of the grammatical change not to limit oneself to strictly linguistic explanations, but to take into account historical and socio-cultural factors.

The singular history of *mediante* in Latin, from its appearance in Late Latin to its emergence within a very specific discursive tradition, has led us to organize this work chronologically and to center it in the periods and domains already mentioned. In part one (Section 2), we will document the late origins of the verb *mediare* and track its route into Latin. Then, in part two (Section 3), we will deal with its use and meaning across the Patristic Period. Part three (Section 4) is dedicated to the development and extension undergone by *mediante* in the High Scholastic period, especially the appearance of clear prepositional meanings. Finally, part four (Section 5) contains the author's conclusions.

## 2. Late Origins: First Evidence of *mediare*

An initial important point in the history of *mediante* is that the Latin verb *mediare*, to which the present participle *medians*, *mediantis* must be related, is not documented in the Latin of the ancient period; that is, neither in the Early nor in the Classical or Postclassical periods of the history of the language. In fact, the first examples we have are from Late Latin<sup>3</sup>.

A starting point in the trajectory of this verb is a passage from the *Vetus* version of the Bible which, as is well known, is the first Latin translation of the biblical text, which began on African soil not before the second half of the second century AD. The passage is from the Gospel of John (7:14), where it relates that Jesus, on his way through the lands of Galilee, went secretly to the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles; see example (1).

- (1) **Iam die festo mediante** ascendit Iesus in templum et docebat  
 Ἦδη δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς μεσοῦσης ἀνέβη Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὸ ἱερόν καὶ ἐδίδασκεν  
 “Then **in the middle of the feast** Jesus went up to the temple and began to teach”

With the extreme formalism that characterizes the *Vetus Latina*, the text translates the corresponding Greek passage of the *Septuagint* entirely literally. It is not only a lexical calque, but also a strict parallelism of the syntactic structure. In both cases, the statement is headed by an equivalent participle

<sup>2</sup> Kortmann (1992, pp. 436–37) already showed that unrelated free adjuncts or dangling participles are also an important source of departicipial prepositions.

<sup>3</sup> Latin examples adduced in this paper are extracted and quoted according to the corpus of Brepolis (CDL (n.d.): Cross Database Searchtool, Brepolis Library of Latin Texts Series A–B, Turnhout, Brepolis) and the THLL (1900–present): *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, Teubner, Stuttgart & Leipzig.

construction which diverges only in the obligatory case inflection: genitive in Greek, τῆς ἐορτῆς μεσοσύσης, and ablative in Latin, die festo mediante.<sup>4</sup>

A second piece of evidence, more or less immediate in chronology, is that of Irenaeus (ca. 130–202 AD), bishop of Lyon. The original Greek of his treatise *Against Heresies* has come to us in very fragmentary form, but we still have the Latin translation that followed the appearance of the Greek version. In it can be found the passage in example (2):

- (2) Omnes autem hi, multo posterius, **mediantibus iam ecclesiae temporibus**, insurrexerunt in suam apostasiam (Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus haereses* 3, 4, 3)

“All these, much later, **in the middle ages of the Church**, rose up in their apostasy”

The example, like the previous one, includes an incidental participial construction with the peculiarity that the agreement of the participle and its subject is made in the plural. Since its function is to explain *multo posterius*, it is clear that the value inferred is temporal: long after the institution of the church, having already exceeded half of its trajectory, in an already advanced stage.

This late appearance of *mediare* at the beginning of the Patristic Period, as well as its later diffusion in the same area, leads us to conclude that the verb *mediare* must have been introduced into Latin as a neologism from Greek as a lexical calque. It is true that in Latin, the existence of an adjective *medius*, of the corresponding adverb *medie* and even of the abstract *medietas*, could make the incorporation of this verb as a denominative not totally alien, but we can still assume that there may have been some difficulties of integration. On the one hand, as we shall see, the evidence at our disposal for the period between 200 AD and 753 is scarce. And to this we may perhaps add some indications of what might be considered problems of inadequacy. For example, in the passage Hebrews (6:17), where God is said to guarantee by oath the fulfillment of his purposes, the Vulgate version of St. Jerome regularized and corrected the predicate *mediavit iurationem* to *interposuit iurisiurandum*—quite clear, but less truly Latin—with which Vetus had calqued, two centuries before, the Greek ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκῳ.<sup>5</sup>

If we are right in thinking that we are dealing with the incorporation of a lexical item through a calque which was somewhat favored in Latin by the existence of closely related forms, it is not improbable also to attribute to that particular way of entry the predominant use of *mediare* in its participial form, which was fixed in the ablative as a faithful transfer, as we have seen in (1), of the corresponding genitive in Greek.<sup>6</sup> In other words, Latin, also protected by a very specific discursive tradition, would have derived from Greek not only the lexical item, but also the type of construction in which it is most often represented.

### 3. The Long Patristic Period

A brief search in the Brepols corpus for the Patristic Period allows us to verify that the forms of the present participle of *mediare* are much more frequent than the finite forms of this same verb or those corresponding to the perfect participle. Likewise, we can observe the preponderance of the singular ablative *mediante*, followed at a considerable distance by the plural ablative *mediantibus* in greater numbers than other grammatical cases; see Table 1.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this paper, we argue that in Latin, these structures constitute not so much absolute ablatives as locative ablatives of temporal location. This is not a problem for the translation of the Greek construction, especially because this language also allows the use of the genitive for the expression of time, as well. See Crespo et al. (2003, pp. 138–39).

<sup>5</sup> We find a quite similar situation in the psalter of Monte Cassino, 54, 24: *virī sanguinum et fraudis non mediabunt* (Gr. ἡμισεύσωσιν) *dies suos* “men [guilty] of bloods and deceit will not reach half their days.” The Vulgate version corrects *mediabunt* to *dimidiabunt*.

<sup>6</sup> Regarding the comparison and behavior of absolute constructions, cf. Coleman (1989, p. 364). Reproduction of Greek patterns in late Latin can be explored in Moreno Hernández (1996, p. 472).

**Table 1.** Occurrences of *mediare* in the Patristic Period.

Forms of <i>mediare</i>	# of Occurrences	Frequency per Million Words
Present participle in sg. ablative ( <i>mediante</i> )	52	1.70
Present participle in pl. ablative ( <i>mediantibus</i> )	4	0.13
Present participle, sg. and pl., in other cases	2	0.06
Perfect participle ( <i>mediatus, -a, -um</i> )	14	0.45
Finite forms	7	0.22

On the other hand, the data suggest that as *mediante* emerged, we have a fairly fixed construction in Latin and, moreover, one linked to a language with a markedly biblical and hermeneutic character, which had developed in response to pragmatic discursive needs within a particular discursive tradition.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.1. Senses and Meanings

For analysis of the conditions that triggered the prepositional value of *mediante*, in all likelihood in Latin itself, it is fundamental to note the meanings with which the verb *mediare* was incorporated from Greek into Latin.

As recorded in the corresponding entry in *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, the examples that attest to the use of *mediare* in Latin show that this verb corresponds to at least two Greek verbs: μεσώω and (ἐ)μεσιτεύω.<sup>8</sup> The first is based on the adjective μέσος “midway between” and means “in the midst of.” The second, on the other hand, is based on the agentive noun μεσίτης “intermediary, mediator” (a noun which Latin imported in the form of *mediator* at the same time as the verb *mediare*) and which means, consequently, “to be in the middle, mediate, interpose” and, by extension, “intercede” and even “guarantee”. Thus, in Latin, two basic meanings are distinguished for *mediare*: one, exemplified in example (3), corresponds to the value of “being in the middle” and selects, as in Greek with the verb μεσώω, nouns that designate units or periods of time and events associated with such units or periods. The second value, which we find in example (4), translates Greek μεσιτεύω and draws on the sense of “being in the middle, to mediate”. Unlike the first, it presents practically no restrictions in the selection of its subject.

- (3) Pisces scorpiones rapulatos. Coquis in liquamen et oleo et cum **mediaverit coctura**, tolles. (Apicius, *Brevis ciborum* 7, 89, 21)  
 “Scorpion fish with turnips. You cook the scorpions in garum and oil, and **halfway through the cooking**, you take them out.”
- (4) haec enim deitas inhabitans operabatur, haec inhabitans **mediabat** utrique eorum (*Collectio Avellana: Epistulae* 263, 1)  
 “For this divine nature worked by dwelling within; dwelling within, it **mediated** between both thing (the soul and body of Christ)”

#### 3.1.1. The Expression of Time

As for the occurrences of this verb in the participial form *mediante*, which is the most common and the one that interests us the most, we see an identical distribution of values. In the first place, the form *mediante* participates, in participial constructions that select as subjects temporal nouns or nominalized events associated with temporal units, as can be seen in examples (5)–(7).

<sup>7</sup> For the concept of discursive tradition and the relevance of discursive traditions in the emergence and expansion of linguistic change, cf. Kabatek (2005). A good review of the issue is in Llopis Cardona (2015), particularly interesting in our case because, differences notwithstanding, the analysis of *in hoc sensu* runs along a route which is, in many respects, similar to that of *mediante*, highlighting the importance of Scholasticism in the emergence and consolidation of this grammatical particle.

<sup>8</sup> We ruled out ἡμισεύω, being quite residual, and also διακόπτω, since the meaning of “cut in half” does not turn out to be relevant in the development of *mediare* in Latin.

- (5) *inoculari ficus locis siccis Aprili, umidis Iulio mediante poterit, Octobri mense locis tepidis* (Palladius Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus, *Opus agriculturae* 4, 10, 32)  
 “The fig tree can be grafted in April in dry places, **in mid-July** in humid (places), in the month of October in temperate (places)”
- (6) *et agatur nona temperius mediante octava hora, et iterum quod faciendum est operentur usque ad uesperam* (Benedictus de Nursia, *Regula* 48, 6)  
 “The None must be done earlier, **at half past eight/in the middle of the eighth hour**, and then go back to work on what has to be done by vespers”
- (7) *Iam enim mediante epulo rex locutus est sacerdotibus qui aderant* (Gregorius Turonensis, *Historiarum libri X*, 8, 1)  
 “So, **halfway through the banquet**, the king spoke to the priests who were present”

It is, however, a rather minor use. Of the 52 examples of *mediante* obtained in this period, only on 11 occasions is a subject expressing time selected, of which, in addition, six correspond to evidence derived or related to the biblical text *die festo mediante*, which we have illustrated in (1). For its part, the ablative plural form *mediantibus*, documented on a total of four occasions, only appears with a temporal noun in the example previously cited in (2).

However, additionally, instances of the temporal value are also scarce in the later development of the prepositional value. Perhaps we can already anticipate some reasons for this.

In this type of syntagm, the temporal noun with which *mediante* agrees is encoded by an ablative of temporal location or ‘time at or during which’. The syntagm functions as an adjunct located on the periphery of the sentence, whose degree of integration with respect to the nuclear predication is uneven. Thus, in example (5), we have in *Iulio mediante* an ablative of temporal location which is fully comparable to the temporal complements *Aprili* and *Octobri mense* in the same sentence, which, syntactically, function as adjuncts subcategorized by *inoculari* “graft”. In contrast, in (1) and (7) the scope of the ablative syntagma, as a free constituent, is extended to encompass the entire sentence. In fact, in (1) and (7) *mediante* is inserted on a distinct syntactic level, since it is not a complement of the verbal predicate directly, but of the whole of the predication for which it provides temporal coordinates. It is no coincidence that the temporal ablative appears at the beginning of the sentence, as is often the case in Latin with the expression of the concomitant circumstances (for example, in absolute ablative clauses or in subordinates of the historical *cum* sentences). In our opinion, the possibility of left-dislocation of these temporal complements may well have slowed down the evolution of *mediante* toward prepositional uses, as the syntactic level on which it is situated does not favor the creation of the points of integration which are necessary for such meanings to surface.

With specific regard to the participle, we should note that, with nouns denoting time, it is lexicalized as an adjective, functioning at the level of the noun phrase, not the level of the sentence. As an adjective, it indicates that the noun has the characteristic of “being in the middle” of the space that the noun represents. In this sense, the behavior of *mediante* is totally comparable in Latin to that of the adjective *medius*, an adjective which, as we have pointed out above, would have already formally favored the entry of the participle into the Latin language. Recall that the adjective *medius*, along with other locative adjectives (*imus*, *summus*, *ultimus*, etc.), can refer in Latin to the noun in its entirety or affect only a part of it. Thus, *medius mons* can mean “the middle mountain” or, with the partitive meaning, “the mountain in its middle,” that is, “the middle of the mountain”. This second sense of *medius*, which is partitive in nature, is shared with the meaning *mediante* has as an adjective of temporal location. We can exemplify what we are saying with these two passages of Gregory of Tours, see (8) and (9), where *medio* and *mediante* refer to half of the month to which they modify:

- (8) *Nam medio mense XI. adveniens, ( . . . ) Pelagium papam perculit et sine mora extinxit.* (Gregorius Turonensis, *Historiarum libri X*, 10, 1)  
 “And when **the middle of the eleventh month** came, . . . he struck Pope Pelagius and killed him without delay”



- (9) Sol eclipsis pertulit **mense VIII. mediante** (Gregorius Turonensis, *Historiarum libri X*, 10, 23)  
 “The sun suffered an eclipse **in the middle the eighth month**”

Finally, the fact that *mediante* does not develop verbal functions and behaves as a mere adjective prevents the noun with which it combines from having an active value. Therefore, in this type of clause, the syntactic and semantic behavior of *mediante* is equivalent to that of the mediopassive participle *mediato*. This is also related to the fact that in Late Latin, the present participle served to express not only a temporal relation of simultaneity, but also of an anteriority which in our examples (1) and (7) is marked, additionally, by the adverb *iam*.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the translation into Latin of the Greek aorist participle, this possibility compensated for the deficiency in Latin of an active perfect participle.<sup>10</sup>

To exemplify this, it is very significant how St. Augustine gathers and glosses, in three almost consecutive paragraphs of his *Treatises on the Gospel of St. John*, the sequence *die festo mediante* in our example (1), in order to clarify that the feast does not refer to a single celebration but to a succession of them, namely eight:<sup>11</sup>

- (10) a. docebunt sic eum adscendisse **mediato die festo**, id est **mediatis illis diebus** (Augustinus Hipponensis, *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* 28, 8)  
 “So shall they teach that he went up in **the midst of the feast**, that is, in the **midst of those days**”  
 b. adscendit autem postea, ut euangelium loquitur: **mediato die festo**, id est, cum iam illius diei festi tot dies praeteriissent quot remansissent (Augustinus Hipponensis, *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* 28, 10)  
 “Then he went up, as the gospel explains, **mid-feast**, that is, when the feast had gone for as many days as still remained”  
 c. adscendit ergo postea dominus ad diem festum, **mediante die festo**, et docebat (Augustinus Hipponensis, *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* 29, 1)  
 “Then the Lord went up to the feast days, **in the middle of the feast days**, and began to teach”

### 3.1.2. From Instrument to Means, Mediation, Agent and Cause

The second sense which we have noted for *mediante*, namely that of interposition, which was brought into Latin from the Greek μεσιτέω ‘to be in the middle, to mediate, to interpose’, can be documented somewhat more widely throughout the Patristic Period, and also has a greater influence in the development of prepositional uses. The most general sense we get from the examples considered is, as we say, that of mere “interposition”, that is, the “situation in the middle” of the noun agreeing with *mediante*, which can be both inanimate (tangible or intangible) or animate (generally human).

- (11) In inferiore uero parte urbis, ubi templum in uicinia muri ab oriente locatum ipsique urbi transitu peruio **ponte mediante** fuerat coniunctum (Beda Venerabilis, *De locis sanctis* 2, 53)  
 “In the lower part of the city, where the temple had been placed in the vicinity of the wall to the east and had been attached to the city itself with an accessible passage, **with a bridge that was in the middle/by means of a bridge**”  
 (12) Non mirandum est, si uel de deo uel de homine probe non sentiant, qui utrumque a se **odio mediante** longinquant (Claudianus Mamertus, *De statu animae* 1, 1)  
 “It is not surprising if those who distance themselves from one another **as a result of the hatred between them/because of hatred**, do not think well either of God or of man”

<sup>9</sup> For the usage of *iam* as method for positioning a time interval on the timeline of the speaker, cf. Torrego (2010, pp. 14–15).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Lorenzo (1998, pp. 43–44). Moreover, Coleman (1989, p. 371, n. 29) recalls that with deponent verbs, postclassical Latin often used the present participle (*ingrediens*) where a perfect active participle (*ingressus*) was available. In this regard, and with respect to *mediare*, it is worth recalling that the grammarian Charisius cites, in an exhaustive list of deponent verbs, a verb *medior* whose meaning is explained as *in medio esse* (Flavius Sospater Charisius, *Artis grammaticae libri V* p. 479, l. 22).

<sup>11</sup> Anselmus Laudunensis, *Glosae super Iohannem* 7, 14: *iam die festo mediante (quia per octonos dies agebatur hac solemnitas) ascendit Iesus in templum et docebat.*

- (13) Unde **mediante uiro inlustri Lupone** duce per iussionem supra fati gloriosi principis Childerici haec omnia, que superius abentur inserta, in omnibus conseruari conuenit. (*Concilia Galliae* 511–695: *Concilium Modogarnomense a. 662–675*, SL 148A, p. 313)

“Thus, **by means/throught the offices of the illustrious Duke Lupo** by order of the glorious prince Childeric above mentioned, it is agreed to observe completely all these things stated above”

Although it may be thought that formally we are dealing with absolute participial clauses, consideration of these examples soon reveals the limited independence of constructions from the main phrase in which they are inserted.<sup>12</sup> It becomes clear that in (11) and (12), the nouns *ponte* and *odio*, on which the quality *mediante* is predicated, appear closely linked to the predicates “be attached” and “distance themselves” from their respective sentences, in respect of which they act as sociative-instrumental ablatives, as is typical of the argument structure of verbs that express notions of union or conciliation and their opposites. Thus, unlike the temporal values to which we have just referred, where the possible dislocation of the construction makes it more easily identifiable, here the connection established by the sociative-instrumental ablative (and its derived uses, especially the causal) with the predicate of the sentence undoubtedly constitutes a factor which favors the interpretation of *mediante* as a preposition:

to attach with a bridge in the middle → to attach by means of a bridge

(Material value, of means, with tangible things)

distance by the hatred interposed → distance because of hatred

(Figurative value, of cause, with abstract concepts)

The scope of *mediante* in these constructions is reduced to a noun: *pons* in (11), *odium* in (12) and *uir* in (13). That is to say, *mediante* in these cases is a constituent of the sentence; hence, it can express various semantic relationships between the construction in which it is inserted and the main sentence, and functions similarly to a preposition. Apart from the meaning, different syntactic behavior marks the difference between the temporal *mediante* and the *mediante* of means, since the former does not require the same integration in the sentence as the latter. When we say, returning to example (5), in mid-July, that is to say, when July is halfway through, the references we use to establish this notion of half do not exceed the limits of the temporal noun: we are speaking of half of the space between the 1st and 31st of July. Therefore, *mediante* or “in the middle” is related only to the temporal noun and not to the syntactic context of the sentence of which it is part. In a very different way, in (11), with *ponte mediante*, we are not referring to the middle of the bridge, but indicating that its position is more or less equidistant between the external references to it: the temple and the city, so that *mediante* or “in the middle of” establishes a syntactic and also semantic relationship with the predicate of the sentence, just as a prepositional phrase would do.

Again, the behavior of *mediante* with instrumental ablatives refers to the use of the adjective *medius*, this time when it affects the noun in its entirety: *medius mons* does not mean in these cases “the middle of the mountain” but “the mountain in the middle.” In fact, it is a question not so much of a different meaning of the adjective as a of different designation of the noun: the concept “mountain” is here designated as a class of entities and the adjective *medius* selects the one having the “middle” quality (Tarrío Ruiz 2009, p. 267).

Deserving of separate consideration are the cases in which *mediante* appears with a noun that refers to people and also to human qualities or attributes. These are usually in a hybrid context in which *mediante* allows for a reading with the basic meaning of “being in the middle”, as well as a reading that implies the extension of that sense to the notion of “intervention or intercession”. This

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<sup>12</sup> We cannot ignore the difficulty, which has been abundantly demonstrated, in drawing precise boundaries between the constructions known as absolutes and those participles in concordance with distinct types of the ablative, especially those of concomitant circumstances. Cf., for example, Serbat (1979, pp. 353–54).

depends, in fact, on the noun which refers to the animated entity being seen either simply as the vehicle through which the predicate of the sentence acts or as the effective agent of mediation.

In the first of these possibilities, we are dealing with constructions whose syntactic and semantic characteristics are identical to those indicated above for examples (11) and (12). Thus, in the example (13), even though we have an animated feature [+ human], Duke Lupo's agentive ability is not verified, since it is not his function to observe the things prescribed by Childerico but to serve as a channel or vehicle for them to be observed. Likewise, in (14), Moses fulfills the role not of active mediator but of intermediary. Nor in (15) can the human attribute *anima* be considered an agent.

- (14) Quod nimirum ueritas semper esse suum ut nobis, utcumque infunderet **Moyse mediante** insinuat dicens: ego sum qui sum (Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia in Iob* 4, 32)  
 "Undoubtedly, the truth reveals that this is always his nature, whatever may be the way in which it has been imparted to us **through Moses**, when he said: I am who I am"
- (15) miror autem tibi uideri sonitum uocis illius, qua dictum est: tu es filius meus, non **mediante anima** sed diuino nutu sola corporali natura sic fieri potuisse (Augustinus Hipponensis, *Epistulae* 169, 44, 3)  
 "I am surprised that you think that the sound of that voice with which it was said: You are my Son, could not have been produced **by the soul** but by divine will under a purely corporeal nature"

In contrast, on other occasions, the agentive reading is imposed quite clearly; that is, the effective agentivity of the name that accompanies *mediante* is verified. Correspondingly, in these cases, *mediante* usually demonstrates a verbal behavior. Far from the merely adjectival function of the previous examples, it can be seen in (16) and (17) respectively that *mediante* develops the complements *cum possessoribus* and *inter carnem deumque*.

- (16) aut eorum carpenta itinere longiore quassantur aut animalia attrita languescunt, **te custode atque mediante cum possessoribus** sine aliqua oppressione mutantur (Cassiodorus, *Variarum libri duodecim* 5, 10, 15)  
 "If the carriages are broken because of a road that is too long, or if the animals languish, through tiredness, **with you acting as a guardian and mediating with the owners**, they can be replaced without any pressure"
- (17) Et filius ergo dei nascitur ex uirgine non principaliter soli carni sociatus, sed **anima inter carnem deumque mediante** generatus. (Rufinus, *Expositio symboli* 11)  
 "Thus, the Son of God is born of the Virgin not united directly to the flesh, but generated **with the soul mediating between the flesh and God.**"

In spite of what has been discussed so far, in the Patristic Period, we also find cases of absolute constructions with *mediante*, but these correspond in their entirety to lexicalized expressions that select God as the subject: *Deo mediante*, *Domino mediante*, *Christo mediante*, and are quite unproductive in Latin.

### 3.2. In Search of Other Values

The differentiation of senses and meanings of *mediante* that we have been discussing from the Patristic Period does not seem to be bound to a particular order of the constituents of the construction. Examples are distributed 50-50 between SV and VS orders, and many highlight the irrelevance of order, be they temporal senses, as in (18), or sociative-instrumental ones, as the frequent occurrences of *anima* in (19) show.

- (18) a. Iam **die festo**, ait, **mediante** ascendit dominus in templum (Petrus Chrysologus, *Collectio sermonum* 85, line 9)  
 b. Sic die festo mediante ascendit dominus in templum (*ibid.* line 15)  
 c. quia Iesus [ . . . ] **mediante die festo** [ . . . ] ambulauit (*ibid.* 85bis)

- (19) a. uerbum autem incommutabile [...] particeps carnis effectum est rationali **anima mediante** (Augustinus Hipponensis, *Epistulae* 140, 44, 4)  
 b. tu es filius meus, non **mediante anima** sed diuino nutu (*ibid.* 169, 44, 3)  
 c. Propterea namque deus corpori **anima mediante** commixtus est (Dionysius Exiguus, *Exempla sanctorum patrum* 88)  
 d. et qui immensus est, capitur **mediante anima** deo et carni (*ibid.* 90)  
 e. qui **mediante anima**, in eius utero fieri dignatus est per humanitatem corpus. (Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia in Iob* 18, 20)  
 f. Carnem quippe diuinitas **anima mediante** suscepit (*ibid.* 31, 23)  
 g. cum unigenitus dei filius in seipso intra uterum uirginis **mediante anima**, humanum sibi corpus creauit (*ibid.* 33, 16)  
 h. filius enim, inquit, dei nascitur ex uirgine, **anima** inter carnem deumque **mediante** generatus (Iohannes Cassianus, *De incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium* 7, 27)  
 i. qui immensus est, capitur, **mediante anima** deo et carni (*ibid.* 7, 28)

It has proved to be impossible to document syntactically-possible prepositional values of *mediante* for this period of Latin, since there are no cases of non-agreement or of constituent order, which would be critical for their detection. Although some semantic contexts may suggest the incipient development of the preposition, it seems clear that these do not correspond with either those which select temporal nouns or even with nouns of effective agentivity, given the limited possibilities which these nouns have of being interpreted and reanalyzed as ‘means’. These points aside, prepositional values seem to appear quite clearly with nouns that have both the typical and derived functions of the instrumental ablative. This is perfectly logical because, semantically, the original values of *mediante* as an ablative are very close to its new prepositional functions.

#### 4. Scholastica mediante

During the centuries of the so called Carolingian Renaissance, and even in the following two centuries, the presence and use of *mediante* in Latin underwent no substantial change: perhaps the number of occurrences increases somewhat (68 cases between the 8th and 11th centuries), but it still does not have a significant frequency and, moreover, the differentiation of meanings does not depart fundamentally from those which we have pointed out. We do not think it necessary to dwell on this here, but by way of example, Table 2 gives the data collected for the 22 instances recorded for the 9th century:

Table 2. Distribution of uses of *mediante*, 9th century.

Lexical Feature	# of Occurrence	noun	Constituent Order
[+ temporal]	8	festus dies (6)	VS (4)/SV (2)
		octaua hora	VS
		regnum	SV
[− temporal] [± concrete]	14	anima (5)	VS (4)/SV (1)
		conciliator	SV
		delectatio	SV
		Dominus	SV
		intercapedo	VS
		pietas	VS
		scientia	SV
		sensus (2)	VS
uirtus	VS		

As we can see, the use of *mediante* with a temporal value is quantitatively less than its use in the sense of mediation, especially if we consider that 6 of the 8 occurrences revolve around *dies festus* of the biblical text. Meanwhile, among the nouns that do not relate to time, those related to human

entities predominate. As to the order of the constituents, this is quite free and does not seem to provide relevant information about the syntactic behavior of *mediante*.

In contrast (albeit slight) to this still very modest use of *mediante*, from the 12th century onward and mostly throughout the 13th and 14th centuries, the increasing presence of constructions in which *mediante* appears is striking, to the point that it becomes quite difficult to explain it away as a link in an evolutionary development that occurs uninterruptedly from the first Patristic examples.

To our knowledge, the arrival on the scene of Scholasticism—from the Early Scholasticism of the 11th and 12th centuries, but especially the High Scholasticism from the 13th century to the end of the Middle Ages—played a decisive role in this matter. As is well known, Scholasticism—as a dominant theological-philosophical doctrine in medieval thought—is characterized by continuity with respect to ancient Patristics, but, unlike the latter’s style of theology, it is marked by exegesis and biblical glosses, and is guided primarily by the criterion of authority. Scholasticism shifts to a more speculative theology, demonstrating its theses with reasoning and applying dialectic methods (Llopis Cardona 2015, p. 199). On the other hand, it is also important to bear in mind that Scholasticism expands its scope of work to other discursive contexts, largely due to the integration of Aristotelian philosophy in its theological doctrine. In this sense, we must not forget that much of the work of the scholastics and schools of translators during the 12th and 14th centuries is marked by translations into Latin of almost all the works of Aristotle and the numerous commentaries on these.

This is not our aim here, nor can we attempt to go into the detail of this very complex activity and its extremely varied results. We put forth this proposal because we believe it is possible to establish in the history of Latin a second entry point for constructions with *mediante*, transferred from Patristicism, but in much greater volume and with fairly fixed uses, which could well explain the common pattern with which the construction comes into Italian, French, Catalan and Spanish (cf. Garachana in this volume).

The Scholastics, imbued with patristic literature, but also concerned with reasoned arguments, found in the incorporation of *mediante* into Latin a particularly transparent and suitable linguistic element for the more explicit, or graphic, expression of means and cause. Since there was a guarantee of semantic proximity, existing construction with *mediante* could be reanalyzed and serve, along with other prepositional phrases, to make up for the progressive loss of the use of the ablative without preposition in medieval Latin.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4.1. Development and Extension of *Mediante*

The hypothesis of the influence of Scholasticism in the development of the prepositional values of *mediante* is supported by the data. Indeed, quantitatively, they are quite striking: for example, in the number of uses of *mediante* in the works of each of the main representatives of High Scholasticism, which surpasses in each case the total of 52 uses we found across the earlier period; see Table 3. A comparison of the total figures for both periods is also overwhelming.

Broadening the focus somewhat over the centuries when Scholasticism flourished, we can see that as against 52 cases of *mediante* registered for the Patristic Period (understood to be, as we have said, between the 2nd century AD and 753), we find in the Brepols corpus 4545 occurrences for the entire Middle Ages, between the year 736 and 1500. Certainly, these figures should be considered in proportion to the number of words in the corpus for each period: 30,578,827 in the Patristic Period and 103,889,649 in the Middle Ages. Nonetheless, as percentages, the ratio is 1.70 occurrences per million words in the first period to 4.37 occurrences per million words in the second; see Table 4.

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<sup>13</sup> See Bastardas Parera (1953, pp. 50–51).

**Table 3.** Occurrences of *mediante* in the High Scholasticism.

Representatives of High Scholasticism	# of Occurrences in High Scholastic Period	# of Occurrences in Patristic Period
Albertus Magnus (c. 1193–1280)	59	
Bonaventura (1217/1218–1274)	364	
Roger Bacon (c. 1219–c. 1292)	61	
Thomas Aquinas (1224/1225–1274)	651	
Iohannes Duns Scotus (1265/66–1308)	131	
Guillelmus of Ockham (c. 1290/1300–c. 1349/50)	412	
Total	1678	52

**Table 4.** Frequency per million words of *medians*, *-ntis* in the Patristic Period and the Middle Ages.

	Patristic Period	Medieval Writers
nom. sg. m. f. n.–ac. n. <i>medians</i>	0.03 1/30,578,827	0.48 50/103,889,649
ac. sg. m. f. <i>mediantem</i>	0.0 0/30,578,827	0.19 20/103,889,649
gen. sg. m. f. n. <i>mediantis</i>	0.03 1/30,578,827	0.11 12/103,889,649
dat. sg. m. f. n. <i>medianti</i>	0.0 0/30,578,827	0.01 2/103,889,649
abl. sg. m. f. n. <i>mediante</i>	1.7 52/30,578,827	4.37 4545/103,889,649
nom.-ac. pl. m. f. <i>mediantes</i>	0.0 0/30,578,827	0.08 9/103,889,649
nom.-ac. pl. n. <i>mediantia</i>	0.0 0/30,578,827	0.009 1/103,889,649
gen. pl. m. f. n. <i>mediantium</i>	0.0 0/30,578,827	0.009 1/103,889,649
dat.-abl. pl. m. f. n. <i>mediantibus</i>	0.13 4/30,578,827	1.01 1058/103,889,649

We must say that this surprising sudden increase does not only have to do with occurrences of *mediante*. Unlike what we observed with respect to the first appearances of *mediare* in Latin, we now find that the participial form no longer exists only in the ablative case, but that there is also a slight extension to other cases in the paradigm. This is perfectly explicable and consistent with the extension undergone by the medieval Latin present participle.<sup>14</sup>

Along with the participle, in medieval usage there are also substantial increases, reaching hundreds of appearances, in instances of the finite forms of the verb, especially the present indicative, totaling 92 occurrences or 0.88 per million words compared to 0.22 or the 7 examples found in the Patristic Period. At this point, one could envisage a possible reformulation or at least a revitalization of the verb *mediare* as a denominative of *medius*, now encouraged by the extension of the present participle. In any case, the expansion and diversification of forms produces formally different utterances that are structurally and semantically similar, as illustrated in (20)–(22).

<sup>14</sup> This extension of usage is illustrated in the study by Mesa Sanz (2004) based on the difficulties of translating the Latin present participle in Romance languages.

- (20) semper **inter** sphaericum et planum **mediat** aer (Iohannes Buridanus, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis De anima* lib. 1, quaest. 6)  
“There is always air **in the middle, between** the spherical and the plane”
- (21) Tertia opinio est adhuc **medians inter** istas duas opiniones (Franciscus de Marchia, *Quaestiones super Aristotelis Metaphysicam* lib. 1, quaest. 14)  
“There is still a third opinion **which is in the middle/mediates between** these two opinions”
- (22) Utrumque autem istorum modorum accidit semper uno minus esse intervalla (quae sunt propositiones) quam terminos: semper enim assumptum medium est inter extrema conjungibilia per medium: et talis conjungibilitas non potest esse nisi termini in uno (**mediante inter** duo) superent propositiones (Albertus Magnus, *Analytica priora siue De syllogismo simpliciter* (*Commentarium in Aristotelis Analytica priora*) lib. 1, tract. 5, cap. 5)  
“With regard to both modes [of syllogism], it is always the case that the intervals (which are propositions) are one less in number than the terms: for indeed, the middle [term] is always taken as lying between the extremes which are related through this middle term: and such a relationship cannot occur unless the number of terms exceeds the number of propositions by one (that is, **the one which mediates between them**)”

#### 4.2. Prepositional Values

The meanings of *mediante* in Medieval Latin did not differ significantly from those stated above, but the frequency of data allows us to specify some points and expand on others. Thus, first, we have the temporal sense, with the meaning “in mid-”. It is a rare, almost vestigial sense. In a constructional context, it appears with a noun designating a period of time for which *mediante* indicates an approximately halfway stage. Predominant by far are the names of the months, but other types of periodization and nominalization of events are not excluded.

- (23) Celebratum est autem hoc concilium Compostelle consilio regis et regine **mediante quadragesima** in era IC.LX—a. VIII Idus Marci (*Historia Compostellana* 2, 52)  
“This council was held in Compostela by advice of the king and queen **in mid-Lent** in the era 1160 on 8th of March”
- (24) **et novembrio mense mediante** (Theoctistus) ad hibernandum cum exercitu Saxoniam intravit (Ademarus Cabanensis, *Chronicon* 2, 13)  
“And **in mid-November** (Teoctist) entered Saxony with his army to spend the winter”

The lexical features of the temporal terms naturally prevent them from functioning normally in non-temporal contexts, so it is not easy for the prepositional sense of *mediante* as we know it to be generated. However, if we consider the order of the constituents of the phrase as a way of detecting possible prepositional meanings (König and Kortmann 1991, pp. 114–15), we must say that in this period we observe certain alternations between SV and VS, which seem to depend on the greater or lesser degree of integration of the temporal complement into the predication and which, moreover, may guide later developments. Thus, in example (23) “mid-Lent” works directly as an adjunct of the verbal predicate “was held”. The VS order of the syntagm seems to demonstrate the strict relationship between *mediante* and the verb, and therefore, suggests a route to a prepositional use that would not succeed. However, in “mid-November” from example (24), the item in the topic position affects the entire sentence by setting the time frame in which the entry of Teoctist in Saxony occurs. Here, the different syntactic level of insertion of the adjunct appears to involve maintaining the Classical order of the constituents, and at the same time, poses serious difficulties for prepositional development. We will return to this when we consider the other meanings of *mediante*.

When *mediante* occurs in reference to ablative nouns whose function is not spatial-temporal, the syntagm in which it appears has principally either sociative-instrumental meanings, or causative and circumstantial ones. Because they all share common characteristics, these functions are often difficult to distinguish because they really depend on the lexical features and restrictions imposed by

the predicates and by the context itself. Thus, for example, in (25) and (26), we have the two nouns “glass” and “mirror,” with the feature [+concrete], which are easily interpretable as observational instruments. But while in (25) the predicate selects glass essentially as an instrument or medium through which a body is seen, in (26), the mirror appears as an object causing partial vision. Meanwhile, what differentiates *mediante Ioanne*, in example (29) from those immediately preceding it, *mediante interpositione* (27) or *mediante scientia* (28), is the feature [+ human]. This allows a controlled predication that is inconvenient for the abstract nouns (27) and (28), which are usually interpreted as modal or circumstantial complements.

- (25) Sed quando corpus album videtur **mediante vitro viridi**, sensus apprehendit aliter quam sit, quia apprehendit illud ut viride, et ita iudicat (Tomasso d’Aquino, *Quaestiones disputatae de ueritate*, quaest. 1, art. 11, contra 3)  
 “But when a white body is seen **through a green glass**, the sense apprehends it in a way which is different from what it actually is, since it apprehends it as green, and so it considers it to be”
- (26) Item, notandum quod speculum est causa partialis visionis quae causatur **mediante speculo** (Gulielmus Occamus, *Quaestiones in librum tertium Sententiarum* (reportatio), quaest. 4, p. 146)  
 “In the same way, it should be noted that the mirror is the cause of the partial vision that is caused **by the mirror**”
- (27) set multa bona in istis [particularibus] accidunt **mediante interpositione mali** (Rogerus Bacon, *Questiones supra libros prime philosophie Aristotelis (Metaphysica I, II, V–X)* lib. 9, p. 316)  
 “But many good things come to these particulars **through the interposition of evil**”
- (28) prudentia quae [...] ascendit per intellectum ad sapientiam descendit autem in artem **mediante scientia** (Bonauentura, *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Visio prima, coll. 2, par. 13)  
 “Prudence, which [...] ascends through the intellect to wisdom, descends instead to art **by means of science**”
- (29) Petrus vero **mediante Ioanne** instruitur a Christo (Tomasso d’Aquino, *Super Euangelium Iohannis* reportatio, cap. 13, lect. 4, num. 1806, lin. 20)  
 “Peter is instructed by Christ **through John**”

The same difficulty in drawing precise boundaries between these phrases explains why, generally, all may be susceptible to reanalysis as the object of a preposition *mediante*, insofar as their respective semantic functions refer more or less metaphorically to the medium through which something occurs. In fact, as we are able to show, there are hardly any restrictions in these cases on the selection of the noun that agrees with *mediante*, with the single exception of temporal nouns.

Similarly, it is also interesting to see that an extension of categorial selection takes place in medieval Latin—unlike the previous period—since we find *mediante* agreeing not only with nouns, but also with pronouns, both personal as well as demonstrative and indefinite, and beyond that—in what undoubtedly represents an advance along the path toward prepositional senses—with relative pronouns (30) and (31), and even with interrogative pronouns that introduce completive clauses, that is to say, in indirect questions.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> We may add that when *mediante* appears in agreement with a relative pronoun, *mediante* usually precedes it. Among the Scholastic writers, we have only observed a clear reluctance to such anteposition in Thomas Aquinas.

	<i>quo/qua mediante</i>	<i>mediante quo/qua</i>
Albert the Great	0	7
Bonaventure	19	15
Roger Bacon	1	10
Thomas Aquinas	34	0
Duns Scotus	3	2
William of Ockham	2	17



- (30) Percussio balistae in sagittam generat actionem in sagitta, **mediante qua** sagitta uolat per aerem mouens se ipsam (Raimundus Lullus, *Excusatio Raimundi* (op. 141), quaest. 2, lin. 229)  
“The blow of the crossbow on the arrow generates in the arrow an action **by means of which** the arrow flies by the air moving itself”
- (31) nam, quamvis species coloris sit illud **mediante quo** color videtur, tamen non oportet quod illa species videatur (Iohannes Buridanus, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis De anima*, lib. 3, quaest. 11)  
“For although the appearance of color is **the means by which** color is seen, it is not necessary that this appearance be seen”
- (32) sed non erit invenire **mediante quo** insit aeri: ergo inest per se (Albertus Magnus, *Commentarii in secundum librum Sententiarum*, dist. 13 C, art. 2)  
“But it will not be found **through what** (light) is present in the air; then it is present by itself”

The above examples (30)–(32) highlight an extension of the scope of *mediante* that allows for the emergence of clearly prepositional senses. Moreover, it should be stressed that the subcategorisation of a relative pronoun by *mediante* stresses the coreferentiality of the phrase with the main predication, and is therefore far removed from the absolute construction.<sup>16</sup>

As a further demonstration of categorical expansion, we can add examples in which *mediante* subcategorizes a nominalized infinitive (33) and (34), or even grammatical words (35) and (36):

- (33) potest causare tristitiam vel delectationem in voluntate sine omni actu libere elicito, sed solum **mediante velle naturali** qui non est actus elicitus (Gulielmus Occamus, *Quaestiones uariae: Notabilia, dubitationes et determinationes*, quaest. 6, art. 9)  
“It can cause sadness or delight in the will without a voluntarily unlawful act, but only **through natural will**, which is not an unlawful act”
- (34) Fundamentum autem filiationis est essentia **mediante actu passivo** originis, scilicet **mediante generari**, sicut est fundamentum paternitatis **mediante generare active** (Gulielmus Occamus, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum* (ordinatio), vol. 3, dist. 5, quaest. 2)  
“The foundation of filiation is essentially **through a passive act** of origin, that is to say **through being generated**, just as the foundation of paternity is **through actively generating**”
- (35) In secunda autem solutione primo attribuebat accidenti quod quid est, [...] et **mediante quod quid est** attribuebat ei definitionem (Sigerus de Brabantia, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam* lib. VII, 10)  
“In the second solution he attributed to the accident the *quod quid est* [...] and **by means of the quod quid est** he attributed the definition”
- (36) Quandoque significat differentiam et tunc construitur cum accusatiuo **mediante inter** (Folchinus de Borfonibus, *Cremonina* (Grammatica, orthographia et prosodia), pars 3, cap. 4, lin. 1191)  
“And when (the verb *interest*) means a difference, then it is constructed in the accusative **with inter**”

Another factor that is useful in confirming the reanalysis of these constructions as prepositional phrases is the invariability of the case and number of *mediante* and the consequent lack of agreement between noun and participle. Although it is not always possible to find examples in the same Patristic context, the example in (37) is illustrative, in which number agreement is broken, and further in example (38), where the lack of case agreement paves the way for a phrase in which *mediante* governs an accusative as the object of the preposition.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> It is perhaps worth remembering that the ablative absolute of the Classical period has a syntactic limitation, in the sense that there can be no overlap between the subject and a nominal element of the main predicate. If there is such co-reference, a participial construction is employed, but not an absolute. However, it is also known that already in Low Latin and especially in Medieval Latin this prohibition is quite lax and there are numerous documented cases in which the subject of the absolute ablative may reappear in the main clause (Bassols de Climent 1945, vol. I, pp. 459–61).

<sup>17</sup> The same sequence *vobis mediante* in example (37) we find also in a letter from Berengaria of Navarre to the Bishop of Winchester, which asks him to mediate with his brother (<https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/765.html>). But we

- (37) episcopalem dignitatem ordinis a Deo **uobis mediante** recipiam (*Historia Compostellana* 3, 34)  
 “That I may receive from God **through you** the episcopal dignity of the order”
- (38) Hilarius non intendit hic dicere quoniam sit distinctio personis suppositis secundum veritatem in hoc verbo Faciamus, sed **mediante falsum et verum** secundum oppositionem haeticorum, qui destruebant pluralitatem personarum (Alexander Halensis et al.ii, *Glossa in quattuor libros Sententiarum: glossa in librum primum*, dist. 23, num. 17, p. 231)  
 “Here Hilary does not mean to say that in this verb faciamus there is a distinction between the supposed persons in accordance with the truth, but **through a false [God] and a true [God]** according to the opposing stance of the heretics, who denied the plurality of persons”

Finally, we must turn to the order of constituents. Although it is commonly accepted, somewhat simplistically, that medieval Latin had already consolidated the Romance verb inversion in sentences, it is important that in this paper we consider the extent to which not only syntactic context but also semantic conditions favor or not the positioning of the noun before the participle.

The truth is that the data is overwhelmingly in favor of the preposing of the participle; see Table 5. To prove this, we return again to the selection of the most representative authors of Patristic Period.

**Table 5.** Order of constituents of *mediante* in constructions in the Scholastic Period.

	# of Occurrences	N + <i>mediante</i>	<i>mediante</i> + N
Albertus Magnus	59	4	55
Bonaventura	364	30	334
Rogerus Bacon	61	2	59
Thomas Aquinas	651	138	513
Iohannes Duns Scotus	131	6	125
Guillelmus of Ockham	412	2	410

On the one hand, we must accept the validity of the observations made above regarding the constituent order of phrases containing temporal nouns, in the sense that the placing of *mediante* before the noun is in keeping with the greater dependence of the phrase on the verbal predicate. We will focus on example (39), where the first appearance of the phrase *anima mediante* sees its constituent order reversed immediately afterwards. Apart from the metric clauses that could be invoked for this kind of prose, it seems clear that the verb plays an important role in the encoding of these complements. First we have a transitive verb, *assumpsit*, with a direct object, *corpus*, and a syntagma *anima mediante* functioning as a peripheral adjunct expressing the circumstances involved in becoming the flesh of Christ. Meanwhile, *pervenit*, besides being an intransitive verb, is a motion verb, so that it is naturally completed by the argument *ad corpus*, but at the same time, their semantic characteristics clearly favor adding *mediante anima* to the verbal predicate as an adjunct with a prosecutive function, that is, as an expression of the means by which the spirit reaches the body.

- (39) [Christus] corpus assumpsit **anima mediante**: tum etiam ratione spiritualis influentiae, quae pervenit ad corpus **mediante anima** (Tomasso d’Aquino, *In III Sententiarum*, dist. 13, quaest. 2, art. 2)  
 “[Christ] assumed a body **through the soul**: and also because of the spiritual influence that reaches the body **through the soul**”

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should recall that already in archaic Latin there is documentation of lack of number agreement with the participles of other verbs and first and second person plural pronouns. Thus, the grammarian Nonius Marcellus denounces the lack of agreement in Plautus, *Amphitryon* 400, *praesente nobis*, and fragment 6 of the comedy *Auctio* by Afranius, *absente nobis*.

Moreover, we may add that in the cases analyzed we have observed that the phrase comprising *mediante* + N usually occurs within affirmative statements or those framed positively. For example, there are syntactical contexts with adversative correlations such as *non ... sed, non ... nisi*, where *mediante* appears as the second term, that is, where it is not marked by negation. Interestingly, when that happens *mediante* precedes the noun. However, when *mediante* appears as the first term along with a negative element, especially the indefinite *nullus*, or in a context marked by negation, the order is invariably N + *mediante*. Example (40) is a good demonstration of this.

- (40) Ad tertium dicendum, quod esse naturale per creationem Deus facit in nobis **nulla causa agente mediante**, sed tamen **mediante aliqua causa formali**: forma enim naturalis principium est esse naturalis (Tomasso d’Aquino, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, quaest. 27, art. 1, resp. ad arg. 3) “Thirdly, it must be said that God, through creation, does not make us the natural being **by means of any agentive cause**, but rather **by some formal cause**”

In our opinion, underlying this double order is the different semantic relation established with the predicate as a result of the different meaning which *mediante* acquires. When the ability to mediate is predicated on a noun representing an entity that is suspended by negation, it is difficult to reanalyze that entity as an instrument, a means, a cause, etc. The reasons are no different, for example, from those which make *obstante* a discourse marker in Spanish which appears mostly in the negative *no obstante*, where the suspension of the obstacle allows for its reanalysis as an inefficient cause. On the other hand, this is one of the few occasions where the suspension or exclusion of the noun with which *mediante* agrees allows the functional alignment of the phrase with authentic ablative absolutes, as happens, for example, in exceptive contexts.<sup>18</sup> This would justify in these cases the SV order and suggest that the verbal properties of the postposed participle have been preserved (Giacalone Ramat 1994, p. 890).

## 5. Recapitulation

*Mediante* enters Latin in the Late Latin (2nd century AD). It does so as a grammatical calque from Greek, but its addition is certainly favored by the existence in Latin of the adjective *medius*, which is widely documented. In the ablative case, *medio/media* and *mediante* share meanings and behavior. Both can refer to a noun designating it fully or in part. Just as *medio monte* can mean “mountain in the middle” or “halfway up, in the middle of the mountain,” it is possible to interpret *ponte mediante* as “on the bridge in the middle, which mediates” or “halfway along, in the middle the bridge.”

The partitive designation is given only to nouns which have the feature [+ spatiotemporal]. Specifically, *mediante* selects temporal or similar nouns, for example, *Iulio mediante* “in the middle, mid-July”. In all other cases, which are the vast majority, *mediante* pairs with ablative nouns with a sociative-instrumental value in its various meanings, especially that of a medium or cause: *Deo mediante* “through/with the mediation of God” *odio mediante* “through/because of hatred.”

Thus, the origin of the prepositional senses of *mediante* lies in a participial construction in the ablative case, but not, as is often claimed and as occurred with other deverbal prepositions, in an ablative absolute construction. The latter, given its syntactic level of integration into the nuclear predication, can hardly provide the integration points needed for such prepositional senses to emerge. Usually, the ablative which goes with *mediante* constitutes a complement subcategorized directly by the verbal predicate, suitable for reanalysis as a prepositional phrase. Meanwhile, in most cases, *mediante* is deverbalized and shows a purely adjectival behavior.

In the few cases found in Latin from the Patristic Period, prepositional values of *mediante* emerge in a literature organized around the biblical text and embodied in glosses, exegeses and commentaries. Centuries later, Scholasticism adopts limited use of *mediante* in the Patristic Period and generously adapts it to its argumentative way of doing theology. It is employed in the techniques and discursive

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Giacalone Ramat (1994), and the case of *excepto* in Molinelli (2001).

turns of Scholasticism, especially causal or justifying turns, which are at the basis of reasoning and the dialectic method. This discursive practice strongly promotes the use of *mediante* as the clear head of prepositional phrases, which is also worthy of note in explaining the emergence of *mediante* in Spanish and in approaching of grammatical mechanisms involved in its introduction.<sup>19</sup>

Beyond its morphological and lexical status, the semantic transparency of *mediante* is essential to its transcategorization. Its characteristic meaning (or rather, that of the whole of its semantic domain) allows it to function with ablatives of an instrumental nature, especially those of means and cause. In this way, its evolution undergoes a process of change along the lines of those that explain Latin prepositional uses of the nouns *causa* or *gratia* in the ablative singular (Fruyt 2011, p. 690), in which there is no semantic change and restructuring of meaning, but only a syntactic reinterpretation of the item in question. Thus, even though its Latin and deverbal origin has frequently led it to being lumped in with the others, *mediante* shares rather little with other Spanish prepositions, be they improper or imperfect, such as *durante*.

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<sup>19</sup> One aspect that we cannot address, but which, in our opinion, deserves study in some detail is the extent to which the causal relationship, which promotes, in our opinion, the development of *mediante* among the Scholastics, maintains only a connection with a certain discursive mechanism, or if it drives to the heart of fundamental doctrinal matters. Above we recalled how the Scholastics, and especially Thomas Aquinas, wove into their doctrine the major Aristotelian principles. On the principle of causality, formalized in the theory of four causes (matter, form, agent and end) is the source of all knowledge of the world and, specifically, the notion of efficient cause is essential in demonstrating the existence of God. Thus, it might not be unreasonable to think that the need for integration of these theoretical principles would have led Scholastics to use their own more elaborate channels and formulations for expressing cause.

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Article

# The History of the Spanish Preposition *Mediante*. Beyond the Theory of Grammaticalization

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**Abstract:** The most generally accepted diachrony of *mediante* assumes a grammaticalization path that started in an absolute clause, which first evolved into a preposition, and later into conjunction. However, data reveals that its development is not connected to an evolution in terms of grammaticalization. Indeed, *mediante* was introduced in Spanish in the fourteenth century as a consequence of syntactic borrowing from Medieval Latin. More specifically, this borrowing entered Old Spanish through Aragonese and Catalan (languages spoken in the east of the Iberian Peninsula). Since its first examples, *mediante* has acted as a preposition, and its form, connected to present participles, would give texts a cultured and Latinising air that was well-suited to the rhetorical guidelines of the European Renaissance and pre-Renaissance. Thus, this paper shows that the writer and rhetorical rules have become a key factor in the evolution of grammar.

**Keywords:** grammaticalization; absolute clause; Old Spanish; syntactic borrowing; Latinisms

## 1. Introduction

The rise of the preposition *mediante* ‘with, through, by means of, via, with the help of’ in Old Spanish has been explained in literature on grammatical change as a consequence of a process of grammaticalization that began in absolute constructions of the present participle (Castro Zapata 2010, 2012; Sánchez Lancis 2001; Sánchez López 2014, 2016). Whereas *mediante* is certainly connected with absolute constructions in Latin (cf. Bello 1988, p. 699), its evolution in Old Spanish is more complex than simply a process of grammaticalization, since the development of prepositional values of *mediante* was already completed in the Latin period. In fact, grammaticalization is not an explanatory hypothesis even for the emergence of *mediante* in the Latin period. Artigas (in this volume) convincingly demonstrates that the Scholastic authors syntactically reinterpreted an ablative construction that had been used sparingly in the Patristic period for the expression of means or cause. Therefore, the conceptual reinterpretation that characterizes the processes of grammaticalization is not observed in Latin either. If prepositional uses of *mediante* are already documented in Latin, it is not surprising that constructions in which *mediante* appears in Old Spanish are clearly prepositional except on rare occasions.<sup>1</sup>

The aim of this work is to analyze the origins of the use of *mediante* in Old Spanish in order to demonstrate that its emergence is the result of a grammatical borrowing.<sup>2</sup> This borrowing would

<sup>1</sup> As pointed out in Sánchez López (Sánchez López 2014, p. 2088). This has even been accepted by authors who argue for a grammaticalization process to explain the existence of *mediante* (see Castro Zapata 2012, pp. 722, 724).

<sup>2</sup> As discussed in Sánchez López (2014), who, however, sometimes seems to exclude *mediante* from this process of copying from Latin:

Las preposiciones improprias durante, mediante, no obstante y no embargante derivan todas ellas de participios de presente: las dos primeras se utilizaban ya en latín dentro de cláusulas absolutas temporales o instrumentales; las otras dos corresponden al latín tardío o medieval, donde también aparecen especializadas para cláusulas

have reached Old Spanish through the intense socio-cultural relations that Renaissance intellectuals maintained both in the Iberian Peninsula and elsewhere in Europe. In this context, the influence of Italy was key. This influence was introduced in the Iberian Peninsula by the intellectuals of the Crown of Aragon, who also maintained close relations with the most prominent Spanish authors of the period (cf. Pons Rodríguez 2015; Pascual 2016; Octavio de Toledo y Huerta 2017a, 2017b). Thus, we aim to demonstrate that the presence of *mediante* as a preposition in Old Spanish is closely related to socio-cultural factors that go beyond the narrow evolutionary margins proposed within the theory of grammaticalization<sup>3</sup> The intense cultural relations that were present in Western Europe during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries led to grammatical borrowings that provided syntactic patterns shared among European languages—to the extent that some of these traits belong to what has come to be called *Standard Average European*.<sup>4</sup>

The hypothesis that *mediante* is the result of a borrowing from Latin into medieval Spanish, which was introduced from Aragonese and Catalan, seems more in line with the historical trajectory that the data show. Indeed, even uses of *mediante* that would be described as absolute clauses are, in fact, the result of rhetorical guidelines of the pre-Renaissance and the Renaissance. Therefore, our proposal implies broadening the analysis of grammatical changes and emphasizing the importance of history and culture in the evolution of languages. In other words, we believe that a rapprochement between historical linguistics and philology is essential to any research on grammatical change.<sup>5</sup>

This work is structured as follows. After this introduction (Section 1), I have devoted a brief section to the description of the corpus used and the methodology followed in this study (Section 2). Next, in Section 3, I have considered the evolution of prepositions in a typological context and reflected on the historical importance of the absolute clauses of present participles as a source of prepositions and conjunctions. In Section 4, I have described the grammatical values of the structures in which *mediante* appears in its first documented uses in Old Spanish in order to demonstrate its character as a grammatical borrowing. In Section 5, I have reflected on the importance of external factors as triggers of grammatical change. Next (Section 6), I have briefly discussed the emergence of the conjunction *mediante que* in Spanish. Finally, in Section 7, I have summarized the conclusions I have reached.

## 2. The Corpus

The data for this research are taken from the CORDE database, which is the most extensive historical corpus currently available in Spanish.<sup>6</sup> In this way, I aim to ensure that the conclusions I obtain are the most representative of the language, in general, and do not reflect the rhetorical guidelines of a textual genre or the style of a writer or a group of writers.

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absolutas en ablativo. Su cronología es muy similar: salvo *no obstante* que entra en el español como calco del latín medieval un poco más tardíamente, las otras tres se documentan desde los orígenes del español.

(Sánchez López 2014, pp. 2099–100)

“The improper prepositions *durante*, *mediante*, *no obstante*, and *no embargante* are all derived from present participles: the first two were already used in Latin within absolute temporal or instrumental clauses; the other two correspond to late or medieval Latin, where they also appear to have specialized as absolute ablative clauses. Their chronology is very similar: except for *no obstante*, which enters Spanish a little later as a calque from medieval Latin, the other three are documented from the origins of Spanish.”

[my translation]

<sup>3</sup> In other words, the humanist influence does not imply a re-latinization of the construction involving *mediante*, but rather it is the trigger for its introduction into the language (for a contrary opinion, cf. Sánchez López 2014, pp. 2084, 2088, 2100).

<sup>4</sup> See Heine and Kuteva (2006) and Haspelmath (2001) on the Standard Average European concept. The work of Cornillie and Cornillie and Octavio de Toledo y Huerta (2015) is particularly relevant for Spanish. The most recent study on the syntactic influence of Latin on European languages is that of Cornillie and Drinka (forthcoming).

<sup>5</sup> For more data on the importance of sociocultural factors on the evolution of Spanish, see Garachana Camarero (2018).

<sup>6</sup> CORDE consists of 250 million words and texts of a variety of types from the time of the language’s beginning up to 1974.

However, I have excluded some texts from our analysis according to the textual criticism guidelines set out in [Rodríguez Molina and Huerta \(2017\)](#). For the study of the rise of *mediante*, it is especially important to handle original editions or copies made within 50 years of their composition. Since the fifteenth century—which was characterized by a clear desire to Latinize syntax—led to the incorporation of constructions in which *mediante* would appear to resemble a present participle, using copies from the fifteenth century to exemplify linguistic use in the fourteenth century could distort our results. Indeed, as we shall see, our research evidences that the use of *mediante* in the fourteenth century is not too far removed from that found in the modern language. In addition to data from CORDE, in specific places, I have resorted to the GRADIA corpus to supplement CORDE searches.

In this paper, I have adopted a usage-based approach to linguistic change. Therefore, I have analyzed the values of *mediante* in constructions documented in the corpora, as well as the characteristics of the texts in which they appear.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. The Evolution of Prepositions in a Typological Context

The evolution of deverbal prepositions deserves particular attention in the literature on grammatical change (cf. among others, the works of ([Giacalone Ramat 1994](#); [König and Kortmann 1991](#); [Kortmann 1992](#)); for Spanish see ([Bosque 1989](#), pp. 197–99)).<sup>8</sup> In European languages, the high number of prepositions originating from participles and gerunds has elicited this attention (cf. [Kortmann 1992](#), pp. 431–32). The recurrence of this type of change can be explained by at least two factors. First of all, it should be noted that verbs, like prepositions, select complements. Thus, from a strictly formal point of view, they correspond to a similar construction: an element governing + an element governed. Secondly, participles are hardly prototypical verbal forms: in Spanish, they lack a morphology that expresses typical verbal values, such as person or mode and, unlike full verbs, they cannot constitute the nucleus of a predicate. In Spanish, this last aspect creates a point of contact with prepositions, which cannot form a phrase on their own but which always need to govern some element.

In addition, [Kortmann \(1992\)](#) points out that participial or gerundial absolute clauses share certain features with prepositional constructions, namely that they both can function as adjuncts with adverbial values and can complement a noun (see 1a and 1b, on the one hand, and 1c and 1d, on the other). This second property, in the case of Spanish, is rejected for the gerund by the educated norm (see 2a and 2b). The *RAE-ASALE* ([RAE-ASALE 2009](#), p. 2045) explicitly argues that adjectival uses are only possible with the gerunds of the verbs *hervir* ‘to boil’, *arder* ‘to burn’, and, with restrictions, *colgar* ‘to hang up’. However, this adjectival use was admitted into the language of past eras for present participles, which, moreover, tend to evolve as adjectives (see 2c and 2d).

- (1) a. **Considering** his family background, he is a most unusual man ([Kortmann 1992](#), p. 436)  
 b. **In many respects**, he is a most unusual man ([Kortmann 1992](#), p. 436)

<sup>7</sup> The searches have taken into account the different spelling variants with which *mediante* has been documented in the history of Spanish, namely, *mediante*, *medjante*, and *medyante*.

<sup>8</sup> In fact, synchronic studies have pointed out the importance of this type of research. In this sense, this affirmation in [Bosque \(1989, p. 199\)](#) is especially interesting:

La segunda pregunta afecta a la recategorización propiamente dicha: “¿por qué obtenemos unas veces preposiciones de los participios pasivos (*excepto*) y otras veces obtenemos adverbios (*incluso*)?”. Es cierto que tanto esta pregunta como la anterior pertenecen al ámbito de la sintaxis histórica, pero las respuestas serían de enorme interés para los que trabajan en la teoría de las categorías gramaticales.

The second question concerns re-categorization proper: “Why do we sometimes get prepositions from passive participles (*excepto* ‘except’) and other times we get adverbs (*incluso* ‘even’)? It is true that both this question and the previous one belong to the field of historical syntax, but the answers would be of enormous interest to those who work on the theory of grammatical categories.”

[my translation]



- c. Leave the box **containing** the dumbbells to me (Kortmann 1992, p. 436)  
d. Leave the box **with** the green lid (Kortmann 1992, p. 436)
- (2) a. \*Caja **conteniendo** botellas de lejía  
"Box **containing** bottles of bleach"  
b. \*El agua **entrando** en la pecera es la de la fuente (RAE-ASALE 2009, p. 2045)  
"The water **entering** the fish tank is from the fountain"  
c. Varones **bataillantes** (Octavio de Toledo y Huerta 2017a, p. 73)  
"Battling men"  
d. De día parece un padre **amante** que a su adorada hija contempla ( . . . ) (Benito Pérez Galdós, *Los Ayacuchos*, 1900, CORDE)  
"By day he seems like a **loving** father who admires his beloved daughter"

The process that leads from participial (or gerundial) constructions to prepositions has been explained as a type of evolution that leads from lexical to grammatical categories. This would, therefore, be a change due to grammaticalization. Such a route of change has favored a theoretical apriorism that has led to the characterization of the evolution of *mediante* as a case of grammaticalization, even though its role was ALREADY that of a preposition from the time of its first use in the language (as has been said, the first examples of *mediante* are considered prepositions in (Sánchez López 2014; Castro Zapata 2012)). Moreover, as I pointed out above, examples can already be found in Latin in which the syntactic function of *mediante* is far removed from proper verbal values and can be characterized as prepositional values (cf. Artigas in this volume).<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, following Kortmann (1992, p. 438), prepositions and conjunctions deriving from participles are marginal members of their category, since they usually show features that differentiate them from the core group of prepositions. Namely:

- They usually have a low frequency of use, as a consequence of their stylistic markedness.
- They show greater morphological complexity: they have two or three syllables.
- Sometimes, in addition, they have recurrent internal constituents (Octavio de Toledo *p.c.* 28.5.17).
- If compared to more semantically bleached prepositions and conjunctions, they have a specific and quite complex meaning.
- They recall the structures from which they derive since the complement of the deverbal preposition can often still be interpreted as their direct object or subject.

In the case of *mediante*, it is used less frequently than other prepositions. For example, a quick search in CORPES XXI shows that, while 34,617 cases of *mediante* are documented, other prepositions are found to a greater extent (for example, *desde* 'from' is found 263,506 times and *hasta* 'to' 234,578 times).<sup>10</sup> *Mediante* has three syllables, while the prototypical Spanish prepositions consist of one or two syllables (*a* 'to', *ante* 'before', *bajo* 'beneath', *cabe* 'next to', *con* 'with', *contra* 'against', *de* 'from', *desde* 'from, since', *en* 'in', *entre* 'between, among', *hacia* 'towards', *hasta* 'to, until', *para* 'to, for', *por* 'for, by', *según* 'according to', *sin* 'without', *so* 'under', *sobre* 'on, about, upon', *tras* 'after, behind').<sup>11</sup> Moreover, *mediante*, despite the fact that it is unstressed (Moliner 1966, s.v. *mediante*; RAE-ASALE 2009, p. 2230), is still described as having occasional uses as a present participle (RAE-ASALE 2009, p. 2230). Besides, *mediante*, together

<sup>9</sup> Possibly, this fact could be related to the decline of the verbal values of the present participle in Vulgar Latin (in archaic Latin these had also been the exception, (cf. Campos Souto 2001, pp. 372–73)).

<sup>10</sup> CORPES XXI is a corpus made by the Real Academia Española (RAE) that contains oral and written texts from the Americas, Spain, the Philippines, and Equatorial Guinea. The texts cover a period from 2001 to 2012. I have taken this corpus to test the low frequency of use of *mediante* as compared to other prepositions also in the contemporary language.

<sup>11</sup> The prepositions *cabe* and *so* are infrequent forms in modern Spanish.

with *durante* ‘during’, *excepto* ‘except’, *salvo* ‘except’, *según* ‘according to’, *menos* ‘but, except’, *incluso* ‘even’<sup>12</sup>, forms a subclass among prepositions, that has been called “improper” (Bello 1988, pp. 738–40) or “imperfect” (Pavón Lucero 1999, p. 587).<sup>13</sup> These non-prototypical prepositions do not assign the oblique case to their complements: \**mediante mí/ti* ‘through me/you’ (Bello 1988, p. 740; Bosque 1989, p. 198). For Bello, the fact that these prepositions do not assign oblique case harks back to their origin seems to prevent their full integration into the class of prepositions. Likewise, *mediante* does not assign nominative case either (Bello 1988, p. 740; Pavón Lucero 1999, p. 589).

Furthermore, these imperfect prepositions cannot govern infinitives, prepositional phrases, or sentences. However, at this point it should be remembered that prepositions, which express exclusively locative values, cannot govern sentences either: *hacia* ‘towards’, *sobre* ‘on, about, upon’, *tras* ‘after, behind’, *bajo* ‘beneath’, and *ante* ‘before’ do not form subordinate locative clauses (Pavón Lucero 1999, p. 571; 2010; Sánchez López 2016). However, it must be remembered that already since the Middle Ages *mediante* can govern a relative clause (example 3) and that from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century it could appear before an infinitive (example 4). It should also be noted that during the same period, *mediante que* ‘because’ existed as causal conjunction, typically with explanatory values (example 5). At present, however, only residual conjunctive uses are found in certain American varieties (example 6)<sup>14</sup> If the conjunctive uses of *mediante que* do not persist in Spanish, it could be because this conjunction was competing with other synonymous conjunctions which were more firmly anchored in the language, such as *dado que* ‘given that’, *visto que* ‘seeing that’, *como* ‘as’, *puesto que* ‘since’. Thus, the fact that *mediante* does not govern clauses in contemporary Spanish seems more to do with stylistic preferences than any real restriction on the preposition. All things considered, it cannot be denied that *mediante* holds a marginal position among prepositions, perhaps due to its having entered the language more recently.<sup>15</sup>

- (3) Pero dexo al onbre sano & franco. el libre aluedrio **mediante el qual** pudiese mereçer & desmereçer allegarse o apartarse ala semejança & nobleza de su fazedor que era y es dios (Fernando Mejía, *Libro intitulado Nobiliario Vero, 1477–1485, CORDE*)

“But to humans, sound and free, He left free will, **through which** they could deserve or not deserve to approach or to stray from the likeness and nobility of their creator who was and is God.”

- (4) a. Enterada S.M. la Reina Gobernadora del oficio de V.E. de 29 de diciembre último ha tenido a bien resolver que **mediante haber cesado** el riesgo que ofrecía la carretera de Aragón a Barcelona, y no ser tampoco grande el que presenta la que va desde aquella ciudad a Valencia, se despache la correspondencia pública de Barcelona por ambas carreras (Real Orden de 8 de enero, citada en Mariano José de Larra, “*Buenas noches. Segunda carta de Fígaro a su corresponsal en París, acerca de la disolución de las Cortes, y de otras varias cosas del día*”, siglo XIX, GRADIA)

“Her Majesty the Queen Governor being informed of Your Excellency’s letter of December 29th last, she has seen fit to resolve that, **since** the risk posed by the road from Aragon to Barcelona **has ceased**, and that neither is the risk presented by the road going from that city to Valencia great, the public mail from Barcelona will be despatched by both routes.”

<sup>12</sup> *No obstante*, *no contrastante*, and *no embargante* were also members of this subclass of prepositions. However, the first has remained fixed as a discourse marker, and the second and third have disappeared from the spoken language (cf. Garachana Camarero 2018).

<sup>13</sup> Giacalone Ramat (1994, p. 893) points out, following Kortmann (1992), that deverbal prepositions are not prototypical prepositions, but peripheral ones.

<sup>14</sup> According to Sánchez López (2014, p. 419), the conjunction *mediante que* had particular vitality in the Spanish of the Americas, declining in the 18th century and remaining as a minority usage in the speech of some varieties of the Spanish of the Americas. For example, it is found in Paraguay, where de Granda (1979, p. 281) pointed out a possible grammatical calque from Guarani.

<sup>15</sup> For Kortmann (1992, p. 438), the behavior furthest from the core of the category characteristic of improper prepositions is a reflection of a lesser degree of evolution. Generally speaking, this argument is also found in Company and Concepción (1997, p. 149).

b. Que **mediante** no **tener** esa enunciada Vniversidad, Carcel, ni el Colegio avitacion alguna que pueda servir, para ella, sera mui util el que se conceda facultad para hacerla en el Suelo, del proprio Colegio (Anónimo, *Real cédula*, España, 1764, CORDE, Sánchez López 2016)

“That **since** the said University **has no** prison, nor any room in the college, which can serve for this purpose, it will be very useful to grant permission to construct one in the grounds of the College itself.”

- (5) Con la prevención que, **mediante que** en la mayor parte de Andalucía se gasta jabón blando, (...) en lo que toca a dicho jabón blando no se haga novedad (Bernardo de Ulloa, *Restablecimiento de las fábricas y comercio español*, 1740–1746, CORDE)

“With the precaution that, **since** in most of Andalusia soft soap is used, [...] no change shall be made with regard to the said soft soap.”

- (6) (...) son mamás que quieren trabajar y no tengan dónde dejar sus hijos, para esas madres es la guardería, y que están utilizando bien, ¿verdad?, porque **mediante que** dejan acá, ellos (sic) van a trabajar (Encuesta 11, Asunción Servim de Eduardo, Paraguay; CREA, Sánchez López 2016)

“( ... ) they are mothers who want to work and don’t have anywhere to leave their kids, that’s who the nursery is for, and they’re using it well, right?, because **through** leaving [them] there, they can go to work.”

#### 4. The Evolution of *Mediante*

##### 4.1. The State of the Art

As pointed out in the introduction, the study of the evolution of *mediante* has been shrouded in theoretical and conceptual assumptions that have greatly distorted any explanation of its history. First, the emergence of *mediante* has been explained as a result of a need to increase the prepositional system due to the loss of the Latin case system (cf. Castro Zapata 2010, p. 1; 2012, p. 722). However, this explanation does not seem likely if we apply it to Spanish, where *mediante* is first documented at the end of the fourteenth century. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that, as Artigas (this volume) points out, the use of *mediante* in Latin seems to respond to an initial borrowing from Greek that only gained strength in twelfth-century Latin. In that century, *mediante* was mostly employed in a written variety of the language where its existence could have more to do with a desire for stylistic variation than with the loss of declensions, which affected the spoken language and which occurred before the Middle Ages. In addition to the chronological argument, it should be noted that the low frequency of examples of *mediante* in the Middle Ages makes it difficult to consider it as the result of grammaticalization meant to fill the gap left by the loss of Latin case.

Secondly, it has also been asserted that the introduction of *mediante* into Spanish was the result of an attempt to solve problems when translating into Spanish (Castro Zapata 2010, p. 3). However, this second possibility may be excluded on the basis of the studies by Pons Rodríguez (2015) and Azofra Sierra (2006). These scholars demonstrate that Spanish authors tended to avoid translating Latin present participles and usually opted for constructions more typical of Spanish syntax. Thus, Pons Rodríguez (2015) stresses the following:

el participio de presente falta o está muy aislado en la mayoría de los escritos del periodo, no figura en buena parte de los tratados despojados (*Amicicia, Arboleda, Defensa de virtuosas mugeres ...*) y tampoco es común en las traducciones. (Pons Rodríguez 2015, p. 405)

“The present participle is missing or is infrequent in most writings from the period, it is absent in many of the treatises analyzed (*Amicicia, Arboleda, Defensa de virtuosas mujeres ...*) and is not common in translations” [my translation]

In turn, Azofra Sierra (2006) points out in relation to the translations of Juan de Mena:

En el caso de la traducción de la estructura que estudiamos, el latinismo más crudo, lo más ajeno al castellano, es la traducción por un falso participio de presente, es decir, una palabra terminada en *-nte*, formada sobre un lexema verbal y a la que se añaden los complementos verbales. Esto, como veremos, es lo menos frecuente: frente a esta traducción que violenta las reglas morfosintácticas del español, Mena se muestra prudente y prefiere adaptar los participios de otra manera. Hemos encontrado varias soluciones: traducción por un adjetivo en *-nte*, traducción por otro tipo de adjetivos, traducción por una subordinada con valor adjetivo (de relativo, de gerundio o subordinada sustantiva en función de complemento predicativo), y traducción por una oración independiente. (Azofra Sierra 2006, p. 69)

“In the case of the translation of the structure we are studying, the crudest Latinism and most alien to Spanish is a translation by a false present participle, that is, a word ending in *-nte*, formed on a verbal lexeme and to which verbal complements are added. This, as we shall see, is a less frequent phenomenon: when faced with such translation, which violates the morphosyntactic rules of Spanish, Mena is cautious and prefers to adapt participles in another way. We have found several solutions: translation by an adjective in *-nte*, translation by another type of adjective, translation by a subordinate clause with adjectival value (relative clause, gerund clause or subordinate noun clause functioning as a predicative complement), and translation by an independent sentence.” [my translation]

Sin renunciar a ensayar nuevos moldes (léxicos y sintácticos) para la expresión culta y literaria, tomando como modelo la lengua latina, se decide [Juan de Mena] en la mayoría de las ocasiones por no forzar la sintaxis del romance y adapta los participios de presente con estructuras oracionales que respetan los valores de la forma originaria sin violentar los patrones sintácticos del romance. (Azofra Sierra 2006, p. 78)

“Without giving up trying new patterns (lexical and syntactic) for cultured and literary expression, taking the Latin language as a model, [Juan de Mena] decides in most cases not to force Spanish syntax and adapts present participles with clausal structures that respect the values of the original form without violating Romance syntactic patterns.” [my translation]

In a recent study, Octavio de Toledo y Huerta (2017a, pp. 72, 80) confirms the conclusions of Azofra Sierra (2006) regarding the scant use of *-nte* forms with verbal value in Juan de Mena’s *Omero romançado*.

In the specific case of *mediante*, it can be seen that, in translations from Latin texts, it often appears in passages without having been present in the original Latin. Thus, when Enrique de Villena uses *mediante* in his translation of the *Aeneid*, he always uses it in the glosses or in the preface and not in the translation itself. Ferrer Sayol uses *mediante* in the translation of Latin texts that do not contain this form.

Thirdly, studies that defend a change via grammaticalization to explain the prepositional value of *mediante* in Spanish ignore the fact that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the verbal use of present participles is not a patrimonial use, but a grammatical borrowing from Latin. This rhetorical artifice ended up being lost from the wider language, and its verbal values were assumed by the gerund (Bassols de Climent 1992, pp. 234–35 (Bassols de Climent); Muño Valverde 1995).<sup>16</sup> aquél en latín.”

“( . . . ) in the transition to the Romance languages, [the present participle] succumbs to an ablative gerund which will assume a good part of the functions it had carried out in Latin.”

[my translation]

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<sup>16</sup> Campos Souto makes the same point (Campos Souto 2001, p. 373), explicitly stating that: “( . . . ) en el paso a las lenguas románicas, [el participio de presente] sucumbe ante un ablativo de gerundio que asumirá buena parte de las funciones desempeñadas por

The learned nature of the verbal uses of the present participle invalidates the grammaticalization hypothesis for Spanish, especially if we bear in mind that, in the case of *mediante*, these verbal uses are very vestigial. Moreover, the verbal uses of present participles have been described as a stylistic artifice, which attempted to mimic Latin syntax (Azofra Sierra 2006; Muñio Valverde 1995; Campos Souto 2001; Pons Rodríguez 2015) or, in the case of some biblical translations, Hebrew (see Pueyo and Enrique-Arias 2015). This rhetorical artifice, lost in the common language, left only a few traces in Spanish in the form of nouns or adjectives (*amante* ‘lover’, *triumfante* ‘victorious’, etc.) or in grammatical forms that already existed in Latin (*mediante* ‘with, through, by means of, via, with the help of’, *no obstante* ‘in spite of, however’) or which were created on this model (*no contrastante* ‘in spite of, although’, *no embargante* ‘in spite of, although, however’).<sup>17</sup>

As a consequence of what has been explained, the presence of *mediante* in Spanish is neither the result of the need to compensate for the loss of Latin declension, nor the result of a change due to grammaticalization. It is, therefore, necessary to find another explanation for its introduction into Spanish.

#### 4.2. Not Every Grammatical Change Is Grammaticalization

As I have argued, the fact that some of the uses of *mediante* in the medieval period are reminiscent of Latin absolute clauses has favored the explanation of evolution in terms of grammaticalization. Such uses are shown in examples like (7), in which the nominal phrase *sana consideración* ‘proper judgement’ functions as the subject of *mediante*. As such, the ensemble *sana consideración mediante* can be literally interpreted as “with a proper judgement mediating”. According to the authors who defend this theoretical position, *mediante* must have followed an evolutionary line, such as the one outlined in (8). According to (8), the evolution of *mediante* must have come about from an absolute clause whose verbal nucleus would be *mediante*, which would be accompanied by a noun phrase in the ablative case acting as its subject. This construction would be reinterpreted as a prepositional phrase, which, in some contexts, could come to have a conjunctive function at the point that *mediante* extends its scope to include an entire sentence.

- (7) si alguno mira a otro que le bien paresca o lo alaba de fermoso o de donoso, luego paresca daño en él de ojo, siquier de fascinaçión. E aquí deven entender, **sana consideraçión mediante**, que la cabsa d’esto es que aquel que alaba la cosa mirada, pues se d’ella paga, paresçe en esa ora que mira más fuerte, firme e atentamente que otra, (Enrique de Villena, *Tratado de fascinaçión o de aojamiento*, 1422–1425, CORDE)

“If one person looks at another person in such a way that that person looks pleasing to him, or if he praises him as being handsome or graceful, then he will suffer damage to his eye, or “fascination”. And by this must be understood, **with a proper judgement mediating**, that the cause of this is that since the person who praises the object of his gaze is pleased by it, it seems at that moment that he is looking more strongly, more firmly and more attentively at that than at anything else”.

- (8) [ABSOLUTE CLAUSE [SUBJECT NP in ablative case] [VF present participle (*mediante*))] > [PP [PREP. *mediante*] [NP]] > [CAUSAL SENTENCE [CAUSAL CONJUNCTION *mediante* que] [sentence]]

However, as we shall see, a careful analysis of the first documentation of *mediante* in Spanish shows that it was already behaving like a preposition in the fourteenth century, which is the time of its introduction into the language. The examples documented prior to this century are found in works preserved in later editions in which the presence of *mediante* may be due to the intervention of

<sup>17</sup> See Garachana Camarero (2018) for the analogical influence of *no obstante* in the creation of *no embargante* and *no contrastante*.

the copyist. There is, therefore, no need to propose the existence of two stages of the introduction of *mediante* into Spanish, one medieval and one Renaissance.<sup>18</sup>

As for the examples reminiscent of absolute ablatives, such as (7), they were rare, and their documentation is concentrated in the fifteenth century when the Latinizing influence is evident. Moreover, the cases of plural concordance between *mediante* and the accompanying nominal element are also concentrated mainly in the fifteenth century (see example 9).

- (9) le fuemos rrebeldes; & non obedeçimos el dicho del señor nuestro dios para andar en sus leyes que nos dio **mediantes** sus sieruos los profetas (Anónimo, *Biblia romanceada*, c.1400, CORDE)

“we were rebellious to God and did not obey his command to follow the laws that he gave us **through** his servants the prophets.”

This plural agreement has been considered an argument in favor of the verbal value of *mediante* and has been proposed as an indication of the existence of a process of grammaticalization. However, the fact that *mediantes* appears far less than the singular *mediante* has been overlooked. Although it could be argued that this is because the accompanying nominal elements appear more frequently in the singular, we cannot dismiss the frequent cases of non-agreement in which the singular *mediante* accompanies a plural nominal element (10). Above all, we cannot ignore the desire to Latinize that permeates the rhetoric of the fifteenth century in Europe, which would have favored hybrid constructions, such as that of (15), in which *mediante* presents plural morphology and characteristics of a participle, but has a prepositional function. Thus, if the cases that could be cataloged as absolute clauses are Latinisms characteristic of the Spanish of the fifteenth century, and if the majority of the examples in which *mediante* appears in plural form can be considered hybrid structures in which *mediante* has the morphology of a participle, but the function of a preposition, the hypothesis of a grammaticalization process loses validity—at least if we want to conceive of it as a change that took place in Old Spanish.

- (10) Segúnd avemos recontado, el rey que estaua en la çibdat, de Granada, después que **mediante** los fauores que ovo del Rey e de la Reyna fué reçebido por rey en aquella çibdat (Hernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, 1480–1484, CORDE)

“As we have recounted, the [Moorish] king who was in the city of Granada, after he was received as king in that city **as a result** of the favors he obtained from the King and Queen [ . . . ]

#### 4.3. The Introduction of *Mediante* in Old Spanish

The first documentation of *mediante* in Old Spanish dates back to the fourteenth century (see Table 1). In this century, I have documented *mediante* on 13 occasions—having eliminated the cases found in works that did not meet the criteria for textual reliability set out in Rodríguez Molina and Huerta (2017). Of these 13 cases, 10 correspond to textual fragments in which *mediante* reproduces the temporal meaning of the Latin participle *medians*, *-tis*, used as an adjective and whose meaning ‘to be halfway’ is the result of translating the Greek verb μέσσω (cf. Artigas in this volume). This can be seen in examples (11) to (13), where *mediante* means ‘in the middle of’.

<sup>18</sup> For a different opinion, cf. Sánchez López (Sánchez López 2014, pp. 2157–58). She argues that, in the fifteenth century, there was a re-introduction of the construction with *mediante*, used as a participle and not as a preposition. The data, however, show that most of the examples in the fifteenth century are hybrid constructions in which *mediante* appears in a plural form, but has a prepositional function. In fact, in the fourteenth century, this usage already existed (see example 15). The examples from both the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are the same grammatical calque, which imitated a Latin construction in which agreeing and non-agreeing forms alternated (cf. Artigas in this volume). The difference, if anything, has to do with the greater use of *mediante* in the fifteenth century, as this is the period of its embedding in the language, and the consequent greater presence of structures in which *mediante* offered a form that could suggest a present participle. However, this is not a sufficient reason to propose two different historical moments for the introduction of *mediante* in Spanish, especially when the first fourteenth-century documentations are found in the work of authors whose admiration for Latinisms is well known, namely, Juan Fernández de Heredia and Ferrer Sayol.

- (11) E aquesto deveu fazez quando ay echa la simjente. Si el jnujerno sera temprado. E que non sea pluujoso. deues sembrar la çeuada glatic que es blanca & de grant peso. faza **mediante** enero en los lugares temprados. (Ferrer Sayol, *Libro de Palladio*, CORDE)

“And this must be done when the seed is sown there. If the winter is going to be mild and not rainy, you should sow latic barley, which is white and heavy, until **mid**-January in temperate places.”

- (12) E quasi **mediante** febrero tu la sembraras en vn foyo. (Ferrer Sayol, *Libro de Palladio*, CORDE)

“and around **mid**-February, you will plant it in a hole.”

- (13) E deuen se trasplantar de **mediante** agosto fasta a **mediante** setiembre con mucho estiercol. (Anónimo, *Memoria de las labranzas*. BNM 10211, 1385, CORDE)

“And they should be transplanted from **mid**-August to **mid**-September with a lot of manure.”

**Table 1.** Distribution of the uses of *mediante* in the xiv-xv centuries.

Century	Preposition	‘In the Middle of’	Noun	Adjective	<i>Dios Mediante</i> and Other Expressions	Conjunction	Absolute Clause
xiv	15.38% (2/13)	76.9% (10/13)	—	—	7.6% (1/13)	—	—
xv	85.5% (213/249)	—	4% (10/249)	0.40% (1/249)	2.8% (7/249)	0.40% (1/249)	6.8% (17/249)

In the fourteenth century, I also find two cases that can already be described as prepositions: neither the syntax of the construction nor the meaning of *mediante* allows for an interpretation as an absolute clause. One of the examples documented in the fourteenth century shows an absence of agreement between the participle and its object (14): *mediante* has a clear instrumental grammatical use, characteristic of the modern language, where *mediante* can alternate with other prepositions or prepositional phrases, such as *con* ‘with’, *gracias a* ‘thanks to’, *a través de* ‘through’. In fact, *mediante las cañas* can be glossed as ‘with the canes, by way of the canes, through the canes’. Another clear indication of the prepositional value of *mediante* is the fact that it is introduced by the verb *ligar* ‘tie’. I will discuss this example later.

- (14) Otra manera ay de fazez vjñyas es a saber que hombre ha muchas cañas al derredor de la parra o de la çepa. E ata hombre los sarmjentos a cada vna caña al entorno. E los vnos sarmjentos se ligan con los otros **mediante** las cañas. (Ferrer Sayol, *Libro de Palladio*, 1380–85, CORDE)

“There is another way of making vines, namely that you put many canes around the vine or the stock. And you must tie the shoots around each canes. And some shoots are linked with the others **through** the canes.”

The other prepositional example of *mediante* in the fourteenth century, although showing concordance between *mediante* and the accompanying nominal phrase, is actually a hybrid construction: *mediante* shows present participle morphology, but a prepositional function. In fact, in (15), the participle appears in plural form, but the nominal complement that accompanies it is placed after it—as is characteristic of prepositional phrases—and the semantic value of *mediante* is close to the one in (14): *mediantes las pregarías de los fieles* can be glossed as ‘by way of/thanks to the prayers of the faithful’. The only example that would allow us to venture an interpretation as an absolute clause would be (16); however, it is a construction close to the idiom *Dios mediante* ‘with the help of God’, which already functioned in Latin as an idiomatic expression (cf. Artigas, this volume).

- (15) Et mayorment aquesto era en aquel tiempo quando haun por todo el mundo non auia alguna yglesia que, **mediantes** las pregarías de los fieles christianos, temprasse et amansasse las penas del

mundo. (Juan Fernández de Heredia, *Traducción de la Historia contra paganos de Orosio*, 1376–1396, CORDE)

“And this happened mainly in the time when in the world there was not yet a church that **thanks to** the prayers of the Christian faithful, tempered, and calmed the pains of the world.”

- (16) & enuio los en sc̄icia a predicar la palaura de dios. la qual cosa los sobre dichos sanctos uarones la gracia de dios **mediante** con senyales & uirtudes cumplieron. (Juan Fernández de Heredia, *Gran crónica de España*, I. Ms. 10133 BNM, 1385, CORDE)

“and sent them to Scythia to preach the word of God, which the above-mentioned holy men, **through** the grace of God, achieved with signs and virtues.”

The situation described for the fourteenth century is modified in the century following. Thus, as shown in Table 1, the temporal values of *mediante* disappeared, overshadowed by the use of *mediado* ‘in the middle of’, with which *mediante* had been in competition since the time of Latin (cf. Artigas in this volume; Sánchez López 2014, p. 411). By contrast, in the fifteenth century, *mediante* begins to be documented as an adjective with the meaning of ‘that which is in the middle’ (17) and as a noun with the meaning of ‘mediator, envoy, messenger’ (18).

- (17) Dize las treguas ser paz sequestra adora como a tiempo & **mediante** o puesta en medio entre la guerra passada & la guerra a venidera. (Alonso de Palencia, *Universal vocabulario en latín y en romance*, 1490, CORDE)

“He says that truces are an intermediate peace, a time that **lies between**, that is to say, between the past war and the future one.”

- (18) a. Mucho mejor puede alabar qualquier **mediante** al que ama e recontar sus virtudes que él mesmo; demás con menos sospeçión se puede hablar con el mediante que con el que ama. (Juan de Mena, *Tratado de amor*, c1444, CORDE)

“Any **mediator** can praise the one he loves and explain his virtues much better than he himself can, and with less suspicion, we can talk to the mediator than to the one that loves.”

b. Interpres. tis. (...). es nombre simple. (...) no esta en vso. quiere dezir interprete. **mediante**: & mensaiero: y el que traslada algo de vna lengua en otra. (Alonso de Palencia, *Uniuersal vocabulario en latín y en romance*, 1490, CORDE)

“Interpres, -tis () is a simple name. (...) it is not in use; it means interpreter, **mediator**, and messenger, and someone who translates something from one language to another.”

c. Internuncijs. es **mediante**: o mensaiero entre ambas partes. (Alonso de Palencia, *Uniuersal vocabulario en latín y en romance*, 1490, CORDE)

“Internuncijs. Is a **mediator** or messenger between both parties.”

Otherwise, most of the examples of *mediante* found in the fifteenth century can be described as prepositions. The order of the elements was the same as that in the prepositional phrases: *mediante* came before the nominal element governed by it. Furthermore, *mediante* also appeared in the singular as a fixed form, even if it was accompanied by a plural nominal phrase (19).

- (19) La Reyna doña ysabel, que tenía vn singular desseo de proueer en las yglesias de sus reynos de personas notables, suplicó al papa que proueyesse a este claro varón del obispado de córdoua, el qual fue proueydo de aquella yglesia & **mediante** los ruegos y exortaciones que de parte de la Reyna le fueron fechas, aceptó la prouisión que el papa le fizo de aquella dignidad. (Hernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, 1486, CORDE)

“Queen Isabella, who had a singular desire to have notable people in the churches of her kingdom, begged the Pope to give the bishopric of Cordoba to this distinguished man, who was granted that



church and, **thanks to** the pleading and exhortation of the Queen, accepted the Pope's granting him that dignity."

Moreover, even when the present participle shows plural agreement with the following nominal complement, its reading is usually that of a preposition with the above-mentioned values of 'with, by way of, thanks to'. Also, the syntax of the construction is mostly that of a preposition and not that of an absolute clause: the nominal element accompanying *mediante* is postposed in most cases. In fact, of the total of 37 cases with plural agreement documented in the fifteenth century, only eight have the noun phrase before *mediante*. Indeed, these are always fixed constructions in which the noun phrase in front of *mediante* is a personal pronoun or a demonstrative (*ellos mediantes, aquellas mediantes* 'because of them, thanks to them'). The remaining examples show the syntax typical of prepositional government and characteristic prepositional meaning. We are, therefore, dealing with hybrid constructions imitating rhetorical patterns which aspire to make Old Spanish more similar to Latin.

Example (20) shows this hybrid character of *mediante* when used in the plural: "la voz humana se faze mediantes .ix. ofiçios" can be interpreted as 'the human voice is produced via/by way of/thanks to nine actions'. This gloss would be confirmed by the fact that *mediantes ix ofiçios* is a parallel structure to *mediante agua & aire* 'through water and air', which appears a little earlier in (20). In this case, the plural variant *mediantes* is not used, despite the plural nature of *agua & aire* 'water and air'.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, in both cases, *mediante* is governed by the verb *se faze* 'it is made' on which it depends directly, which makes it difficult to attribute a verbal value to *mediante* and reinforces the hypothesis that it has prepositional value in (20). In the same vein, the [-animated] character of the noun phrase that accompanies *mediante-mediantes* prevents a mediation reading and favors their interpretation as prepositions denoting the instrument or means by or with which an action is achieved or accomplished. In other words, when the noun governed by *mediante* is a [-human, -animated, -agentive] noun, the event being talked about does not occur 'with the help or intervention of someone', but rather, since there is no entity that can perform any action, the interpretation of *mediante* with the sense of 'by way of, by means of' is triggered. When in the construction there is no agent controlling the action, an instrumental interpretation is activated. The noun that appears next to *mediante* no longer 'intervenes or helps' but becomes the means or instrument through which an action is carried out or a state is reached.

- (20) Musam. desta causa dixeron algunos llamada de moys: por quel son dela musica mayor mente & qual quier sonable voz se faze **mediante** agua & ayre & que por ende fingeron ser .ix. musas: por que la voz humana se faze **mediantes** .ix. ofiçios (Alonso de Palencia, *Universal vocabulario en latín y en romance*, 1490, CORDE)

"Muse. Some called this the call of the muses, because the sound of the music and any voice that sounds is mainly done **through** water and air. Therefore, they pretended that there were nine muses since the human voice is produced **through** nine actions."

Examples in which *mediante* has a plural form (*mediantes*) often appear in constructions in which the noun phrase governed by *mediante* refers to people. This personal reference could favor an interpretation in terms of an absolute clause: the character [+animate, +human] of the noun that accompanies *mediante* can confer a predicative character on the construction in which *mediante* has both an adjectival and a participial value.

However, it is often the case, even when the nominal element that appears next to *mediante* refers to an animate entity, that we are far from the reading of an absolute clause, since the animate entity usually has the role of a means through which something is done or achieved and not of an agent that

<sup>19</sup> Certainly, it could be argued that until the eighteenth century, with phrases formed by the coordination of two singular nouns, the verb could agree in both singular and plural. That said, it would seem that the presence of *mediante* that appears later could have tipped the balance in favor of the plural agreement. However, this does not appear to be the case.

performs the action (Sánchez López 2014, p. 413). This is the case in example (21), in which even the personal pronoun *ellos* ‘they’ appears before *mediante*. This order and the agreement between *mediantes* and the personal pronoun in the third person could lead to a reading of ‘with them intervening’. However, the reading of the whole passage favors an instrumental interpretation in terms of ‘by way of them, thanks to them’, which does not necessarily imply an active intervention of the children mentioned in the example. Rather, children are the means through which the father gains friends. Therefore, this use of *mediante* in (21) is closer to the semantics associated with the preposition, since the reading of this passage does not seem to confer any kind of agentive role on the referent of the animated noun phrase, but rather, as pointed out earlier, this prepositional phrase seems to denote an instrument through which an action is carried out or an event takes place. Thus, a Latinizing construction was being used for the expression of prepositional values. That is, to say, a Romance construction is hiding under a Latin guise.

- (21) E si tanto el padre bive que los fijos a senio lleguen, exemplos buenos e menospreçio del mundo d’ellos como expertos confirmantes, spezializantes lo que él ha visto e cognosçido. Allende d’esto, en estas hedades las amistades que ellos **mediantes** ganan escusan de costas ganancias, acarreadas por ellos (Enrique de Villena, *Tratado de la consolación*, 1424, CORDE)

“And if a father lives so long that his children grow old, [they will become] good examples and will despise their world as experts who can confirm and detail what their father has seen and known. Beyond this, the friendships which [old people] gain at that age **through** [their children] compensate for what they have cost them.”

The non-agentive character of the referent of the noun phrase [+animated, +human] that appears next to *mediante* (*ellos mediante*) is further highlighted in examples, such as (22). In fact, in this case, it does not seem that the early prophets could be considered mediators, but rather the instruments through which the *law* was spread.

- (22) fizieron pedernal en non oyr la ley que mando el señor delas huestes con su espíritu **mediantes** los prophetas primeros (Anónimo, *Biblia romanceada*. *Real Academia de la Historia*, p. 87, c1400, CORDE)

“they insisted on not hearing the law that the Lord of Hosts sent with his spirit **through** the early prophets.”

Examples like (21) and (22) allow *mediante* to be considered a preposition that, on occasion, lends itself to rhetorical license, which was very much to medieval taste. In this sense, it is significant that the first example of plural *mediante* (*mediantes*) agreeing with a preceding noun phrase is not found in texts until 1424. Up to that point, the post-positioning of the nominal phrase was the rule, even when *mediante* appeared in plural form. This fact reinforces the hypothesis that the pre-position of the nominal complement and the plural agreement—otherwise a minority—appear to be more of a Latinizing trend with a syntactic structure closer to that of the mother tongue that could be achieved rather than effective use of an absolute clause in the Romance language. Significantly, the first examples with a nominal element positioned before *mediante* that have been retrieved in the work of Villena (an author known for his Latinizing syntax).<sup>20</sup>

Another indication that points to the possibility that the plural use of *mediante* was the result of a Latinizing trend is found in examples, such as (23), where the plural of *mediante* is used despite the fact that the nominal element governed by it appears in the singular.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Sánchez López (2014, p. 416) also commented on the limited functionality of the Latinized constructions.

<sup>21</sup> It could be argued, however, that the nominalizations with neuter *lo* can have a collective meaning which justifies the plural agreement.

- (23) “La santa sanctorum del tabernáculo enseñava el çielo emperial, que es asignado a la santa Trinidad et a los sus ángeles; et el santuario del tabernáculo, que era en doble mayor, enseñava e demostrava la tierra e la mar; por quanto era común a los sacerdotes; la çaga del tabernáculo blanca enseñava el çielo christalino; las pieles, **mediantes** lo bermejo, enseñavan el çielo estrelloso del firmamento (Enrique de Villena, *Tratado de Astrología*, 1428, CORDE)

“The sanctum sanctorum of the tabernacle showed the imperial heaven, which is assigned to the Holy Trinity and their angels, and the sanctuary of the tabernacle, which was twice as large, showed the land and the sea since it was common to the priests. The rear of the tabernacle, which was white showed the crystalline sky; the hides, **by means of** the red, showed the starry sky of the firmament.”

The syntactic and semantic behavior of constructions with *mediante* from their introduction into the language in the fourteenth century contributes to the idea that from this moment onwards we have to do with an instrumental or causal preposition. The constructions close to absolute clauses are the result of rhetorical artifice. In fact, the process of consolidation of *mediante* in Old Spanish is so advanced in the fifteenth century that there are documented examples in which *mediante* is followed by the preposition *de* (24). A century later, the preposition *a* will be added (25). However, none of them will take hold.<sup>22</sup>

- (24) a. Y quando fallare onbre ley y encomendaças tales que se alcance **mediante de** sus çiençias y obras este grado angelical, ( . . . ) ella sin dubda es la Ley, con la qual será seguro que permanecerá su alma en el ligamiento de las vidas después de la muerte del cuerpo.” (Anónimo, *Traducción castellana del Libro de El Kuzari de Yehudah Halevi*, c1450, CORDE)

“And when a man finds such a law and such commendations that he can achieve this angelic degree **through** his knowledge and works, this is no doubt the law with which, he may be sure, his soul will remain in the union of lives after the death of the body.”

- b. La segunda rrazon es por que procurar saber las cosas aduenjeras **mediante de** los spiritus malignos es graue pecado. (Lope de Barrientos, *Tratado de adivinar y magia*, 1445, CORDE)

“The second reason is that it is a serious sin to try to know the things that will come **through** the evil spirits.”

- (25) Amigo di de buen grado que **mediante a** mi gran dios yo satisfare a los dos lo que me aueys demanda(n)do (Micael de Carvajal, *Tragedia Josephina*, a1540, CORDE)

“Friend, kindly say that **through** my great God, I will satisfy both of you in what you have asked of me.”

The presence of these prepositions next to *mediante* has been explained as an example of the re-categorization of the present participle as a preposition (Espinosa Elorza 2010, p. 245). However, given that we already have clear examples of the prepositional value of *mediante* since the fourteenth century, it seems that the presence of a ‘to’ and *de* ‘of’ (which have no semantic value in the constructions

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<sup>22</sup> However, they come to have sufficient significance for the conjunctive variants *mediante de que* and *mediante a que* to be developed.

- (i) la cual mejora en cuanto a la dicha D.a Jusepa me pertenece, **mediante de que** como está dicho, yo pagué su dote de entrada en el convento y gasto. (Juan de Ayala, *Testamento*, 1658, CORDE) “This improvement, in reference to the aforementioned Dona Jusepa, belongs to me **since** as has been said, I paid for her dowry to enter the convent and the associated expenses.”
- (ii) No puede estimarse por excesiva esta suma **mediante a que** en ella se incluye el valor del chile (José María Quirós, *Memoria de Instituto*, 1817, siglo XIX, CORDE) “This sum of money cannot be considered excessive as it includes the price of chili.”

*mediante a* or *mediante de*) was due to the strangeness of *mediante* as a preposition. When these prepositions were added to *mediante*, its inclusion in the paradigm of the prepositions was validated, conferring on the structures *mediante a* and *mediante de*, the form of a prepositional expression.<sup>23</sup> Something similar happened to *no obstante de*, *no embargante de*, and *no contrastante de* ‘in spite of’ (cf. Garachana Camarero 2018). Sánchez López (2016), following Berg (1998, p. 173), explains this type of change by analogical paradigmatic pressure, which particularly affects meaning-bearing words.<sup>24</sup> Later on, Fisher (2011, p. 35) points to the formal or semantic similarity of new constructions with others belonging to a well-consolidated paradigm in the language as a decisive element in the consolidation of new forms in the language (Sánchez López 2016).

Another argument in defense of the grammatical status of *mediante* as a preposition is its early use in coordinated prepositional phrases, such as those of (26) and (27). These examples show that the prepositional phrase headed by *mediante* is coordinated with another one introduced by a synonymous preposition, with an instrumental (27) or causal (28) meaning, *por* ‘with, through, by’.

- (26) No biuos estantes. O no firmes. De quales naturas. De como se deuen dar o **por** quien: & **mediante** quien. (Fernando Mejía, *Libro intitulado Nobiliario vero*, 1477–85, CORDE)

“Not being alive, or not [being] firm. Of what nature. On how they should be given or **by** whom: and **through** whom.”

- (27) y que por eso acostumbran los cristianos derramar con devoción agua bendita sobre las sepulturas, porque, **mediante** aquella santa agua y **por** la devoción con que allí se derrama, huyen los demonios de los monumentos [Talavera, *Impugnación*, 1478, CORDE]

“And that because of that Christians are accustomed to spilling holy water with devotion on the graves, because, **through** that holy water and **through** the devotion that is spilled there, the demons of monuments flee.”

Further proof of the consolidation of *mediante* in the Spanish grammatical system can be found in the examples in which *mediante* governs a relative clause (28), an indirect question (29), or a completive clause (30).

- (28) y ouo el grado singular espiritual **mediante** el qual se juntó al Nuestro Señor y a las ynteligencias separadas (Anónimo, *Traducción castellana del Libro de El Kuzari de Yehudah Halevi*, c1450, CORDE)

“and he had reached the singular spiritual level **through** which Our Lord and these different kinds of intelligence were joined.”

- (29) Los círculos, cuadrángulos y cuadrados que en él se consideran, las líneas diametrales, colaterales, verticales (... ) diagonales, horizontales y de la contingencia, y las demás, **mediante** con qué y por dónde ha de obrar (Luis Pacheco de Narváez, *Advertencias para la enseñanza de la filosofía y destreza de las armas*, 1642, CORDE)

“The circles, quadrangles, and squares which are included in it, the diametrical, collateral, vertical, [...], diagonal, horizontal, and tangential lines, etcetera, **with** which and along which it will act.”

- (30) en lo que toca a cardoso el es moço muy onrad y visto su buen tino he hecho con el lo que me pidio **mediante que** me dixo queria mucho a vm. (Fernández Alcaide 2009)

<sup>23</sup> I refer to the expanded paradigm of prepositions since in these cases *mediante a/mediante de* function as prepositional phrases and not as stand-alone prepositions.

<sup>24</sup> In Sánchez López (2014, pp. 415–16), a cross with *por medio de* is proposed as a possible explanation for the existence of *mediante de*.

“As far as Cardoso is concerned, he is a very honest young man and, given his good sense, I have done with him what he asked me **since** he told me that he loved Your Worship very much.”

But maybe the most conclusive proof of the prepositional nature of *mediante* from its very first documentation is found in the example of the translation of *De re rustica*, also known as *Opus agriculturae*, by Ferrer Sayol, quoted earlier. The example is repeated below (14'). It is significant that this early example of Ferrer Sayol translates the Latin preposition *per* 'by, with' by *mediante* (see 31 for the Latin example). That is to say, Ferrer Sayol resorts to *mediante* as an alternative to *per*, whose prepositional value in Latin is beyond doubt and whose parallelism with Spanish *por* 'by' could have favored the use of this preposition instead of the innovative *mediante*.

(14') Otra manera ay de fazer vjñyas es a saber que hombre ha muchas cañyas al derredor de la parra o de la çepa. E ata hombre los sarmjentos a cada vna caña al entorno. E los vnos sarmjentos se ligan con los otros mediante las cañyas. (Ferrer Sayol, *Libro de Palladio*, 1380–1385, CORDE)

“There is another way of making vines, namely that you put many canes around the vine or the stock. And you must tie the shoots around each cane. And some shoots are linked with the others **through** the canes.”

- (31) aliud genus est in quo cannis pluribus circa dispositis ipsa uitis **per** cannas sarmentis ligatis in orbiculos flectitur se sequentes. (Palladius Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus, *Opus agriculturae* (LLA 603)—LLT-B lib.: 3, cap.: 11, pag.: 78, linea: 2, *Brepolis*.)

“There is another procedure in which the vine itself, **with** several canes places around it, and with the shoots intertwined by means of the canes, twist in successive circles.”

In view of the above, it does not seem possible to defend the idea of an evolutionary path for *mediante* leading from a present participle used in an absolute clause to a preposition. The data we have available reflect its clearly grammatical use from its beginnings. The few examples that could fall under the rubric of an absolute ablative structure can be understood as the result of a Latinizing trend, which was in decline from the end of the fifteenth century. In this way, in the sixteenth century, constructions in which a nominal element is placed before *mediante* are practically reduced to the lexicalized expression *Dios mediante* 'with the help of God', which already alternates with the alternative *mediante Dios* (32). In this century, the use of the plural of *mediante* diminishes drastically. In fact, although the possibility of a plural agreement persists until the twentieth century, it is a stereotypical formulation which is not really productive in the language. Thus, the most recent examples in our corpora appear under the lexicalized expressions *mediantes las oraciones* 'through the prayers' (33) and *Dios y la justicia mediantes* 'with the help of God and justice' (34). In both cases, *mediante* has a prepositional value.

- (32) **e mediante Dios** llegarés en buena disposición (Fernando de la Torre, *Libro de las veynte cartas e quísticas*, c1449, CORDE)

“And you will arrive in good **in good order**.”

- (33) Andamos padre mio en esta machina de negoçio tan grande en sy y en los muchos negocios que dependen del; alumbre su divyna Magestad al Rey nuestro Señor y a sus ministros para que en todo se acierte a hacer su santa voluntad, como lo confio en su misericordia **mediantes** las oraçiones de Vuestra R. (Pascual Boronat & Barrachina, *Los moriscos españoles y su expulsión*, 1901, CORDE)

“We are engaged, Father, in this business which is so great in itself, and in the many matters which depend on it; may His Divine Majesty enlighten our Lord the king and his ministers so that in everything His holy will may be done, as I trust in His mercy, **through** the prayers of Your Reverence.”

- (34) Dios y la justicia **mediantes** han de coger a los bandidos, (Tomás Carrasquilla, *La marquesa de Yolombó*, 1928, CORDE)

“With the help of God and justice, they will catch the bandits.”

## 5. The Influence of Culture on the Evolution of Languages. Grammatical Borrowings

At this point, it is important to return to the hypothesis of the grammatical calque that I have focused on in this work as a possible explanation for the existence of *mediante* in Spanish. In fact, the first documentation of *mediante* in Old Spanish in the fourteenth century are from the work of the Aragonese Juan Fernández de Heredia and the Catalan Ferrer Sayol, as well as from two other texts, also written in the Kingdom of Aragon, namely, *Memoria de las labranzas* and the *Gestas del rey don Jayme de Aragón*. Therefore, the recourse to *mediante* may have to do with the influence of the author’s mother tongue and culture (Catalan and Aragonese). Indeed, when commenting on Villena’s profuse use of the present participle in this work, [Pons Rodríguez \(2015\)](#) points out the following:

Como elemento impulsor de esta característica de su *usus scribendi*, además del peso del latín, no se puede descartar el que este rasgo fuera propio de la lengua aragonesa, que tan afín le resultaba. ([Pons Rodríguez 2015](#), p. 406)

“As a driving force of this characteristic of his *usus scribendi*, in addition to the weight of Latin, it cannot be ruled out that this trait was characteristic of the Aragonese language, which was so similar to it”. [my translation]

This influence of the linguistic varieties of the eastern part of the Peninsula on medieval and Renaissance Spanish has been observed in other areas of its grammar; for example, the extension of the lack of number and gender inflection in the participle of the compound tenses ([Fernández-Ordóñez 2011](#); [Rodríguez Molina 2010](#)), in the evolution of certain locative expressions, and of particular prepositions and conjunctions ([Octavio de Toledo y Huerta 2016](#); [Ridruejo 1984](#)), as well as the use of the indicative future in counterfactual subordinate clauses ([Ridruejo 1984](#)).

However, it should not be forgotten that the presence of the present participle in Catalan and Aragonese could also be the result of a learned borrowing introduced at the end of the Middle Ages. Indeed, [Campos Souto \(2001, p. 373\)](#) and [Mesa Sanz \(2004\)](#) point out that present participles in the vernacular language do not constitute patrimonial forms. Specifically, [Mesa Sanz \(2004, p. 371\)](#) considers the existence of the present participle in Romance languages to be the result of the rhetorical artifice of the medieval language so that no Romance language inherits it directly from Latin.<sup>25</sup> However, whatever the origin of the use of present participles in the linguistic varieties of the eastern part of the Peninsula, the imprint of Catalan and Aragonese on the Spanish language cannot be ignored, either as importers of linguistic novelties or as the origin of innovations<sup>26</sup> ([Fernández-Ordóñez 2011](#); [Octavio de Toledo y Huerta 2017a](#); [Pons Rodríguez 2015](#); [Ridruejo 1984](#); [Rodríguez Molina 2010](#)). In the specific case of *mediante*, Aragonese or Catalan authors are the first to use this grammatical form in

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<sup>25</sup> According to [Bassols de Climent \(1992, p. 234\)](#):

Si bien en el período clásico tiene [el participio de presente] un significado acusadamente verbal en cuanto expresaba acciones (como los verbos) y no cualidades (como los adjetivos), no obstante ya en el latín arcaico y popular va ganando terreno su valor nominal sobre el verbal. Triunfa esta tendencia en romance (...).

While in the classical period, [the present participle] has a markedly verbal meaning insofar as it expressed actions (like verbs) and not qualities (like adjectives), in archaic and popular Latin, its nominal value steadily gains ground over the verb. This trend prevails in Romance (...).

[my translation]

<sup>26</sup> An identical influence is observed in the emergence of *no obstante*, *no embargante*, and *no contrastante* (cf. [Garachana Camarero 2018](#)). And the same can be said of the preposition *durante*.

their works written in Spanish, so it is safe to assume that Aragonese and Catalan would have served as catalysts for the introduction of a Latinizing structure in Spanish that would not triumph, in general, but would leave its mark on the preposition *mediante*.<sup>27</sup>

In dealing with the influences of eastern linguistic varieties on the introduction of learned (Latin) linguistic traits in Old Spanish, [Octavio de Toledo y Huerta \(2017a, p. 82\)](#) points out that key authors from the fourteenth century were trained in Italy or in Catalonia and Aragon: Villena, Mena, Santillana, Martínez de Toledo, or Alfonso de la Torre, among others. It is also important to point out, following [Octavio de Toledo y Huerta \(2017a\)](#), that the Latinisms introduced in the Romance languages at this time arrived via translations of legal, administrative, or technical texts so that there is no diglossic situation that might have inhibited their extension into the vernacular language. On the contrary, they are what [Barra Jover \(2010, p. 64\)](#) called “unmarked Latinisms”, which, since they were not introduced into the language through prestigious variants, but through everyday communicative situations among speakers, can be consolidated more easily into the language.

Present participle constructions re-analyzed as prepositions constituted a rhetorical fashion on the rise at this point in Western European history. This is evidenced by the fact that similar structures exist in other Western European languages. In the specific case of *mediante*, there are synonymous forms in Catalan *mediant* (35), French *moyennant* (36), or Italian *mediante* (37), whose first documentations are close in time to those of Spanish (all seem to be concentrated in the fourteenth century).

- (35) speram en Nostre Senyor Déu, **mediant** lo seu divinal auxili, partir de aci lo terç jorn de festes de Nadal (*Lletres reials a la ciutat de Girona*, 1293, II-6, Carta 627, linia: 18, CICA)

“we hope in our Lord God, **through** his divine help, to leave from here the third day of the Christmas festival.”

- (36) ... **moiennant** les prieres de l’eglise (JEAN GOLEIN, *Rational B.D.*, c.1370–1372, p. 679). [*Traité du sacre*, DMF]

“**thanks to** the prayers of the church.”

- (37) E **mediante** la grazia di Dio tutti gli altri guarirono (Simone Sigoli, *Viaggio al monte Sinai*, TLIO)

“And **by** the grace of God, all the others will be healed.”

In addition to *mediante* (and *durante*), Spanish, Catalan, Aragonese, French, and Italian also employ *no obstante* and *no contrastante* ‘although’. Moreover, Spanish and Aragonese also used *no embargante* ‘in spite of, although, however’, which, like *no obstante*, was used as a preposition, a conjunction and a counter-argumentative discourse marker (cf. [Garachana Camarero 2018](#); [Pérez Saldanya and Salvador 2014](#)). All of these forms are Latinisms, which were disseminated in European languages from the fourteenth century. Consequently, attention should be drawn to the importance of not misidentifying grammatical change as grammaticalization. In fact, the data provided by the texts do allow us to explain the introduction of *mediante* into Spanish as a result of a grammatical calque that, coming from the east of the Peninsula, triumphed in Spanish, while it was lost in Catalan. What was the origin of the misunderstanding? It seems to be the wide explanatory power of the Theory of Grammaticalization, which can sometimes make it possible to explain on the basis of this approach processes of change that respond to other evolutionary mechanisms, such as the grammatical calque (for this question cf.

<sup>27</sup> An identical influence is observed in the emergence of *no obstante*, *no embargante*, and *no contrastante* (cf. Removed for peer review.). The same can be said for the preposition *durante*.

This idea, applied to the present participle, in general, is already found in [Ridruėjo \(1984\)](#). On the other hand, [Lapesa \(1986\)](#) and [Meilán García \(1991\)](#) point out a possible influence of French for the use of present participles, in general, in Old Spanish.

Harris and Campbell 1995). It is, therefore, necessary to pay attention to the data and not to ignore the socio-cultural factors in which the language is set and which, therefore, can be decisive in its history.

## 6. And after the Calque ... Grammaticalization?

In the previous pages, I have argued that the existence of *mediante* in Spanish is not the result of a grammaticalization process. Nonetheless, from the preposition *mediante*, the conjunction *mediante que* ‘because’ was later developed, the existence of which could perhaps be explained as a case of secondary grammaticalization.<sup>28</sup> However, the concept of secondary grammaticalization itself is not well outlined in grammatical theory and is entangled in a theoretical discussion which is yet to be resolved. If we add to this the fact that the existence of *mediante que* can be argued to be the result of the broadening of the scope of the preposition *mediante* by coming to encompass a whole clause, we can explain the emergence of *mediante que* as an analogical expansion which was favored by the re-analysis of *mediante*. Consequently, it is also possible to explain the existence of *mediante que* without resorting to the theory of grammaticalization.<sup>29</sup> As I will demonstrate in the following paragraphs, the process follows paths of change in which analogy is key.

The consolidation of *mediante* in Spanish, which, as was stated, became evident in the attempt to adapt it paradigmatically to the language through combinations with other prepositions that would turn it into a prepositional locution, also led to further enlargement of its scope. Thus, from the sixteenth century onwards, we begin to find instances of *mediante* governing verbal infinitives and complement clauses. This is the beginning of the process of formation of the conjunction *mediante que*. As shown in (38), the prepositional use of *mediante* before nominal elements allowed its analogical extension in contexts in which this nominal element was an infinitive, which at times, in spite of being preceded by an article, had a verbal value (see examples in 39, and especially Sánchez López 2016). From these constructions, an additional analogical extension of *mediante* emerged when it started to be employed before complement clauses headed by *que*. From here, there was a re-analysis of *mediante* and *que* as causal conjunction. At this point, as pointed out by Sánchez López (2016), *mediante* loses its traits of semantic selection, as it goes from governing terms that denote entities that can be interpreted as instruments to governing sentences (40).

(38) [PP[<sub>prep</sub> *Mediante* [NP]] > [PP[<sub>prep</sub> *Mediante* [INF]] > [PP[<sub>prep</sub> *Mediante* [QUE + CLAUSE]] > [CAUSAL SENTENCE [causal conj. *Mediante que* [CLAUSE]]]

(39) a. Todos estos indios destas prouinçias referidas (... ) es gente que vsan y acostumbnan poner en las flechas hierba ponzoñosa y pestilencial, con que matan la gente (... ) y **mediante** el vsar desta hierua pestilencial para su defensa, se conseruan y an defendido siempre de los españoles, y nunca an sido enteramente subiectos, ni domados dellos. (Fray Pedro de Aguado, *Historia de Santa Marta y Nuevo Reino de Granada*, 1573–1581, CORDE)

“All these Indians of the aforementioned provinces are people who usually put on the arrows a poisonous and pestilent herb with which they kill people, and, **through** using this stinking herb for their defense, they keep and have always defended themselves from the Spaniards, and they have never been completely subdued or controlled by them.”

b. paresciole a Yamque Yupangue que su padre era ya de gran edad y que **mediante andar** ellos en la guerra sería posible morir y no hallarse ellos a su muerte (Juan de Betanzos, *Suma y narración de los incas*, 1551, CORDE)

<sup>28</sup> The concept of *secondary grammaticalization* was coined by Givón (1991) to refer to the second type of change that Kurylowicz (1965) proposed in his definition of grammaticalization, namely, a change that leads from grammatical elements to more grammatical ones. Later, Traugott (2002) created the notion of *primary grammaticalization* to allude to the evolutive steps that lead from the lexical to the grammatical. For a review of the concept of secondary grammaticalization, cf. Winter-Froemel (2014).

<sup>29</sup> The most detailed study on the creation of *mediante que* is that of Sánchez López (2016).



“It seemed to Yamque Yupangue that his father was very old and that, **since** they were at war, he could die and they would no be present when he died.”

- (40) Los papeles periodicos no dan a sus autores menos derecho; pues el producir sus noticias en esta forma no es efecto de corta literatura, sino de haver imaginado, que combenia propagar asi las noticias, **mediante que** se facilita la lectura de mayor numero de personas. (Juan Antonio Llorente, *Discursos sobre el orden de procesar en los tribunales de Inquisición, 1797*, CORDE)

“Periodical publications do not give their authors less right; for producing their news in this way is not the consequence of bad literature, but of their having imagined that it was appropriate to publish news in this way **since** it made it easier for a greater number of people to read it.”

The causal meaning of *mediante que* is explained by the fact that this sense was already one of its prepositional values. That is, the sense of mediation and of a means by which an action is carried out or a state is reached evolve into causation: carrying out an action by way of someone or something allows for the inference that such thing is done thanks to it, that is, because of it. In the prepositional uses, the sense of causation must be understood as a positive cause. In the conjunctive uses, this causal sense was established in the expression of the explanatory or justifying cause, which, as [Sánchez López \(2016\)](#) points out, is the characteristic value of the sentences headed by *mediante que*.

## 7. Conclusions

In this paper, I have reflected on the introduction of the preposition *mediante* in Spanish. Traditionally, its emergence in the language has been described as a process of grammaticalization. However, a detailed analysis of the data shows us, from its very first documentation, examples in which *mediante* appears well established as a preposition (in fact, it already existed in Latin). The constructions in which *mediante* has a verbal value in Old Spanish are the result of the Latinizing trends of the (pre)Renaissance, which, in spite of the positive appraisal of vernacular languages, exalted Latin to the extent of generating syntactic structures that violated the grammar of these languages. Hybrid constructions in which *mediante* appeared with plural morphology—impossible for Spanish prepositions, which are never inflected—can not be considered in most cases as verbal uses of *mediante*. In fact, in almost all cases, despite its plural form, *mediante* is a grammatical particle with a prepositional function.

Considering the difficulty of explaining the existence of *mediante* as the result of a process of grammaticalization, an alternative explanation is preferred based on the detailed analysis of the examples obtained from CORDE and the GRADIA corpora. This study has shown that the first examples of *mediante* are documented in texts written by Aragonese and Catalan authors. Something similar happens with other prepositions, conjunctions, and discourse markers originating in early present participles, namely, *durante* ‘during’, *no obstante*, *no embargante* ‘in spite of, although, however’, and *no contrastante* ‘in spite of, although’. Moreover, these constructions have been documented in the languages of Western Europe since the fourteenth century with similar values. Consequently, the hypothesis can be ventured that they consist of a grammatical borrowing from Latin that spread through the European languages and reached Old Spanish through the Crown of Aragon, or, more specifically, through Aragonese and Catalan.

The triumph of *mediante* as a preposition probably has much to do with the exceptional character of present participles in Spanish, which would have favored the primacy of prepositional values, which did not violate the syntactic rules of Spanish where the present participle is not a grammatical class. However, as has already been pointed out, the prepositions coming from participles have a form and meaning that are not particularly consistent with a class of words characterized by their low semantic load and limited phonetic length. Quite possibly, for this reason, examples soon began to be documented in which *de* was placed after the preposition, and more rarely, *a*, in clear parallelism with what happened with *no embargante de*, *no obstante de*, and *no contrastante de* ‘in spite

of'.<sup>30</sup> The postposing of a preposition constitutes a grammatical redundancy, given that *mediante*, *durante*, *no embargante*, *no obstante*, and *no contrastante* were already prepositions. Then, how does one explain this redundancy? The answer is that the use of the prepositions *a* and *de* following *mediante*, *durante*, *no obstante*, *no embargante*, and *no contrastante* was an attempt to formally integrate these forms derived from a participle into the paradigm of prepositions. This highlights the importance of analogy in speakers' linguistic behavior, as they often try to standardize grammatical paradigms on the basis of the functional or semantic resemblance they perceive between linguistic forms.

Finally, once the prepositional form was established in the language, the causal conjunction *mediante que* was created, which was used in Spanish from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The formation of the conjunction *mediante que* from the preposition *mediante* suggests its re-analysis in contexts in which *mediante* does not govern a phrase, but rather a sentence. *Mediante que* is an extension of the prepositional use of *mediante* motivated by the analogical extension of the type of complement it appears next to. In the same way that *por* or *para* can be followed by a nominal element, an infinitive verb, or a sentence, *mediante* started out governing nominal phrases and ended up governing clauses as well. The process would have been facilitated by the use of *mediante* before infinitives. This functional change was accompanied by the consolidation of explanatory or justifiable causal meanings of *mediante que*, which did not become established in the language.

### Main Corpus

BREPOLIS = Brepolis Library of Latin Texts Series A–B, Turnhout, Brepols ([apps.brepolis.net](http://apps.brepolis.net)).

CICA = Corpus informatitzat del català antic (<http://www.cica.cat>).

CORDE = Real Academia Española, Banco de datos (CORDE) [en línea]. *Corpus diacrónico del español*. <<http://www.rae.es>> [Enero de 2015].

CORPES XXI = Real Academia Española, Banco de datos CORPES XXI [en línea]. *Corpus del Español del Siglo XXI*, <<http://web.frl.es/CORPES/view/inicioExterno.view>> [consulta junio 2016].

DMF = Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique/Université de Lorraine (2015): *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* [online], <<http://www.atilf.fr/dmf>>.

GRADIA = Corpus de Gramática y diacronía ([gradiadacronia.wix.com/gradia](http://gradiadacronia.wix.com/gradia)).

TLIO = Corpus testuale dell'Italiano antico (<http://www.ovi.cnr.it/>).

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<sup>30</sup> Cuervo, in his note 143 on Bello's *Gramática*, points out the use of prepositions *durante*, *mediante*, *obstante*, *embargante*, *excepto* followed by *a* or *de*, as a result of the analogy with synonymous locutions, such as *a pesar de*, *sin embargo de*. For Cuervo, these are objectionable constructions which he qualifies as carelessness that “deben evitarse a todo trance” (‘should be avoided at all costs’, Cuervo note 143 in Bello 1988, pp. 969–70. My translation).

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Article

# The Role of Elision in Evolutionary Processes

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**Abstract:** Changes by elision—as well as those due to processes of adfunctionalization or refunctionalization—must be taken into account as explanatory mechanisms of linguistic change. In this paper, we study the role of elision in the theoretical overview of explanatory theories of language change by focusing on the evolutionary process of the Spanish adverb *aparte*. We analyze the consequences of the elision of an initial construction for the development of new functions as an exceptive or additive adverb, and as an additive connector with a specific meaning, conditioned by the evolution of the entire construction. We find that, in this case, the ellipsis of a verbal element has led to important modifications of the preserved item (*aparte*), not only at the semantic-pragmatic and functional levels but also in its category membership.

**Keywords:** elision; connector; construction; evolutionary process

## 1. Objective and Hypothesis

The objective of this paper is to analyze the role played by elision in processes of grammatical evolution on the basis of the data provided by the changes undergone by the particle *aparte* in the course of its history.<sup>1</sup> The cases analyzed in texts from the 15th century onwards indicate that the functions that *aparte* acquired from the 16th century, first as an exceptive particle, and later on as an ‘adlative’ additive connector, have their origin in the integration of the adverb in certain absolute constructions which were widespread in the 16th century (*dejando aparte, dejado aparte . . .*), and which underwent the elision of the verb *dejar* ‘to leave’. Thus, the adverb *aparte* was pragmatically loaded with the meaning of the entire construction and experienced a major functional change when reanalyzed as an exceptive particle.

In other words, the history of *aparte* allows us to analyze to what extent a verbal elision constitutes the point of departure for a process of change that cannot be entirely explained by the Theory of Grammaticalization, and that has as its main consequence the semantic and functional complexity of *aparte*. As we will see, in current Spanish *aparte* works not only as an adverb of place—directional or locative (1a, 1b)—or as an adverb of manner (1c), but also as a noun (1d), as an adjective (1e), as an exceptive adverb (1f), as an additive adverb (1g), and as additive connector of specific meaning, which we have labeled an ‘adlative additive’ (Azofra Sierra 2014) (1h).<sup>2</sup> As an exceptive and an additive, it admits prepositional or conjunctive extension (*aparte de/[de] que*).

- (1) a. Llevaron **aparte** (‘a otro lugar’) al detenido. “The person under arrest was taken **aside**.” b. Enterraron el cuerpo **aparte** (‘en otro lugar’). “The body was buried **apart**.” c. Las invasiones se organizaron **aparte** (‘separadamente, de forma independiente’). “Invasions were organised

<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper. Oversights, omissions, and errors in the final version of the paper are entirely my own.

<sup>2</sup> According to the RAE and ASALE (2009, 1.9z), *connectors or markers* are a “discursive class” that can be formed by adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions or more complex constructions.

separately.” d. La relación de los personajes se descubrió en **un aparte** (‘una conversación privada, que no oyen otras personas’). “Relationships between the characters were unveiled in an **aside**.” e. Cervantes es un escritor **aparte** (‘diferente’). “Cervantes is a writer **apart**” f. {**Aparte del precio / El precio aparte**} (‘excepto el precio’), es una compra estupenda. “Its price **apart**, it’s an excellent buy.” g. **Aparte** de guapa (‘además de guapa’), es muy buena persona. “**Apert** from being beautiful, she’s a good person.” h. No tiene ningún motivo para lamentarse: **aparte** de que (‘además de que’) tiene una familia estupenda, su trabajo es interesante y le permite disfrutar de una buena renta. “She has no reason to complain. **Besides** having a wonderful family, her job is interesting and allows her to enjoy a good income.”

From the theoretical point of view, the explanatory scope of the Theory of Grammaticalization, especially in the case of the evolution of discourse markers, has been long questioned (cf. Company 2004; Garachana Camarero 2015; Pons Rodríguez 2010, for more in-depth analysis). In fact, not all changes can be explained by *grammaticalization*; that is to say:

[T]he change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions. (Hopper and Traugott [1993] 2003, p. 18)

We believe that the evolutionary process of the particle *aparte* will allow us to analyze where to set elision within the theoretical overview of explanatory theories of language change. Finally, it is important to underline the fact that context as a locus of change comes to have changes by elision: Forms do not change in isolation, but they acquire new functions depending on their context and are—as we will see in this case—integrated into a given construction. It is, therefore, necessary to emphasize the importance of *constructionalization* (Traugott and Trousdale 2013). The result is a particle that acquires new functions in the course of its history while not losing the initial meanings linked to the locative adverbial category, in a process that could be defined as ‘adfunctionalization’ according to Smith (2011, p. 305): “The process in which a form assumes a new function alongside or in addition to its original function.”

## 2. The History of the Particle *Aparte*

### 2.1. Grammaticalization

Originally, *aparte* comes from a locative prepositional phrase that has been grammaticalized as an adverb, *a {una/otra/su} parte* > *aparte* (for a detailed analysis of the history of the particle *aparte*, cf. Azofra Sierra 2011). The original phrase, of which we have examples in (2), inherits a Latin construction with the preposition AD, whose meaning can be directional (‘hacia, a’) or situational (‘junto a’) depending on the context. From a theoretical point of view, the process that gives rise to the adverb of place can be explained in terms of *grammaticalization*: The original noun fails to admit determiners or complement phrases (2); it loses the possibility of number inflection, and the construction is blended as one single item, fixed as early as the medieval times: Invariable, and characteristically adverbial, either locative ‘a/en otro lugar’, ‘a distancia’ (3) or modal ‘separadamente’ (4).

- (2) que se tiró **a una parte** por le dar el viento (c. 1300–1325, *Cuento muy famoso de Otas de Roma*). “he stepped **aside** to avoid the gale” b. que los freyres posauan **a su parte** (1293, *Gran Conquista de Ultramar*). “that the friars put **at their side**” c. e el uno, echado **a otra parte** medio vivo, mostraba razón de la muerte (a 1280, Alfonso X, *General Estoria*). “and one, lying **aside** half alive, showed signs of death”
- (3) a. Essora salién **aparte** ifantes de Carrión (c. 1140, *Poema de Mio Cid*). “Then the princes of Carrión stood **aside**” b. E de los çient cavalleros, llamó los veynte **a parte** delos mejores (c 1300–1325, *Cuento muy fermoso de Otas de Roma*). “And from the one hundred knights, he called **aside** twenty of the best”

- (4) Et si el bozero o el duenno del pleito quisiere aver consejo, que lo aya **a parte**; (1252, *Documentos notariales*). “And if the lawyer or the litigant should wish to deliberate, let them do so **apart**,”

In these examples, the original function—both of the prepositional construction *a* {*una/la/otra/ su*} *parte* and the adverb *aparte*—is an adjunct of the verb, indicating a locative circumstance. As indicated by RAE and ASALE (2009, 30.2ñ), most adverbs in Spanish are adjuncts, that is, unselected modifiers. However, on the other hand, we find instances of the adverb *aparte* as a noun complement from the earliest texts on—probably after verbal ellipsis—constructions of the *capítulo aparte* type, which were frequent in legal texts.<sup>3</sup> From the 15th century on, this construction increases and spreads to other contexts, until it generalizes in a variety of genres in the 17th century (*reino aparte, conversación aparte...*), see example (5):

- (5) Él fundó a Roma en el monte Aventino e hizo **regno aparte** para sí (1427–1428, E. de Villena, *Traducción y glosas de la Eneida*) “He founded Rome on the Mount Aventine and made a **separate kingdom** for himself”

Very much to the Latinizing taste of the age, an absolute construction became frequent in the 15th century, in which *aparte* was combined with the gerund or past participle of the verbs *dejar* or *poner*, with the meaning ‘to omit’ or ‘to ignore’, as illustrated in (6), (7) and (8):

- (6) Atraviéndose, todo temor **aparte puesto**, contra las defensiones legales (1427–1428, E. de Villena, *Traducción y glosas de la Eneida*). “all fears **set aside**, he dared to oppose legal impediments”  
 (7) no queda otro remedio sino que, **dexando aparte** los muertos, los bivos que quedan pongan (1482–1492, Garcí Rodríguez de Montalvo, *Amadís de Gaula*). “there is no choice but, leaving the dead **aside**, for those still living to remedy”  
 (8) Por tanto, *dexadas* lágrimas **aparte**, dezidme quién sois (1516, F. Bernal, *Floriseo*). “So, leaving tears **aside**, tell me who you are”

These absolute clauses spread very quickly in the 16th century, as we can see in the table below, which shows the frequency of the absolute construction *dejado/a/os/as aparte* + NC or its equivalent from the 15th–19th century. We can observe how this construction becomes fixed in the 16th century and begins to become less frequent after the 17th century when ellipsis occurs (see Table 1).

Table 1. Absolute construction frequencies over the centuries.

12th–14th c.	15th c.	16th c.	17th c.	18th c.	19th c.
	18	146	64	2	3

The establishment of this construction made the two constant elements—the verb and adverb—begin to act like a semantic unit, favoring the start of a new process of grammaticalization. Although an increase in frequency alone is no proof that there is a process of grammaticalization (Octavio de Toledo y Huerta 2014), other formal changes confirm this point: Agreement between the past participle and its subject is lost (masculine *dejado* vs. feminine *la cámara*), the verbal form is exclusively masculine singular, and in many cases the adverb moves to the position immediately after the participle, as we can see in example (9):<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Both in Latin and Spanish the verbal ellipsis of *ESSE* or *ser/estar* occurs frequently, which in this case enables the adverb to situate the noun in space: “Un capítulo [que está] aparte” (“a chapter [that is] apart”). It could also be interpreted as a change in the construction of the locative complement: “Aparte del capítulo” > “en capítulo aparte” (“apart from the chapter” > “in a separate chapter” (see this example: *Et ne huiusmodi donatio a me facta et obligatio a parte capituli repremissa possint in dubium revocari*, 1269, *Documentos notariales*). In any case, the possible ellipsis in these examples are not related to the process we will describe below, the verbal ellipsis of *dejar* or *poner* in absolute clauses.

<sup>4</sup> Compare the constructions in examples (7) and (8): *Dexadas* lágrimas *aparte* vs. *dejado aparte* la cámara.



- (9) Y lo bueno que es que, **dejado aparte** la cámara a donde duermen y el estrado . . . (1550, P. de Luján, *Coloquios matrimoniales*). “And the good thing is that, **leaving aside** the chamber where they sleep and the platform . . . ”

Semantic evolution of the overall meaning of the construction also takes place: ‘*Dejar a un lado*’ comes to be used in the sense of ‘to ignore, to exempt’ now; and ‘*poner a un lado*’ has the meaning of ‘to add’. As an absolute clause, *aparte* usually has an exceptive meaning (10), though there is no shortage of examples with additive meaning (11):

- (10) Éste será también mi gusto, porque, **aparte** nuestras peleas, don Benito es un amigo de corazón (1898, Á. Ganivet, *Los trabajos del infatigable creador Pío Cid*). “That will also be my pleasure, because, our quarrels **aside**, don Benito is a dear friend”
- (11) y bien portado, casi daba gusto de socorrerle, **aparte** la obra de caridad (1898, Á. Ganivet, *Los trabajos del infatigable creador Pío Cid*). “and so well-behaved, that, quite **apart** from it being a charitable work, it was almost a pleasure to help him”

### 2.2. Ellipsis and the Introduction of the Exceptive Particle

The high frequency of the construction starts to erode the lexical meaning of the verbal element as it loses its specific semantic content and alternates—without an appreciable difference—with other verbal elements like *poner* or *sacar*:

- (12) Romper con grandísima destreza, *poniendo* géneros **aparte**, (1599, M. Alemán, *Primera parte de Guzmán de Alfarache*). “breaking with extreme dexterity, putting goods **aside**,”

Over time, such unitary meaning would have made unnecessary the monotonous repetition of the less accurate meaning element (in this case, the verbal one: *Dejar*, *poner*, etc.) and would have favored ellipsis. The overall meaning of the expression would then fall on the element that remained, the adverb *aparte*, which initially expressed a circumstance of the verbal action and was reanalyzed as an exceptive modal adverb, meaning ‘omitted’, ‘not being considered’ as in (13).

- (13) Pues sepan -replicó Sancho-, burlas **aparte**, que no solamente me toca a mí uno de los nombres que cada uno de vuestras mercedes tiene [ . . . ], sino [ . . . ] (1614, A. Fernández de Avellaneda, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*). ““May you know” replied Sancho, “that, jokes **apart**, it’s not just one of the names which each of Your Worships has that belong to me [ . . . ], [but] . . . ”

### 2.3. From Exceptive Particle to Adlative Additive Connector

The origin of *aparte* as an additive connector is closely associated with these uses since in many of the cases in which it has an exceptive meaning, *aparte* is linked to what is properly argumentative: Reasons, fears, opinions, etc. are ignored or left aside. This contextual meaning favors the semantic-pragmatic change that leads *aparte* to become an element of additive connection within the argumentative discourse. The existence of ambiguous contexts confirms this, as we can see in (14), where *aparte* can mean either ‘outside (in addition to)’ or ‘apart from’:

- (14) Para que los cobren y empleen en lo que **aparte de** este testamento dejare ordenado (1681, P. Calderón de la Barca, *Testamento*). “so that they collect and use them in what I shall order **in addition to/apart from** this will . . . ”

The close connection between the verbal ellipsis and the introduction of the connector is also evident in some examples where the elimination of the verbal element (*[dejado]*) results in the use of *aparte* as an additive marker, as in examples (15) and (16):

- (15) Sol.—En llegando a Valladolid, me habéis de dar un traslado desta loa, porque, **[dejado] aparte** que es de mucho gusto, me quiero aprovechar de algún remedio para limpiarme los dientes, aunque los tengo tan malos que me parece imposible que yo venga a tener en mi vida buena

dentadura (1603, A. de Rojas Villadrando, *El viaje entretenido*). “Sol.—When we arrive in Valladolid, you must give me a version of this prologue, because, quite **apart from** the fact that it is very pleasing, I want to use some remedy to clean my teeth, although they are in such a bad state that I think it is impossible that I will ever have a good set of teeth in my life”

- (16) Ellos nacieron con libertad de hombres, y ellas con recato de mujeres. Y así, por lo que deben ser más culpadas, [**dexando**] **aparte** que son más desgraciadas, es que como son las que pierden más, luce en ellas más el delito. Y por esto, como los hombres se juzgan los más ofendidos, quéxanse y condénanlas en todo, y así están hoy más abatidas que nunca, porque deben de ser los excesos mayores. Demás de esto, (1647–1649, María de Zayas y Sotomayor, *Desengaños amorosos*). “Men are born with the freedom which is characteristic of men, and women are born with the modesty which is characteristic of women. And so it is that women must get blamed more, **setting aside** the fact that they are more unfortunate, because since they have more to lose, their misdeeds are more apparent. And on that account, since men judge themselves to be more greatly offended, they complain and condemn women in everything, and so women are now more oppressed than ever, because their excesses must be greater. Besides this ...”

We can observe the new functions developed by *aparte* after the 16th century in the following examples: Exceptive ‘except for’ (17) and additive ‘in addition to’ (18).

- (17) ¿Y lo demás? Nada. Allí no hay sexo. **Aparte** del orden, parece el cuarto de un estudiante (1885-85, Clarín, *La Regenta*). “And the rest? Nothing. There is no sex. **Except for** its tidiness, it looks like a student’s room”
- (18) Carmen se confesaba en aquel instante a sí misma que toda la noche había pensado en el subteniente, que le era muy simpático, **aparte** de ser buen mozo; (1886, Clarín, *Pipá*). “At that moment, Carmen was admitting to herself that she had been thinking of the lieutenant all night long, and that she found him very agreeable **as well as** handsome;”

In modern Spanish, obviously, we are no longer dealing with cases of ellipsis: In (17) and (18), *aparte* is already used as a connector. We postulate that the verbal elision in absolute constructions with *dejar* and *poner* led to *aparte* being endowed with new meanings, exceptive and additive, as a connector, without the need to resort to more complex construction.

### 3. The Specific Meaning of *Aparte* within the Additive Connection

The pragmatic meaning of *aparte* as an additive connector shows the persistence of its etymological meaning, which is why we have called such an additive connector ‘adlative’ (Azofra Sierra 2014). It thus differs from cases where the addition is ‘cumulative’ or ‘summative’, for which connectors such as *encima* or *además* are used (Espinosa Elorza 2010, pp. 157–58).

As we can see in example (18), it is clear that *aparte* is a particle that has a very peculiar procedural additive meaning. It coincides with *además*—a prototypical connector of the set of additives—in that the argument it shows has the same orientation as the previous one: It is co-orientated. On the other hand, it differs from *además* in that the argument headed by the connector *aparte* is unnecessary to reach the conclusion—by contrast with the one introduced by *además*, which is deemed necessary. In this respect, *aparte* behaves like *encima*, a connector that also introduces an unnecessary argument. However, since the argument introduced by the connector is presented as following a different line from the preceding argument, the fact that it can have less argumentative force does not contradict the expectations of the speaker—something that can happen with the connector *encima*—and this is precisely the origin of its use as a counter-argumentative connector (Garachana Camarero 2008). *Aparte*

also differs from *encima* in that its argument does not carry an excessive, cumulative load, nor does it carry a subjective nuance.<sup>5</sup>

As we can see in example (19), this is the peculiarity of *aparte* in its procedural meaning as additive connector (vs. other additives):

- (19) Tal vez por ahí puedas tú encontrar la solución –le sugirió Julio García a Antonio Casal–. Dirigiendo uno de esos organismos. **Aparte de que** el tipo de labor, humanitaria, es de las que a ti te gustan, resolverías tu vida. (1961, J. María Gironella, *Un millón de muertos*). “Perhaps you can find the solution there: Managing one of those agencies,” suggested Julio García to Antonio Casal. “**Apart from** the fact that this is the kind of humanitarian work you like, it would sort your life out.”

Conclusion: to manage one of those agencies is the solution [to your problems]:

Argument 1: You would sort your life out;

Argument 2: You would do the type of job you like.

These are co-orientated arguments along different lines; the second is not necessary and it does not have greater argumentative force, nor does it have an excessive or evaluative nature (as opposed to *encima*). Being arguments of different types, they do not “add” anything to the reaching of a conclusion: They will not contradict the listener’s expectations. We observe that it may even happen, as in this example, that the argument introduced by *aparte* acts as a reinforcement of the main argument, despite actually being a much weaker argument. At any rate, it is evident that the argumentation follows two separate paths since two different types of reason are presented.

In the evolution of *aparte* there is a semantic-pragmatic change which conventionalizes its meaning of omission, or voluntary relegation outside the central point of attention, which developed from the original locative meaning of the adverb, and this process is the basis of its use as an additive connector. Exception and addition can be seen as contextual readings of the same evaluative attitude from the speaker, who introduces something that is not essential (and may not even be important) to the argumentative sequence and must be considered as lateral or secondary to the particle *aparte*. The context will clarify to the listener whether he needs to add this as additional information (*‘poniéndolo al lado [del resto de la argumentación]’*) or dispense with it (*‘dejándolo a un lado’*).

However, the use of *aparte* as an exceptive particle is not entirely comparable to that of the most prototypical exceptive particles in Spanish (*excepto* and *salvo*): Unlike these, *aparte* is usually not interpreted as relating to a universal quantified expression: “*Vinieron todos {excepto/salvo/\*aparte de} ella*” [“They all came except for her”]. This behavior may explain why *aparte* has developed an additive value that is not possible with the more univocal exceptive particles.

In other cases of grammaticalization, ellipsis also occurs in one of the elements of the original expression (cf. [Garachana Camarero 1998](#), regarding the marker *no obstante*; [Elvira 2009](#), regarding some expressions with concessive function; and [Pérez Saldanya and Salvador 2014](#), regarding concessive constructions such as *no obstante (esto)*, *sin embargo (de que . . . )*). In our case, similarly, the contextual meaning of the expression has become conventionalized; in addition, ellipsis occurs because one of the elements, now semantically eroded, becomes dispensable.

#### 4. *Aparte* in Lexicographical Works

Since the categorization of this particle is problematic, we consider it also necessary to carry out a specific study of the lexicographical treatment it has received, as in many cases this is very illustrative

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<sup>5</sup> Even though this is a matter that would require more specific attention, we cannot overlook the fact that the arguments linked by *aparte* may be inverted without affecting the meaning; something that does not happen with *encima*: (18) *Dirigiendo uno de esos organismos, harías un trabajo que te gusta y aparte resolverías tu vida.*

of the changes undergone by the adverb and its resistance to an analysis which covers the whole complexity of its evolution. We provide some examples of interest in the final Appendix A: *Diccionario de autoridades*, *Diccionario histórico de la lengua española*, *Diccionario de uso del español*, *Diccionario del español actual*, *Diccionario de la lengua española*, *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas*.

Successive editions of the Real Academia Española (RAE)'s *Diccionario de la lengua española*—henceforth DRAE—have collected these changing meanings and have thus shown the difficulty in assigning a grammatical category to some of these new functions. We can observe how in DRAE 1803 the phrase *dexar aparte* ('to omit') is no longer present. *Aparte* maintains its categorization as an adverb of manner ('apart from, drawing a distinction') in its first meaning entry. In 1899, the adverb of manner is divided into two meanings: '*separadamente, con omisión*' ('apart from, drawing a distinction') and '*con omisión, con preterición*' ('omitting'). For the first time, we find the meaning as an adverb of place, in its purely locative meaning: '*en otro lugar*' ('elsewhere'). In DRAE 1914, the adverbial uses of place split into two meanings: '*en otro lugar*' ('elsewhere') and '*a distancia, desde lejos*' ('at a distance, away'); there are no changes in its uses as adverb of manner. In 1970, the adjectival meaning is added, '*diferente, distinto, singular*' ('different, peculiar'), with an example which is maintained until 2001: "*Góngora es un autor APARTE en la poesía española*". In RAE 1992, a new category is introduced:

**Aparte de.** loc. prepos. Con omisión de, con preterición de. U. t. sin la preposición y pospuesto al nombre. APARTE *impuestos, impuestos APARTE.* (RAE 1992)

In DRAE 2001, with the meaning '*con omisión de, con preterición de*', it is considered a preposition, but in 2014 it is categorized as an adverb, even though the same examples and definitions are applied. Regarding additive meaning, only some lexicographical works explicitly mention an "additive" nature (Moliner 1970; Santos 2003). In the works by the RAE, we must understand that *aparte* is considered as a contextual variant of the adverb of manner: DHLE: "adv. m. Además de, separadamente"; DRAE: "adv. m. Separadamente, con distinción". (Cuervo [1886–1893] 1994) does not list *aparte* as an additive adverb, nor does he relate it to *además* or *encima*; he does not explicitly refer to the exceptive uses either (in no case does he employ paraphrases like '*fuera de*' in order to explain the meaning of *aparte*). Problems of categorization have been reflected in the definitions found in lexicographical works. The categorization of some uses is quite heterogeneous. We find these conflicting uses:

- *Aparte de esto*: Prepositional vs. adverbial phrase. *Aparte* has the potentiality for prepositional (*aparte de*) and conjunctive (*aparte [de] que*) extension.
- Phrases like *un cuaderno aparte*, 'independent': Postnominal preposition vs. adjective vs. adverb as noun complement.
- Absolute clauses of the *bromas aparte* type or independent complements like *impuestos aparte*: Postnominal preposition vs. adjective vs. adverb following the ellipsis of a verb such as *dejar*.
- *Aparte* as attribute? *El café es aparte*: Adjective vs. locative adverb.

As explained in Azofra Sierra (2011), problems in categorization are largely due to the elision that has taken place in the evolutionary process.

## 5. Conclusions

We have reviewed the process of evolution of the connector *aparte*, attempting to find in its history the reasons for its specific meaning as an additive connector, which distinguishes it from other additives: when it adds an argument, the marker indicates that this is not necessary to reach the conclusion, but neither is it an element of greater argumentative force than the first one, and in fact, what the hearer must infer is that the argument introduced by *aparte* permits the reaching of the same conclusion as that expressed by the first argument, but via by another track of reasoning. *Aparte* is also an additive connector, but it presents specific characteristics linked to its etymological meaning; thus, compared to other connectors that show addition in their vertical dimension (like *encima* or *sobre esto*), *aparte* does so in a horizontal dimension, like *junto/juntamente con esto*, medieval *allende de esto*

or *fuera de esto*: That is to say, one item is added next to another. Hence, the additives of this type can express addition and exception simultaneously. This special type of connection, which we call ‘adlative addition’, is to be considered the characteristic property of *aparte* (and *fuera de*, or medieval *allende de*): These connectors are used to introduce arguments that follow another route or pathway in reasoning, adding elements of a different type. Besides the additive function, some of the works consulted explicitly distinguish two meanings of *aparte*: Additive and exceptive. These meanings are very close, and can even occasionally coincide, precisely because of the special meaning of *aparte* as an additive to which we have referred above.

At the theoretical level, the study of the evolution of *aparte* allows us to draw some conclusions about the explanatory capacity of different mechanisms proposed to explain linguistic changes: Constructionalization, grammaticalization, or the relationship of this with adfunctionalization and refunctionalization processes. We have seen that grammaticalization cannot explain all the processes of change and that grammaticalization and lexicalization are not opposing processes: In the elision of *aparte*, there are changes which are characteristic of grammaticalization, but the elision of the verb causes the entry of a new item in the lexicon: *Aparte* ‘with omission’. It would be questionable whether all processes of grammaticalization give rise to grammatical elements or whether some of these processes result in lexical items of great complexity due to the lexical load which they have inherited from the original constructions.

On the other hand, attention should be called to the enormous complexity that changes by elision can cause in the categorial values of the new forms, as is evident in the case of *aparte*: The problems of categorization of the new polyfunctional form, which are reflected in the lexicographical works, show the great grammatical complexity of the units which are the result of changes by elision, due in large measure to the inheritance of the meanings of the entire initial construction.

Finally, we have highlighted the importance of context in the changes due to elision by which *aparte* becomes an exceptive/additive particle. Our study has attempted to make it clear that elision must be taken into account as a mechanism in explaining the linguistic change since it often initiates processes which are complementary to those of grammaticalization and can contribute to a better understanding of some of the complex processes of change such as those undergone by the particle *aparte*.

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## Appendix A. The Particle *Aparte* in Lexicography<sup>6</sup>

<i>Diccionario de Autoridades (RAE 1726)</i>
<b>APARTE.</b> adv. Separadamente, con distinción y separación: y assi se dice <i>Pon esto aparte, guárdalo aparte</i> . Lat. <i>Separatim, Seorsim.</i> // <b>APARTE.</b> En las Comedias es lo que el cómico dice y representa sin que lo entienda y oiga la Persona, ò Personas con quienes habla, [...] Lat. <i>Clam. Seorsim.</i> [...] // <i>Dexar una cosa aparte.</i> Se dice en la conversación, quando se entromete alguna especie que la interrumpe, ò que no es del intento para lo que se trata. [...]. Lat. <i>Praetermittere, omittere.</i> [...]

<i>Diccionario histórico de la lengua española (DHLE) (Academia Española 1933)</i>
<b>APARTE.</b> (Del lat. <i>ad, a, y pars partis</i> , parte.) adv. 1. Hacia parte o sitio retirado. 2. En parte retirada, en otro lado. 3. Del lado de. 4. adv. m. Además de, separadamente. [...] 5. Se usa a modo de preposición pospuesto al nombre. [...] <sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The entries listed are not complete: non-problematic cases have not been included (for example, meanings as noun).

<sup>7</sup> We have omitted the remaining meanings, which relate to its use as a noun.

<b>Diccionario de uso del español (DUE) (Moliner 1970)</b>
<p><b>aparte.</b> (De “parte”). 1. (“Dejar, estar, tener”). Adverbio con que se expresa la situación de una cosa separada de otras que se consideran, con las cuales estaba antes o con las cuales tiene alguna relación. [...] ‘Por separado. Separadamente’. [...] Se emplea como adjetivo en expresiones como “un grupo aparte, rancho aparte”. (fig; “Dejar. Tener”). Con preterición o desprecio; no dando a la persona de que se trata participación en las ventajas o en la sociedad de otros. [...] ]</p> <p>APARTE DE. (I) Prescindiendo de la cosa que se expresa. [...] (II) Además de. [...] ]</p> <p>APARTE DE QUE. Expresión conjuntiva de las que pueden llamarse “aditivas”, equivalente a “además de que”. [...] ]</p> <p>DEJAR APARTE. Dejar sin tratar por el momento cierta cosa. [...] ]</p> <p>ESO APARTE. Forma absoluta muy frecuente, usada por “aparte de eso”.</p>

<b>Diccionario del español actual (DEA) (Seco et al. 1999)</b>
<p><b>aparte I</b> <u>adv</u> 1 En lugar o situación separados con respecto a alguien o algo mencionado o presente, o con respecto a las perss. o cosas corrientes. (b) Continuando en el renglón siguiente. (c) En lugar o situación que permite la privacidad o la discreción. (d) [...] ]. 2 Sin ser considerado o mencionado. <i>Con vs como</i> DEJAR, PONER, QUITAR, ECHAR o QUEDAR. (b) Frec se omite el v, quedando el adv pospuesto o antepuesto al sust. (<i>minucias aparte, aparte bromas ahora</i>). <b>II</b> <u>adj invar</u> 3 Diferente o distinto [de alguien o algo mencionado, o de las perss. o cosas corrientes] (<i>ser aparte, comer en escudilla aparte</i>). (b) Independiente (<i>suelen ser tiradas aparte</i>). <b>III</b> <u>prep</u> 4 Además de. <i>Tb, más frec, . ~ DE</i>. 5 Fuera de o con excepción de. <i>Tb, más frec, ~ DE</i>.</p>

<b>Diccionario de la lengua española (RAE and ASALE 2014)</b>
<p><b>aparte.</b> (De <i>a</i><sup>1</sup> y el lat. <i>pars, partis</i>, parte).1. adj. Diferente, distinto, singular. <i>Góngora es un caso aparte en la poesía española</i>. 2. m. En el teatro, palabras que dice un personaje fingiendo hablar consigo mismo dirigiéndose a otro u otros, y dando por supuesto que no las oyen los demás. 3. m. Conversación privada que mantienen dos o más personas, al margen de otras que se hallan en el mismo lugar. 4. m. Ejemplar de una tirada aparte. 5. m. <i>Ar</i>. Espacio o hueco que, tanto en lo impreso como en lo escrito, se deja entre dos palabras. 6. m. <i>Arg., Col. y Ur</i>. En un rodeo, separación que se hace de cierto número de cabezas de ganado. 7. adv. En otro lugar. <i>Poner un libro aparte</i>. 8. adv. A distancia, desde lejos. 9. adv. Separadamente, con distinción. 10. adv. Con omisión de, con preterición de. <i>Aparte impuestos</i>. <i>Impuestos aparte</i>. 11. adv. En el teatro y referido al modo de decir su texto un personaje, fingiendo hablar consigo mismo o dirigiéndose a otro u otros, dando por supuesto que no lo oyen los demás. U. normalmente como acotación. <b>aparte de</b>. loc. prepos. fuera de (   además de). <i>Aparte de impuestos, el precio se mantuvo</i>.</p>

<b>Diccionario panhispánico de dudas (RAE and ASALE 2005)</b>
<p><b>aparte.</b> Puede funcionar como adverbio, como adjetivo, como sustantivo y como preposición:</p> <p>(a) Como adverbio significa ‘en otro lugar’. [...] ]. Con verbos como <i>dejar, poner</i> y similares, <i>aparte</i> significa también ‘fuera o al margen’: «<i>Dejando aparte la moral, quizá su negativa daba de él una imagen equivocada</i>» (SchzEspeso <i>Alas</i>). En estos casos, es frecuente la omisión del verbo, pudiendo quedar el adverbio antepuesto o pospuesto al sustantivo: «<i>La doctrina europeísta ha tenido, aparte su acierto o su error, una utilidad indiscutible</i>» (CSerraller <i>Paisajes</i>); «<i>Pero bromas aparte, yo empiezo a sentir miedo</i>» (Tusquets <i>Mar</i>). Como todos los adverbios, es invariable [...] ]. (b) Como adjetivo significa ‘distinto o singular’: «<i>Cada cosa de este mundo [...] era un caso aparte, una singularidad que no admitía comparaciones</i>» (Pombo <i>Metro</i>). Es invariable en plural: «[...] ] <i>integrar, en publicaciones aparte, los datos</i> [...] ]. (c) Como sustantivo es masculino y se usa normalmente con los sentidos de ‘palabras que, en un texto teatral, dicen uno o más personajes fingiendo que no las oyen los demás presentes en la escena’ y ‘conversación entre dos o más personas al margen de otras presentes’ [...] ]. (d) Forma la locución preposicional <i>aparte de</i>, que significa ‘con omisión de, al margen de’ [...] ]. En la lengua culta debe evitarse el uso de la locución popular <i>fuera aparte (de)</i> [...] ]. Está muy extendido, y es válido, el empleo de <i>aparte de</i> con el sentido de ‘además de’ [...] ].</p>

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Article

# On the History of *Ante(s)*: Exaptation of Adverbial *-s*?

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**Abstract:** In this paper we will describe the historical development of the Spanish doublet *ante-antes* ('before') and explore the question whether a process of exaptation is involved (cf. Lass 1990). We will argue that the final *-s* of *antes*, that originally marked the adverbial status of the word, in the course of time had become a kind of morphological 'junk' (cf. Lass 1990) and, subsequently, could be exploited in order to encode the semantic opposition between temporal meaning on the one hand, and adversative meaning on the other hand. However, based on quantitative data we will show that the incipient semantic redistribution over the course of the 16th century rather suddenly collapsed, leading to a differentiation between the prepositional *ante* and adverbial *antes*.

**Keywords:** adversativity; *ante-antes*; exaptation; temporality; preferentiality

## 1. Introduction

Currently, the only productive means to form an adverb in Spanish is by way of the suffix *-mente*, which is added to the female form of the adjective (*lento* > *lentamente*, 'slow' > 'slowly'). This suffix originally was a Latin noun, *mens* ('mind'), used in the ablative case to indicate the state of mind of someone, and subsequently the way in which an action was performed (Penny 2004, p. 131). However, in Old Spanish the adverbial function could also be explicitly marked by a final *-s*. Since a number of Spanish adverbs of Latin origin already ended in *-s* (e.g., *magis* > *más*, 'more'; *laxius* > *lejos*, 'distant'; *foras* > *fuera*s, 'outside', 'except'), by means of analogy in Old Spanish the *-s* was added to other adverbs that originally lacked this final consonant (e.g., *in tunc* > *entonces*, 'so'; *dum interim* > *demientras* > *mientras*, 'while'; *numquam* > *nunqua* > *nunquas*, 'never') (Azofra Sierra 2014, p. 377; Corominas and Pascual 1984, p. 277; Menéndez Pidal 1976, p. 296; Penny 2004, p. 131).<sup>1</sup> Eventually, while some adverbs maintained their analogous *-s* (e.g., *entonces*, *mientras*), other longer forms disappeared, particularly during the Middle Ages (e.g., *fuera*s, *nunquas*). Still others kept both forms creating doublets, e.g., the adverbs *quizá* and *quizás* ('perhaps'), which both express uncertainty or possibility and, according to the *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* (Real Academia Española 2005, s.v. *quizá*) are both valid forms.

Another doublet in Modern Spanish is *ante-antes* ('before') but this pair differs from *quizá-quizás*, because nowadays the two forms show clear-cut distinctions as far as their functions and meanings are concerned, although in Old Spanish *ante* and *antes* had similar functions and meanings.

It is this doublet that we will discuss in detail in the present paper. In Section 2 we will start sketching the historical development of the two adverbs *ante* and *antes*. Subsequently, in Sections 3

<sup>1</sup> Ortiz Ciscomani (2014) studies adverbial phrases with the preposition *a* ('to') and a lexical element ending in *-as* (e.g., *a cuestas*, 'on one's back'). She states that the *-as* ending is usually associated with Latin accusative feminine plural, although in many instances of the adverbial phrase scheme there seems to be no logical reason for the use of a feminine plural ending (cf. *a ciegas*, 'blindly', which is rooted in the adjective *ciego*, 'blind'). In our view these adverbial phrases differ from simple adverbs like *más* or *lejos*, since the final *-s* in the latter clearly is not a plural marker.



and 4 we will present quantitative data taken from a corpus especially compiled for the present paper, that will allow us to outline the main distributional similarities and differences between the two forms. Finally, Section 5 summarizes the main findings of our research and discusses their theoretical implications. Particularly, we will focus on the question whether the observed language change can be regarded as a case of exaptation.

## 2. The Case of the Spanish Doublet *ante-antes*

The Spanish forms *ante* and *antes* both derive from Latin *ante* ('before'), which functioned either as an adverb or preposition. In Old Spanish *ante* and *antes* conveyed all the meanings *ante* already had in Latin, i.e., temporal and spatial meanings, although the longer form *antes* never appears to have expressed spatial meaning in Spanish (Alvar and Pottier 1993, p. 311; Azofra Sierra 2014, p. 379).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, derived from the original meaning, *ante* and *antes* acquired a more abstract meaning of precedence, to express the idea of preference in comparisons or contrast in adversative relations (cf. Azofra Sierra 2014, pp. 392–96; Cuervo 1886/1994, p. 485; Elvira 2009; Espinosa Elorza 2010, pp. 104–7; Garachana Camarero 1998; Herrero Ruiz de Loizaga 2005, pp. 71–72; Iglesias Recuero 2014, pp. 2560–61 and 2600 ff.; Keniston 1937, p. 630; Menéndez Pidal 1976, p. 393 and 468; Nieuwenhuijsen 2012). These preferential and adversative meanings seem to be a Late Latin or Romance innovation, given that they are not listed in Latin (Azofra Sierra 2014, p. 392; Iglesias Recuero 2014, p. 2560).<sup>3</sup> In Section 4 we will discuss the different meanings in more detail on the basis of several illustrative examples.

On the other hand, in Modern Spanish *ante* only functions as a preposition, to locate the position of someone or something in relation to someone or something else (*ante el tribunal*, 'before the court') i.e., it only retains the spatial meaning that it already had in Latin.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, *antes* in Modern Spanish only has an adverbial value, with temporal, preferential or adversative meaning.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the different functions and meanings of the Latin *ante* seem to have been redistributed among its two descendent forms *ante* and *antes*.

According to Azofra Sierra (2014, pp. 379–80) and Octavio de Toledo y Huerta (Octavio de Toledo y Huerta 2014, p. 1899) the functional differentiation of *ante* and *antes* was accomplished in the (mid) 16th century, although Cuervo (Cuervo 1886/1994, p. 480) states that in those days *ante* sometimes still was used as an adverb, in accordance with the practice of former times.

As far as their meanings are concerned, it appears that in Old Spanish the two adverbs *ante* and *antes* were used indifferently to indicate temporal, preferential or adversative meaning. Studies about the evolution of adverbs sometimes treat the two forms as if they were synonymous and stood in free variation to each other, starting with Nebrija (Nebrija 1495/1951) who in his Spanish-Latin vocabulary simply gives "ante o antes adverbio. *antea*" (cf. also Alvar and Pottier 1993, p. 311; Espinosa Elorza 2010, pp. 104–7; Elvira 2009, p. 105; Iglesias Recuero 2014, pp. 2560 and 2600; Keniston 1937, p. 630; Menéndez Pidal 1982, p. 333).

However, in the case of *ante*, Octavio de Toledo y Huerta (Octavio de Toledo y Huerta 2014, p. 1899) points at an early tendency of morphosyntactic differentiation of the spatial and temporal meanings, whereby *antes* came to express temporality, leaving the prepositional *ante* with the spatial meaning. While, as stated before, this holds true from the mid 16th century onwards, it does not

<sup>2</sup> In spite of this, in his dictionary of the Castilian language, originally published in 1886, Cuervo (Cuervo 1886/1994, p. 486) does list the spatial meaning of *antes*, and although in most of the cited examples *antes* is combined with *de* or *que*, thus becoming a preposition or conjunctive, he also presents some examples of the bare *antes*, especially used in written texts to refer to something discussed earlier.

<sup>3</sup> However, the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Glare 1968–1982, p. 138) includes for the prepositional *ante* (yet not for the adverbial *ante*) as its last meaning: "before (in choice, preference, etc.), above, more than".

<sup>4</sup> For the development of the preposition *ante* cf. Octavio de Toledo y Huerta (Octavio de Toledo y Huerta 2014, p. 1897 ff).

<sup>5</sup> *Antes* can behave as a preposition, in Old Spanish as well as Modern Spanish, but only when it is followed by the preposition *de* (*antes del fin de semana*, 'before the weekend').

explain nor take into account the semantic distribution of *ante* and *antes* in their adverbial function in earlier times. Moreover, based on an analysis of a large corpus of examples, Azofra Sierra (2014, pp. 379–80) arrives at some interesting conclusions about the distribution of the two forms and their meanings. She argues that in the 12th and 13th century *ante* was mainly spatial, whereas *antes* was temporal. The 14th and 15th century witnessed a predominance of *ante* with temporal meaning, alongside *antes* that primarily expressed preferential/adversative meaning. On the other hand, from the 16th century onwards *ante* was exclusively used for spatial reference, while *antes* completely seized the temporal meaning, in addition to the preferential/adversative meaning. However, it should be noted that the percentages given by Azofra Sierra (2014, p. 380) reflect the distribution of the three different meanings (locative, temporal and preferential/adversative) within each form separately and, therefore, do not necessarily inform about the preferred form per meaning. For that reason, a closer look at which of the two forms predominated in the 14th and 15th century if preferential/adversative meaning was to be expressed, reveals that in the 15th century it is *ante* (19 occurrences) which is found more in contexts of preferential/adversative meaning than *antes* (12 occurrences). The evolution of *ante* and *antes*, then, seems to have been less straightforward as Azofra concludes.

In spite of this qualification, the data provided by Azofra seem to suggest that, apart for the functional differentiation between preposition or adverb, an interesting kind of semantic differentiation also took place, in which the adverbial doublet *ante-antes* was exploited to express different semantic values. At some point in the history of the Spanish language, *antes* appeared to have been incorporating the preferential and adversative meanings, whereas *ante* was reserved for temporal meaning. However, this process of redistribution was interrupted quite suddenly in the 16th century, when adverbial *ante* fell into disuse.

### 3. The Data—Distribution of the Forms *ante* and *antes*

In order to check the above summarized claims and study more in detail the functional and semantic development of *ante* and *antes*, we collected a corpus of examples taken from the *Gradia* corpus, which contains 490 documents of different lengths, with different text genres and roughly covers the period from the 12th century to the present.<sup>6</sup> Since not all genres supply texts for the period in which the development of *ante* and *antes* appears to have taken place, we only selected those genres that incorporate texts dating from the 13th century to at least the 16th century. Despite the fact that Azofra Sierra (2014, p. 380) asserts that from the 16th century on *ante* loses its temporal, preferential, and adversative meanings and only survives with locative meaning as a preposition, for two genres we also included some 17th century texts, in order to assure we would not miss out some of the possibly interesting last cases of adverbial *ante*. Of every text, we included all cases of adverbial *ante* (1a and b) and *antes* (2a and b), but eliminated instances of the prepositional *ante* (3a) and *antes de* (3b), as well as instances of the conjunctives *ante que* (4a) and *antes que* (4b). Thus, our corpus totals 1531 examples, 371 cases of adverbial *ante* and 1160 of adverbial *antes*.

- (1) a. *E despues que el rrey don sancho llego a xerez los dela villa que **ante** estauan çercados fueron muy conortados conla su venjida.* (anonymous, *Crónica de Sancho IV*, C14) “And after that king don Sancho arrived at Jerez, the people of the city that **before** were besieged felt very comforted with his arrival”.
- b. *& no<n> se acuyte de andar **ante** se tarde por algunos dias fasta q<ue>l rrestauramj<ent><<o>> sea muy bie<n> rrefoçado & co<n>firmado.* (Tederico, *Cirurgia*, C16) “and do not hurry to walk **rather** take some days until the restoration is well reinforced and confirmed”.

<sup>6</sup> The corpus was originally created by the research group *Gradia* for their work on verbal periphrases. It covers the following genres: legal, notarial, historiographical, technical, narrative, essayistic, epistolary, philosophical, political, dialogic, journalistic, oral and theatrical texts. The corpus contains over 20 million words. For more details, see <http://gradiacronia.wixsite.com/gradia/corpus-gradia>.

- (2) a. *enlo qual se cumplio lo que Esopo vn poco antes dixera asu amo.* (anonymous, *Esopo historiado*, C15) “in which was achieved what Aesop a bit **before** had said to his master”.
- b. *Mas los xpistianos de tierra de Suria non auien mengua antes auien uiandas assaz.* (anonymous, *Gran conquista de Ultramar*, C13) “But the Christians of the land of Syria did not have lack **rather** they had a lot of food”.
- (3) a. *& dixo non fables ante ningun omne fasta que oyas sus palabras.* (anonymous, *Poridat de poridades*, C13) “and he said do not speak **before** no man until you hear his words”.
- b. *y aunque hacía mal tiempo llegó al puerto Mano á las once horas antes de medio día,* (Alonso de Santa Cruz, *Crónica del Emperador Carlos V*, C16) “and although it was bad weather he arrived at the harbour Mano at eleven o’clock **before** noon”.
- (4) a. *E ante que muriese mando en su testamento con grand amor que auia a aquella cibdad que ouiera ganado de moros* (Diego Rodríguez de Almela, *Valerio de las historias eclesiásticas y de España*, C15) “And **before** he died he ordered in his will with great love that he had for that city which he had won from the Moors”
- b. *y no se han de comer hasta el mes de Agosto, y antes que llueua.* (Tomás de Murillo y Velarde, *Tratado de raras y peregrinas yeruas, que se han hallado en esta Corte*, C17) “and they [a certain plant] should not be eaten until the month of August, and **before** it rains”.

In Table 1 we present quantitative data of *ante* and *antes* ordered by century.

**Table 1.** Frequencies of *ante* and *antes* per century.

Century	<i>ante</i>	<i>antes</i>	Total
13	23.1% (123)	76.9% (409)	100% (532)
14	29.9% (95)	70.1% (223)	100% (318)
15	40.6% (93)	59.4% (136)	100% (229)
16	19.5% (60)	80.5% (248)	100% (308)
17	0% (0)	100% (144)	100% (144)
total	24.2% (371)	75.8% (1160)	100% (1531)

Chi-square (4, N = 1531) = 89.174, p = 0.000 \*\*\*<sup>7</sup>.

The data of Table 1 show that from the 13th century onwards the corpus contains both adverbs, until the 17th century, when the texts only render cases of adverbial *antes*, definitely restricting *ante* to prepositional use, as was already claimed by Azofra Sierra (2014, p. 380). Interestingly, Table 1 also reveals that in the course of time there is fluctuation and co-existence of the two forms (cf. Aitchison 2013, pp. 100–1 and 126), although the non-etymological *antes* as an adverb has always been more frequent than its counterpart *ante*.

As mentioned before, in compiling our corpus we selected different text genres, which allows us to check whether the observed evolution is similar for all genres or is more or less prominent according to certain discourse traditions. Table 2 displays the distribution of *ante* and *antes* per century in historiographical, philosophical and technical texts.<sup>8</sup>

A closer look at the three different text genres, historiographical texts, philosophical prose and technical texts, puts on display some interesting differences between them.<sup>9</sup> Whereas in the first genre

<sup>7</sup> The result is significant at p = 0.01. This level of significance is maintained for all chi-square calculations in this chapter.

<sup>8</sup> For philosophical and technical texts, we selected all the documents the *Gradia* corpus contains (717,513 and 833,716 word tokens respectively), for historiographical texts we selected only part of the total amount of texts in this genre. Even so, because we wanted to select several texts per century, the number of word tokens (2,093,277) for this genre is higher than for the other two. It goes without saying that this difference in word tokens does not affect the comparability of the data of Table 2, since the percentages reflect relative frequency.

<sup>9</sup> For the present research we selected three historiographical texts from the *Gradia* corpus. However, as far as the *Anales de Aragón* by the historian Jerónimo Zurita are concerned, we only took into account a small part of the work (approximately

adverbial *ante*, compared to *antes*, has always been rather rare, in the other two genres the use of *ante* persists much longer. As Table 2 reveals, the philosophical prose and technical texts pattern together until the 16th century, when use of *ante* falls to 13% in philosophical prose, but maintains itself at 59.3% in technical texts. Interestingly, the decrease of the use of *ante* (against *antes*) from the 15th to the 16th century in philosophical prose is statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$  \*\*\*), while the apparent retention of *ante* in technical texts in the 16th century lacks statistical significance. Even so, in the 17th century *ante* has fallen into disuse in both historiographical and technical texts. Moreover, it merits noting that in philosophical prose the frequency of *antes* increases steadily over time, while in technical texts the use seems to oscillate and even decrease between the 14th and 16th century.

**Table 2.** Frequencies of *ante* and *antes* per century and per text genre.

Century	Historiographical		Philosophical		Technical	
	<i>ante</i>	<i>antes</i>	<i>ante</i>	<i>antes</i>	<i>ante</i>	<i>antes</i>
13	4.3% (18)	95.7% (396)	88% (44)	12% (6)	89.7% (61)	10.3% (7)
14	18.1% (38)	81.9% (172)	53.2% (50)	46.8% (44)	50% (7)	50% (7)
15	24.7% (20)	75.3% (61)	45.9% (39)	54.1% (46)	54% (34)	46% (29)
16	0% (0)	100% (171)	13% (6)	87% (40)	59.3% (54)	40.7% (37)
17	0% (0)	100% (118)	- †	-	0% (0)	100% (26)
total	7.6% (76)	92.4% (918)	50.5% (139)	49.5% (136)	59.5% (156)	40.5% (106)

† For philosophical prose, we do not have data for the 17th century, since the *Gracia* corpus does not contain texts of this genre for this particular period; historiographical chi-square (4,  $N = 994$ ) = 96.104,  $p = 0.000$  \*\*\*; philosophical chi-square (4,  $N = 275$ ) = 54.944,  $p = 0.000$  \*\*\*; technical chi-square (4,  $N = 262$ ) = 65.291,  $p = 0.000$  \*\*\*.

#### 4. The Data—Distribution of the Meanings of *ante* and *antes*

As mentioned earlier, in Old Spanish the two adverbs could have temporal, preferential or adversative meanings. The examples grouped under (5) are instances of *ante* with its different meanings, the examples of (6) correspond to the three meanings of *antes*.

Whereas the temporal meaning is clearly different from the preferential as well as the adversative meaning, the last two are somehow similar, as they share the idea of precedence. In order to distinguish between preferential and adversative meanings we classified an example as ‘preferential’ when both the preferred object or action and the second term of the expressed preference were present in the immediate context and the two terms of the comparison referred to the same person or object, as is the case in example (5b) (*deuen de morir* vs. *se dexar venir a seruidumbre, los que son libres*) and in (6b) (*spirituales* vs. *corporales, tus mercaderias*).

temporal *ante*

- (5) a. *de guisa que los faz nacer por fuerça. & a los que son blancos. tinnelos de la color que eran ante.* (Alfonso X, *Lapidario*, C13) “so that it makes them [the hairs] grow forcibly and those that are white it dyes them with the colour they were **before**”.

preferential *ante*

- b. *los que son libres ante deuen de morir que se dexar venir a seruidumbre.* (Diego Rodríguez de Almela, *Valerio de las historias eclesiásticas y de España*, C15) “those who are free **rather** should die than let themselves come to servitude.”

adversative *ante*

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215,000 tokens), in order to keep the total number of word tokens for 16th century historiographical prose in relative balance with the total number of word tokens in the 16th century of the other two text genres. It is worth mentioning that in the work of Zurita still five cases of adverbial *ante* are documented.

- c. *E el Respondio le **ante** te digo que si tu quisieres comer destas verças non seras lisonjero mas diras palabras de verdat* (Sancho IV, *Castigos y documentos para bien vivir*, C14) “And he answered him **rather** I tell you that if you (would want to) eat from these cabbages, you will not be flattering but will tell the truth”

temporal *antes*

- (6) a. *Quiero esso mismo / que sepas que enel tiempo dela peste / aquellos mueren **antes** / en cuyas casas hay fedores particulares* (Taranta, *De epidemia et peste. Tratado de la peste*, C15) “I also want you to know that in time of the plague those die **first** in whose houses are particular stenches”

preferential *antes*

- b. *E dixo pugna que tus mercadurias sean **antes** spirituales que corporales* (anonymous, *Bocados de oro*, C13) “And he said strive that your goods are **rather** spiritual than corporal”

adversative *antes*

- c. *Mas estas cosas no las creyó Alvarado, **antes** decía que los indios no decían la verdad* (Pedro Cieza de León, *Las guerras civiles del Perú*, C16) “But these things Alvarado did not believe, **rather** he said that the Indians did not say the truth”

Diachronically, the preferential meaning seems to have been first in developing out of the temporal meaning, followed by the adversative meaning (cf. [Azofra Sierra 2014](#), pp. 379 and 392; [Herrero Ruiz de Loizaga 2005](#), p. 71; [Iglesias Recuero 2014](#), p. 2560; [Nieuwenhuijsen 2012](#)), an evolution that is consistent with the idea that priority or preference can lead to adversativity ([Garachana Camarero 1998](#), p. 601).<sup>10</sup>

According to [Garachana Camarero \(1998, p. 601\)](#) adversative connectives like *antes* signal a notion of priority at the textual level, marking the preference of one argument over another. [Elvira \(2009, pp. 104–5\)](#) characterizes the connective *antes* as a piece that opposes two elements in a certain part of the discourse and denotes the conceptual or logical preference or priority of one of these elements. Both authors, thus, assume a strong connection between the concepts of priority or preferentiality and adversativity.

In our corpus we find examples that can either have a temporal or a preferential reading. The two meanings share a sense of precedence, which in the case of temporal meaning obviously is related to time, whereas in the case of preferential meaning a more abstract sense of precedence is involved, i.e., the speaker mentally places one event before the other, making an implicit comparison between them. Furthermore, the preferential and the adversative meaning both highlight the notion of precedence, the former making a comparison, the latter stating a contrast. Thus, our corpus also happens to contain examples that allow for either a preferential or an adversative meaning.

First consider (7a), in which, in spite of the fact that the syntactic structure is similar to that of cases with a preferential interpretation, the reading is clearly temporal; the poison does not prefer to do one thing (to kill) to another (the person feeling the poisoning), but, instead, turns out to be mortal before someone becomes aware of its effects. By contrast, in (7b) the writer states that the father prefers to die himself instead of witnessing his son’s death. However, in this case a temporal relationship between the two events, in principle, is also feasible, because if the father does not wish to see his son dying, inevitably he himself must die first. Examples like (7b), therefore, can be considered bridging contexts that give rise to the inference of preferential meaning (cf. [Heine 2002](#)). Finally, example (7c) can only have a preferential reading, i.e., the writer asserts that we prefer to help our relative or friend

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<sup>10</sup> However, [Elvira \(2009, p. 105\)](#) claims the adversative meaning can have arisen as a secondary or inferred reading of examples in which the temporal meaning was also present. He does not seem to assume a preferential meaning in between.

instead of our neighbour; a temporal relation is very unlikely, if not inconceivable, since it is not the case that we will help our relative or friend before our neighbour.

Subsequently, in (8a) it could be inferred that the birds prefer to hide instead of leaving the caves, but, at the same time, the example can have a contrastive reading, given the marked antithesis between 'leaving the caves' and 'hide themselves', in which case 'rather' could be paraphrased with 'by contrast' or 'on the contrary'. Thus, (8a) and similar examples serve as bridging contexts that induce an inference in favour of the adversative meaning. On the other hand, in (8b) a preferential reading is excluded, since the first statement (*es cosa honesta fazer lo que es prouechoso*) is made by others ('they say'), whereas the second statement (*es honesto non lo fazer*) is made by the speaker ('I say'), so there is no comparison of two objects or acts by the same speaker at stake. Therefore, (8b) cannot but lead to an adversative interpretation. In fact, in (8b) there is a double contrast, i.e., between different speakers ('they' vs. 'I') and between different assessments ('it is honest to do something' vs. 'it is honest to refrain from doing that thing').

- (7) a. *e diz aún que el venino o la poçón d'ellas que ante mata all omne que él sienta el su empoçonamiento*, (Alfonso X, *General estoria I*, C13) "and he even says that the poison or the potion of them [a certain type of snakes] kills the man **before** he feels its poisoning,"
- b. *otrosy el padre ante querria ver la su muerte que la de su fijo* (Sancho IV, *Castigos y documentos para bien vivir*, C14) "also the father **rather (before)** would want to see his death than that of his son"
- c. *mas sy plejto han en juyz'io. ante ayudaras al pariente & Al amigo. que al vez'ino*. (Alonso de Cartagena, *De los oficios*, C15) "but when they have a lawsuit in court you will **rather** help your relative or friend than your neighbour."
- (8) a. *& las que estan en las arboles & en las cuevas non osan salir dellas ante punnan de se asconder quanto mas pueden*. (Alfonso X, *Libro de ajedrez, dados y tablas*, C13) "and those [birds] that are in the trees and in the caves do not dare to leave them, **rather (on the contrary)** they struggle to hide as much as they can."
- b. *lo que dizen que es cosa honesta. faz'er lo que es prouechoso ante digo yo que es honesto. non lo faz'er* (Alonso de Cartagena, *De los oficios*, C15) "what they say that it is honest to do what is beneficial, **rather** I say that it is honest not to do it"

In our corpus, the preferential meaning is always less frequent than the temporal and the adversative meanings and, except for the 15th century, the temporal meaning is always more frequent than the adversative one. The relevant data are shown in Table 3.<sup>11</sup>

Taking into account the different genres, it turns out that, although there are some fluctuations per century, overall the percentages per meaning are quite similar; in all three text genres the temporal meaning is most frequent, followed by the adversative and, at a much lower rate, by the preferential meaning (Table 4). Globally, this pattern is maintained for every century, although in historiographical prose in the 14th and 15th century the adversative meaning is slightly more frequent than the temporal one, which is also the case for philosophical texts in the 15th century.

In view of the fact that at least from the 13th century onwards two similar adverbs are available, which apparently seem to be used indiscriminately to express temporal, preferential and adversative meaning, it is conceivable that in the course of time a redistribution of these meanings among the two forms took place. Although, as argued before, there is a semantic continuum between the three meanings, temporality can be placed at one end, whereas adversativity is clearly located at the other end, with preferential meaning bridging the semantic gap between both extremes.

<sup>11</sup> In this and the following tables we do not incorporate the data from the 17th century, since they do not show variation between *ante* and *antes*.

**Table 3.** Frequencies of temporal, preferential and adversative meaning per century.

Century	Temporal	Preferential	Adversative	Total
13	77.6% (413)	0.9% (5)	21.4% (114)	100% (532)
14	50.3% (160)	8.5% (27)	41.2% (131)	100% (318)
15	39.3% (90)	10.9% (25)	49.8% (114)	100% (229)
16	53.6% (165)	1.6% (5)	44.8% (138)	100% (308)
total	59.7% (828)	4.5% (62)	35.8% (497)	100% (1387)

chi-square (6,  $N = 1387$ ) = 157.165,  $p = 0.000$  \*\*\*.

**Table 4.** Frequencies of temporal, preferential and adversative meaning per text genre.

Genre	Temporal	Preferential	Adversative	Total
Historiographical	60.6% (531)	3.2% (28)	36.2% (317)	100% (876)
Philosophical	53.5% (147)	10.5% (29)	36% (99)	100% (275)
Technical	63.6% (150)	2.1% (5)	34.3% (81)	100% (236)

historiographical chi-square (6,  $N = 876$ ) = 133.890,  $p = 0.000$  \*\*\*; philosophical chi-square (6,  $N = 275$ ) = 42.334,  $p = 0.000$  \*\*\*; technical chi-square (6,  $N = 236$ ) = 29.702,  $p = 0.000$  \*\*\*.

Therefore, we could hypothesize a dichotomy of form and meaning, in which *ante*, the etymological Latin form, would stick with the oldest temporal meaning, already present in the Latin *ante*, whereas *antes*, the diachronically later form, would seize the Romance novel meaning of adversativity. It should be mentioned that our hypothesis does not make a prediction about the expression of the preferential meaning by one of the two adverbs, since preferential cases on the one hand can be grouped with temporal cases, in which they clearly originate, but on the other hand are also clearly linked to adversative cases, with which they share the meaning of abstract precedence. However, as Table 3 shows, preferential meaning has always been fairly rare in both adverbs.

To test this idea of semantic differentiation, we calculated percentages for *ante* and *antes* with the three meanings. Table 5 displays the results.

**Table 5.** Frequencies of *ante* and *antes* per meaning (temporal, preferential, adversative) and per century.

Century		<i>ante</i>	<i>antes</i>	Total
13	Temporal	23.5% (97)	76.5% (316)	100% (413)
	Preferential	40% (2)	60% (3)	100% (5)
	Adversative	21.1% (24)	78.9% (90)	100% (114)
14	Temporal	37.5% (60)	62.5% (100)	100% (160)
	Preferential	40.7% (11)	59.3% (16)	100% (27)
	Adversative	18.3% (24)	81.7% (107)	100% (131)
15	Temporal	56.7% (51)	43.3% (39)	100% (90)
	Preferential	44% (11)	56% (14)	100% (25)
	Adversative	27.2% (31)	72.8% (83)	100% (114)
16	Temporal	18.8% (31)	81.2% (134)	100% (165)
	Preferential	0% (0)	100% (5)	100% (5)
	Adversative	21% (29)	79% (109)	100% (138)

C13 chi-square (2,  $N = 532$ ) = 1.107,  $p = 0.575$ ;<sup>12</sup> C14 chi-square (2,  $N = 318$ ) = 14.310,  $p = 0.001$  \*\*\*; C15 chi-square (2,  $N = 229$ ) = 18.462,  $p = 0.000$  \*\*\*; C16 chi-square (2,  $N = 308$ ) = 1.467,  $p = 0.480$ <sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Two cells (33.3%) have an expected count of less than 5.

The results of Table 5 do not give evidence of an indisputable gradual spread of *antes* over the different semantic contexts, i.e., we do not observe a situation whereby *antes* grasps one meaning at a time (cf. Aitchison 2013, p. 112). Rather, our data point to a state of affairs in which from the 13th to the 16th century the use of adversative *antes* is always much greater than adversative *ante*. For example, in the 13th century a figure of 78.9% is registered for *antes* with adversative meaning, as opposed to 21.1% for *ante* with this same meaning. This pattern is repeated throughout the centuries. Moreover, in every century the percentage of *ante*'s temporal meaning is higher than the percentage of its adversative meaning, except for the 16th century, when *ante* definitely loses ground as an adverb. Thus, our data reflect a fuzzy situation of co-existence of the two adverbs just before the final blow by *antes* in the 17th, when *ante* no longer counted as an adverbial solution (cf. Aitchison 2013, pp. 130–32).<sup>13</sup>

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

We now turn to the question whether the case of the doublet *ante-antes* can be conceived as an example of exaptation, a concept which Lass (1990) borrowed from evolutionary biology and applied to language change to describe changes whereby a grammatical distinction coded morphologically is lost without the loss of the corresponding morphological material. This morphology then becomes 'junk', useless material, which subsequently can be exploited for some other function. Lass further states that the domain of exaptation does not have to be morphosyntactic. He considers the semantic splitting of doublets also exaptive, since "if two forms code one meaning, one form is (potential) junk" (1990: 94, note 10).

Over the years, Lass' proposal has been discussed intensively and extensively for different languages. Thus, Vincent (1995) analyses examples from the Romance languages, and Norde (2001) explores the concept of exaptation in the context of Swedish, while Narrog (2007) examines processes of exaptation in Japanese (for a review of some of the early studies on exaptation, see Traugott 2004). Particularly, many studies question the notion of 'junk morphology' and, indeed, in later work Lass (1997, pp. 316–24) himself modifies his original idea stating that the availability of junk is not a *sine qua non* in order for exaptation to take place, and that, on the contrary, functional material can also be exapted. De Cuypere (2005) holds a fairly pessimistic view of the usefulness of the concept of exaptation stating that it "comprises such a broad spectrum of changes that the concept reduces to mere triviality". By contrast, Gardani (2016) argues that exaptation provides valuable insights into the investigation of diachronic change.

Smith (2011, p. 268) calls the kind of language change Lass is referring to 'refunctionalization' or 'adfunctionalization', depending on whether the new function replaces the old one or is simply added to it. Pountain (2000, p. 295) uses the term 'capitalization', in "an attempt to label the historical process by which a linguistic feature which already exists in a language comes to be substantially exploited for wider purposes, sometimes simply making overt distinctions which were previously covert, but sometimes apparently creating new expressive possibilities". Pountain (2000, p. 295)

Finally, in their recent volume on exaptation and language change Norde and Velde (2016, p. 10) adopt a broader, slightly different definition of exaptation, i.e., "the leap-like co-optation of a trait for a new function that is not immediately related to its former function".<sup>14</sup>

Whereas the final *-s* in Old Spanish could serve to mark adverbs, unarguably in the course of time it lost this function, given that in standard Modern Spanish the only productive adverbial suffix is *-mente*.<sup>15</sup> Instead, according to Penny (2004, p. 131) adverbial *-s* was only an informal means to mark

<sup>13</sup> This pattern is repeated in every text genre separately. However, the results are only statistically significant in the case of philosophical prose.

<sup>14</sup> See for a thorough state-of-the-art discussion of the notion of exaptation also Norde and Velde (2016, pp. 1–35).

<sup>15</sup> Pato and Casanova (2017) report the existence of adverbial *cercas* alongside *cerca* in contemporary Mexican Spanish. According to the authors, *cercas* must be a recent creation, based on analogy with other adverbs that end in *-s* (such as *lejos*), since a diachronic review of the form only rendered four occurrences, dating from the 14th to the beginning of the 17th century. Note that currently *cercas* is a highly stigmatized form in Mexico. Given its recent development and the lack of



adverbial function, too irregularly applied to count as a genuine suffix. The adverbial morpheme, therefore, at some point in time must have become a sort of junk and must have been no longer recognized as adverbial marker. Now, as Lass (1990, p. 82) states:

here are three things that can in principle be done with it: (i) it can be dumped entirely; (ii) it can be kept as marginal garbage or nonfunctional/nonexpressive residue (suppletion, ‘irregularity’); (iii) it can be kept, but instead of being relegated as in (ii), it can be used for something else, perhaps just as systematic. (cf. also Lass 1997, p. 317)

Since *ante* and *antes* could both convey different meanings, the felicitous presence of the final *-s* in *antes* could be exploited for semantic purpose, i.e., it could be capitalized in order to encode the semantic opposition between the temporal meaning (adverbial *ante*) and the adversative meaning (adverbial *antes*). Indeed, our data show a tendency towards Lass’ option (iii), as long as both forms are in use as adverbs.<sup>16</sup> Admittedly, the described tendency does not comply with the definition of exaptation as proposed by Norde and Velde (2016, p. 10), because, as argued before, the different meanings of *ante* and *antes* fit in a semantic continuum, being the temporal meaning related to the preferential one, which in turn shares the notion of precedence with the adversative. For that reason, there is no new function involved. Vincent (1995, p. 435, note 4) states:

in the case of exaptation either the meaning was not previously encoded so that only the form pre-exists or else both form and meaning are already present but not combined in the same linguistic sign. (Vincent 1995, p. 435)

The adversative meaning of *antes* arguably corresponds to the second option of Vincent’s definition of exaptation, for in Old Spanish there were other means to convey this meaning, for example, *sino* (‘but’) and *más bien* (‘rather’), to mention just two connectives (cf. Elvira 2009; Garachana Camarero 1998; Nieuwenhuijsen 2012).

In the course of the 16th century, *ante* comes to be exclusively used as a preposition, whereas *antes* generalizes for adverbial function. Thus, the phonological opposition between *ante* and *antes* is exploited to create a clear-cut distinction between word classes. Figure 1 sums up the different functions and meanings of *ante* and *antes* and visualizes the changes both forms experienced in the course of time.

The word class distinction inevitably leads to the collapse of the hesitant differentiation between *ante* expressing temporality and *antes* expressing adversativity, since, as a consequence, the use of *ante* as an adverb obviously is ruled out.

Within the scope of the present paper we can only speculate about the cause of this collapse. Certainly, the redistribution of meanings would have led to a transparent distinction between forms and temporal meaning (*ante*) vs. adversative meaning (*antes*). However, *ante* with spatial meaning, inherited from Latin, had always been available in Spanish. Therefore, the semantic differentiation of adverbial *ante* and *antes* only sorted out the possible opacity as far as the temporal and adversative meanings were concerned, but it did not take into account the spatial meaning. So, the outcome of this change inevitably would entail a new type of opacity, i.e., the fact that *ante* designated space as well as time.

Moreover, although in many instances there is a fairly clear semantic difference between the temporal meaning on the one hand and the preferential and adversative meaning on the other hand,

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historical evidence, we do not think the existence of contemporary Mexican *cercas* challenges the claim of unproductiveness of the Old Spanish adverbial suffix *-s*.

<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, as mentioned before, other Spanish adverbial doublets chose other options depending on the specific word pair. In the case of *fuera-fuernas* (‘outside’, ‘except’), the second form with final *-s* has not survived in Modern Spanish (option i); the two members of the doublet *quizá-quizás* (‘perhaps’) are both valid forms in Modern Spanish, so the final *-s* can be considered a non-functional residue of ancient times (option ii). By contrast, in the case of *entonces* (‘so’) only the form with final *-s* has survived.

these differences perhaps were not salient enough to impose a definitive semantic redistribution of *ante* and *antes*, although it does seem to have prompted the distribution as documented in our corpus spanning the period from the 13th to the 16th century.

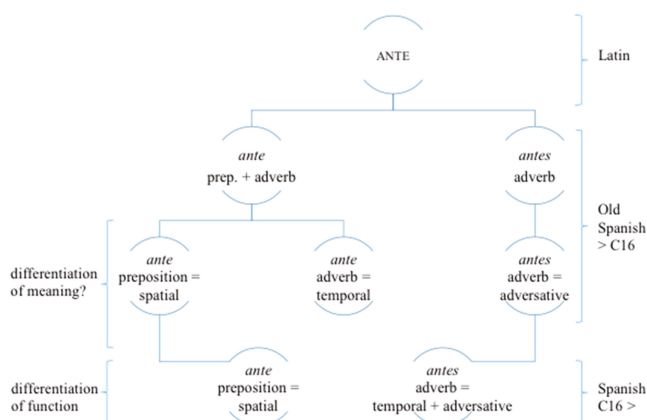


Figure 1. Different functions and meanings of *ante* and *antes* in diachronic perspective.

By contrast, the final differentiation created a clear distinction in function between prepositional *ante* and adverbial *antes*. At the same time, the change resulted in a distinction between spatial meaning (*ante*) as opposed to temporal, preferential adversative meaning (*antes*). It is this distinction that, in retrospect, has prevailed.

**Corpus:** GRADIA = Corpus compiled by the research group GRADIA. <http://gradiadiacronia.wixsite.com/gradia/corpus-gradia>.

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