

(In)Transitivity, Semantic Change, and Reanalysis: The Diachrony of the Spanish Verb *Volver*

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Abstract

Our aim in this paper is to explain the progressive semantic change of the Spanish verb *volver* from the 13th century until the 21st. We will show that at the beginning, its unique use is a transitive one, from Latin until the 14th. Then it acquired an intransitive use in the 15th. We will claim that the semantic change meaning of this verb from the transitive use to the intransitive, ending by the grammaticalization of the verb with the creation of a periphrasis (*volver a* + infinitive), is part of a ‘reanalysis’ process of the semantic relation between both cases the agent and the patient in the eventive structure and, consequently, of the subject and the object complement in the syntactic distribution. The semantic core which conveys a metaphorical or a spatial path toward a goal (“to make a rotary motion, to turn”) is unchanged. We claim that the telic character of the verb allowed it to impose itself and to replace *tornar*.

Keywords: grammaticalization; motion verb; semantic change; transitivity; *volver*

Resum. *(In)Transitivitat, canvi semàntic i reanàlisi: la diacronia del verb espanyol volver*

L’objectiu d’aquest estudi és explicar el progressiu canvi semàntic del verb espanyol *volver* des del segle XIII fins al XXI. Mostrarem que en un primer moment el verb solament té un ús transitiu, des del llatí fins al XIV. Després, al segle XV, va adquirir un ús intransitiu. Considerem que el canvi semàntic que descriu, amb el pas de l’ús transitiu a l’intransitiu, que culmina amb gramaticalització del verb i la creació d’una perífrasi (*volver a* + infinitiu), forma part d’un procés de «reanàlisi» de la relació semàntica entre l’agent i el pacient en l’estructura eventiva i, en conseqüència, del subjecte i l’objecte en la distribució sintàctica. El nucli semàntic, que transmet un camí metafòric o espacial cap a una meta (“fer un moviment rotatori, girar”), no es modifica. Creiem que el caràcter telic del verb li va permetre imposar-se i substituir *tornar*.

Paraules clau: gramaticalització; verb de moviment; canvi semàntic; transitivitat; *volver*

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1. Introduction

The diachrony of the motion verbs in Spanish language has been widely studied (Castillo Herrero 2003; Melis 2006; Rosemeyer 2013; Zielinski 2014), especially *tornar* and *volver*, two verbs which have coexisted for a long time (Yllera 1980; Eberenz 1998; Suárez Fernández 1999; Melis 2006; Taranilla García 2008; Zielinski 2014; Fernández Martín 2016; Cuní Diez & Derdouch 2020). It is usually said that *tornar* was the most common form to express a ‘turning back’ movement as well as the repetition of an event, from the beginning of Spanish prose until the 15th century, century in which *volver* begins to increase until it will completely replace *tornar*. Our aim in this paper is to explain the progressive semantic change of the Spanish verb *volver* from the 13th century until the 21st. To do it so, we have used the following corpus: Gracia, CDH, Corde and Corpes.

Diachronically, *volver* first is used in a transitive construction as in *volver la mar* (*enturbiar*, *remover*, ‘to stir, to shuffle’ the sea) and later, develops an intransitive construction as in *volvió a casa* (‘he came back home’). Basically, *volver* refers to a rotative movement (‘to spin, to turn’) which affects the property of an entity (*volver la mar*) or the location of an entity (*volvió a casa*). We claim that grammaticalization and routinization are not sufficient to explain the semantic change of the verb. We assume that the principles of variation are based on lexical properties of the verb and formulate the hypothesis that change of meaning of *volver* is based on the reanalysis of the relation between the agent and the patient and consequently on the syntactic distribution of the two arguments subject and direct object.

1.1. Motion verbs: *tornar* and *volver*

We will give a brief overview of the different meanings of *tornar* and *volver*. In Latin, *Torno*, *tornare* is “to turn, to make round by turning on a lathe, to fashion”. *Volvo*, *volvere*, means “to roll, to cause to roll”, “to revolve”, “to turn over (in mind)”. At first, it displays a mere transitive use as in *volvere oculos* (“turn the eyes, look around”) and after, an intransitive use which means “to roll, to go by rolling to”: *lacrimae volvuntur inanes* (“vain tears roll from her eyes”) (Gaffiot 1934). In Spanish, both verbs have developed proper and metaphorical uses. In the first part, we will show the constructions that *tornar* and *volver* have in common, and in the second part, the meanings in which they differ.

Both verbs can be used in an intransitive construction or in a transitive construction, acquire a causative or an anticausative meaning, and at last, a periphrastical use. From the beginning of the Spanish prose, *tornar* appears in an intransitive

construction and expresses a turning back spatial movement; the goal can be a place (*Roma, Africa*) as in (1) or an eventive noun (*batalla*) as in (2):

- (1) Desdalli mouio e *tornos pora Roma* (hist.es.13.1).
- (2) e depues *torno a la batalla* o el rey Leomedon estaua con su yent e matol por su mano.

Volver has developed this meaning much later (Corominas & Pascual 1983-1991) as we will observe in (3):

- (3) *y volvió a Cataluña* con propósito de hacer guerra a los infieles (hist.es.16.1-1).

Both present also a transitive¹ use whose first meaning is “to spin”, although it is not a very common one for *tornar* (Eberenz 1998: 111), since, as an example, *tornar cabeça* is used as a frozen expression which means “stop and think about”:

- (4) por *tornar cabeça* en qué manera los penasse (hist.es.13.2).

Instead, *volver* is commonly used with the meaning of “to spin, to turn an object”. In (5) and (6), *la hoja* ‘the leaf’ or *el rostro* ‘the face’ undergo a rotative movement:

- (5) Sempronio: lee más Adelante. *Vuelve la hoja* (tea.es.15.1).
‘Sempronio: read ahead. Turn the page.’
- (6) El can congosto a su amo *vuelve el rostro* (dial.es.16.2).
‘The dog in distress turns its face to its master.’

The second meaning is “to bring back” an object (*hacer que vuelva*) or “to return” (*devolver*). The sentence (7) can be interpreted as “bring them back to Cadiz”:

- (7) Y así me ordenará el remitirlas a Madrid, *volverlas a Cádiz* (epis.es.17.2).

When used in a transitive construction, both allow for expressing a change-of-state, with a *causative* meaning, “to make something + (en) adj./NP”.² The predicate refers to a change of state (‘being heathen’/‘ashes’/‘white or yellow’) produced by an agent or a cause (‘they’, ‘fire’):

- (8) Les dava muchas donas por *los tornar gentiles* (hist.es.13.1).
‘He gave them many gifts for turning them gentile.’

1. Verbs that are used with the same form in both the transitive and the intransitive structure are called *labile* (Dixon 2000; Haspelmath 1993).

2. Yllera (1980: 308) observes that it can rarely combine with a participle: *que la tornasse sana*.

- (9) *fasta que [el fuego] lo torno todo en ceniza* (hist.es.13.1).
 ‘until [the fire] turned everything to ashes.’

Diachronically, *volver* replaced *tornar* in the 16th:

- (10) *Los he de volver blancos o amarillos* (nar.es.17.5).
 ‘I shall turn them white or yellow.’

They may acquire an *anticausative* meaning, *tornar/volver* (en) + adj./part (“to become (in)” + adj./part) as in (11-12). They express “to become” and combine with an adjective or a NP (‘dark’), i.e. the subject experiments a change of state, without any cause or agent:

- (11) *et/torno el dia tan escuro como/si fuesse noche* (hist.es.14.2).
 ‘the day became as dark as/if it were night.’

It is worth noting that until the 17th, we usually find *volver en*:

- (12) *Las burlas se vuelven en veras* (nar.es.17.9).
 ‘Mockery becomes true.’

The last construction is the periphrasis “*tornar/volver a*” + infinitive with an *iterative* meaning (“to do it again”). *Volver* will substitute *tornar* from the 16th. It is usually said that the periphrasis comes from a metaphor of motion. The so-called metaphorical use comes from a spatial metaphor: he came back to serve the King” > “he served again” as we can observe in (13) and (14):

- (13) *et al tercer/dia el rey sallio de burgos/ala ora anoche cie et torno-/sse a meter en celada en aquel/ mismo lugar do se auie/metido la otra vegada.* (hist.es.14.6)
 ‘the third day the king left Burgos at nightfall and went back into the cell in the same place where he had gone the other time.’

- (14) *Josia de Aquaviva volvió a servir al rey [de Aragón].*
 ‘Josia de Aquaviva returned to serve the king.’

Instead, *tornar* and *volver* do not share all the same meanings. Yllera (1980) and Fernández Martín (2015) say that *tornar* displays a mere inchoative value (“to begin to”) that *volver* has never acquired.³ *Torno a lidiar* in (15) can be interpreted as “he began to fight”.⁴

- (15) *luego que fue suelto guisosse & torno a lidiar con el* (hist.es.13.1).

3. Menéndez Pidal (1944-46, vol. I: 352) refers to a pleonastic value with a mere intensive force.

4. Even though this meaning probably arises from both the spatial meaning and the perfective *torno*, we understand that “he came back to fight” produces by inference “he began to fight”.

On the other hand, *tornar* displays a discourse or metalinguistic interpretation and means “to resume with speech”, i.e. the discourse had been interrupted and the author wanted to go back to what was said (Yllera 1980: 197; Eberenz 1998; Taranilla García 2008).⁵ It combines with a NP “*tornar al propósito*” (Eberenz 1998: 116) or an infinitive which refers to a speech act (*dicendi verb*) like in:

(16) Mas, *tornando a nuestro propósito* (dial.es.16.3).

‘But, coming back to our purpose.’

(17) Dexa la estoria de hablar de los Ostrogodos de Espanna. Et *torna a contar* de los Godos de Espanna (hist.es.13.1).

‘He leaves the history of the Ostrogoths of Spain. And returns to tell the story of the Goths of Spain.’

These combinations, *tornar a* + *dicendi verb* are extremely numerous until the 16th in our corpus, but this interpretation appears above all in the present form (*torna a*). This makes sense since it is the present discourse tense.

On the other hand, during the 13-14th, *volver* offers other uses it does not share with *tornar* and that do not exist anymore in Modern Spanish. The first one is “to stir, to shuffle” an object (*enturbiar, remover, revolver*) which appears to be one of the first meaning according to Corominas & Pascual (1983-1991) and Gradia:

(18) Ell Espiritu de la tu saña ayuntó las aguas e *las volvió* (hist.es.13.2).

‘The Spirit of Thy wrath hath troubled the waters and troubled them.’

A second, very widespread, meaning of *volver* is “to mix” an object and make it into something new. It means “mix with something” until it reaches a new state:

(19) Desi que *bolviessse estos polvos* todos en uno (hist.es.13.2).

‘that these powders all mixed into one.’

(20) *bolviolo en uno* con agua de fuentes (hist.es.13.2).

‘and turned it into one with water from fountains.’

Having displayed their different meanings across the centuries, the question is how *volver* could replace *tornar*. We will look at the theories of semantic change.

1.2. The semantic change: grammaticalization

To account for the semantic change of *volver* and *tornar*, many authors have tried to explain the ‘motivation’ as well as the ‘mechanism’ of the change. Motivation has to do with the *why* of change, and mechanism has to do with the *how* of

5. Montserrat (2023: §47.3.2.2.2.) observes the same for the Old Catalan (“*torna a parlar* del rey d’Aragó”).

change (Hopper & Traugott 1993). If we look at the *why* of change, many authors try to explain why *volver* has replaced *tornar*. Two main reasons are mentioned. The first one is the polysemy of *tornar* (Zielinski 2014: 238), which presented a large number of meanings, among others, the metalinguistic one that *volver* never developed (Eberenz 1998: 119) – and as a consequence, its loss of expressivity. As pointed out by Zielinski (2014: 238), loss of expressivity means that the speakers need to create a clearer and purer grammatical expression to avoid possible ambiguities. Contrary to *tornar*, *volver* preserved a very high degree of expressivity since it still had the meaning of “direction of rotational movement” and was still able to produce “an emotional enhancement for this motion movement” (Eberenz 1998: 119). The second reason would be a stylistic one (Fernandez Martín 2015: 158), i.e. using *tornar* or *volver* would be due to diastatic reasons. During the 16th and the 17th centuries, the use of *tornar* was characteristic of the lowest stratum, whereas *volver* was characteristic of the higher one (Zielinski 2014: 239).⁶ This deals with the coetaneous use of both forms *volver* and *tornar* but do not account for its semantic change across history.

To explain the *how* of the change of semantic meaning of *tornar* and *volver*, linguists mainly refer to the grammaticalization of the lexical verb as it became a periphrasis composed of the verb + infinitive. The grammaticalization concept comes from Meillet (1912) and “refers to the steps whereby particular items become more grammatical through time” (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 2): the gradual change of meaning of *volver* from “to go back” (*volvió a Madrid*) to “to do it again” (*volvió a decirlo*).

It is usually said that grammaticalization involves a *reanalysis* and a *routinization* of the form. On the one hand, “grammaticalization always involves reanalysis” and is considered as the most important mechanism for grammaticalization (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 59). For *volver* and *tornar*, the reanalysis lies in a metaphorical innovation which consists of interpreting *volvió a decir* or *tornó a decir* as “he said again” and not as “he came back to say”. The metaphorical innovation emerges since *volver* still refers to a path in the opposite direction (“to go back to”) but the goal or meta is no longer a place but a temporal event (*decir*). Garachana & Rosenmayer (2011: 48) show the difference between the repetitive (“to do it again”) and the restitutive interpretation (“to go back to a previous situation”) and defend that gradually *tornar a* + infinitive is restricted to the restitutive value.

On the second hand, grammaticalization involves a ‘routinization’ of the verb. This means that to be clearer and more expressive, the speaker will repeat the same expression and may leave the old ones:

Signal simplification typically results from the routinization (idiomatization) of expressions. Rather than find different ways of saying approximately the same thing, speakers will repeat expressions they have heard before, even if they are in competition with other expressions, perhaps in the interest of sounding “with it”. (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 72)

6. Instead, Eberenz (1998: 119) states the opposite saying that a humble social origin of the neologism [*volver*] would seem plausible.

The routinization concerns the combination of the auxiliary verb with the infinitive (Garachana & Rosenmayer 2011) and could explain the gradual disuse of *tornar* to the benefit of *volver*.

Instead, we would like to show that grammaticalization and routinization only cannot explain the change of meaning across the centuries, from the 13th until the 21st; the lexical properties of the verb itself need to be factored in. The three following aspects, in our opinion, have not been studied:

1. How and when does the common intransitive meaning of ‘to return, to go back’ appear, since *volver* at first is transitive?
2. Where do causative (“to make + adjective”) and anticausative (“to become”) meanings come from?
3. Even though it is well known that the iterative meaning of *volver a + infinitive* (“to do it again”) comes from a metaphorical innovation, i.e. a spatial path in an opposite direction and a temporal reading, what does “temporal reading” mean?

In all the interpretations of *volver*, the question is who undergoes the change and what kind of change. We try to answer these questions, and we will propose that lexical properties of the verb may explain its semantic change.

1.3. Our hypothesis

We assume that the principles of variation are based in lexical properties of the verb (Mendivil 2015: 235) and that a verb is a lexical category that can encode manner or path (Beavers, Levin & Wei Tham 2010: 334). If we look at its semantic structure, it is usually said that *volver* is part of the verbs which display an inherent direction (“de dirección inherente”) since it refers to a path directed toward a goal and offers a telic character (Lamiroy 1991; Batsiukova 2004; Cuartero Otal 2005). In this way, it can develop a change-of-state meaning as in *lo volvió invulnerable*, (‘this made him invulnerable’). This means that something or someone causes a person (*lo* ‘him’) to acquire a property permanently (*invulnerable*). To explain our hypothesis, we will start from this change-of-state meaning. According to Vivanco (2015: 44), a change-of-state verb can be defined as following:

Un verbo de cambio de estado denota un evento en el que un argumento, el interno, sufre una alteración de algún tipo y pasa a encontrarse en un estado físico o psicológico distinto de aquél en que se encontraba anteriormente.

‘A change-of-state verb refers to an event in which the internal argument undergoes an alteration and is now in a different physical or psychological state from that in which it was previously found.’

If we look at the causative use of *volver* as in the following example,

- (21) Lo que suelen hacer algunas *mujercillas simples* [...] es algunas misturas y venenos con que *vuelven locos a los hombres* (nar.es.17.5).
 ‘What some *simple women* tend to do [...] is to make some mixtures and poisons with which *they drive men crazy*.’

we observe that *volver* lexicalizes a property scale that measures the event and at the same time denotes the resultative state (Vivanco 2015: 52). The interpretation is that an agent “simple women”, lead a patient, “men”, in the direction of a resultative state, “be crazy”.

Now, we will analyze in the same way the example (22) where *volver* used in an intransitive construction means “to go back”:

- (22) y con esto se levantó el cerco y *volvió el rey Carlos a Pamplona* (hist. es.16.1-1).

In a certain manner, “King Carlos” (*el rey Carlos*) is the agent of the movement and, at the same time, the patient who experiments the change of location (Cifuentes 1999).

Our hypothesis is that the grammaticalization and, more broadly, the change of meaning of the verb, is part of a semantic *reanalysis* process of the relation between the two semantic cases of *agent* and *patient* in the eventive structure and, consequently, of the subject and the direct object in the syntactic distribution. This is linked to transitivity. As pointed out by Hopper & Thomason (1980: 251), “transitivity is traditionally understood as a global property of an entire clause, such that an activity is ‘carried over’ or ‘transferred’ from an agent to a patient”. The agent traditionally is considered as the volitional actant capable of controlling the action (Vivanco 2015: 36).⁷ The patient is the one who undergoes a modification (Dowty 1990; Vivanco 2015). We admit that the morphological case assignment is also the expression of the verb and its arguments (subject and direct object) (Mendivil 2015: 227). The parameter that is especially relevant for transitivity is affectedness “understood roughly as involvement in the verbal event and change of state of the participant as a direct result of this event” (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011: 6).⁸ We will see how this deals with the semantic change of the verb: transitivity, agent, patient, affectedness.

Volver at first, is a transitive verb and must be interpreted as “stir, shuffle, mix”. It combines with direct object like “the sea”. An agent or a cause, subject of the verb, changes the property of a patient, the direct object of the verb, by making it experience a movement, “to roll”, and then “to stir” (*la luna vuelve la mar e mézclala*, hist.es.13.2). Then it develops an *anticausative* meaning (*volverse*), without any agent or cause, in which a patient, subject of the verb, changes and acquires a quality

7. When it refers to an inanimate object (eventive NP or natural forces), it is usually called “cause” (Reinhart 2000; Fábregas 2014; Folli & Harley 2007). Sometimes, a generic term is used as “proto-agent” (Van Valin 1977; Dowty 1991; Van Valin & LaPolla 1997; Mendikoetxea 2000) or “initiator” (Ramchand 2008) to encompass both “agent” and “cause”.

8. See Beavers (2011) for a clear definition of the concept of “affectedness”.

(*tienen la naturaleza del camaleón, que se vuelve del color que se le pone delante*, hist.es.17.1.2). In both interpretations, a patient undergoes a change of the property by means of a (metaphorical or not) rotative movement. From the 15th century onwards, *volver* is used to express a spatial movement and means “to go back”. The subject is the patient that experiments a change of location (*volverse como se volvió con gran diligencia en Italia*, dial.es.16.3). From this spatial movement comes the periphrasis *volver a* + infinitive, which probably lost gradually its spatial meaning to acquire its repetitive temporal meaning (*Josía de Aquaviva volvió a servir al rey [de Aragón]*, hist.es.16.1-9). At the same time, a factitive meaning is increasing with the meaning of “to bring back” (*y mandé volver las barcas*, epis.16.6). The patient which is the direct object of the verb experiments a change of location by returning in the direction of the agent. A close sense, “to return” (*vuélvelo al lugar donde lo tomaste*, sap.es.15.2) in a same way means that the patient, direct object of the verb, experiments a change of location and returns in direction of the addressee.

Our hypothesis is that the change of meaning of *volver* is based on the reanalysis of the relation between the *agent* and the *patient*, and therefore on the syntactic distribution of the two arguments, the *subject*, and the *direct object*. We postulate that the semantic core of the verb “to undergo a rotating movement” is preserved. We would obtain the following semantic and syntactic distribution:

“To undergo a rotative movement”:

(transitive) Rotative movement undergone by the *object*:

- change of property: *volver la mar*, ‘to stir’, *volverlo en uno*, ‘to mix’, *volverlo invulnerable* ‘to make someone/something’ +adj/NP (causative)
- change of location: *volver su tierra*, ‘to bring back’, ‘to return’

(intransitive) Rotative movement undergone by the *subject*:

- change of property: *volverse cristiano*, ‘to become’ (anticausative)
- change of location: *volver a Cataluña*, ‘to come back’, *volver a prometer*, ‘to do it again’ (periphrasis)

To summarize, the lexical core meaning “to turn” as well as the telic eventive structure of *volver* semantically allows for the meaning of a change-of-state of a patient. The patient syntactically can be the subject or the direct object of the verb. If the change-of-state meaning that implicates a ‘rotative movement’ affects the whole object, it will modify its location; if it affects the nature of the object, it will modify its property. In section 2, we will present the different meanings which exhibit a property modification and in section 3, those which reveal a location modification.

2. Change of property: transitivity and intransitivity

We assume that the semantic core of the verb is unchanged (“to operate a rotative movement”). We will look at the first case in which the change-of-state that implicates a rotative movement affects the nature of the patient and modifies

its property. The patient who experiments the change of property will be the direct object in a transitive structure (2.1. “to stir, to shuffle”; 2.2. “to mix”, 2.3. causative interpretation) and the subject in an intransitive structure with an anticausative interpretation (2.4. “to become”).

2.1. *Change of property (without a resultative state): DO⁹ (patient) > “to stir, to shuffle”*

At first, an agent modifies the property of a patient by a rotative movement without any resultative state being expressed. In our Corpus, in the 13-14th, *volver* is almost exclusively used with this very restrictive meaning, “to stir, to shuffle” (*enturbiar, remover*), and only combines with a noun which refers to a substance, a liquid, most of the time the “sea”, “the waves” (*el mar, las aguas*). This use is neither recalled by Corominas & Pascual (1983-1991), nor by Yllera (1980).

(23) e ell espíritu de la tu saña ayuntó *las aguas e las volvió* (hist.es.13.2).

(24) e [la luna] *buelve la mar e mézclala*. (hist.es.13.2).

An inanimate agent, “a spirit”, “the moon” (*espíritu, la luna*) exerts a force, i.e. a rotative movement, on a patient – the direct object of the verb – (“the waves”, “the sea”). The continuous rotary motion affects the property of the object, but even if it is modified, we are only able to visualize a movement. No resultative state is expressed after the movement of “volver [enturbiar] las aguas”.

2.2. *Change of property (with a resultative state): DO (patient) > “To mix, to change a substance into something”*

A second common meaning is “to mix”. Most of the time, *volver* comes to express that an object is mixed or blended with another one until they become something new. The patient which undergoes the change-of-state is the direct object of the verb. Contrary to the previous sense, the semantic event is completed by a resultative state. It refers to substances or liquids “oil, gall, vinegar” (*olio, fiel e vinagre*) that are mixed until they turn to be one:

(25) e desí tomó del santo olio de la unción e d’aquella sangre que esparziera sobr’ell altar e *bolviólo en uno con agua de fuentes* (hist.es.13.2).

‘and so he took of the holy anointing oil and of that blood which he sprinkled on the altar and turned it into one with water from fountains.’

(26) por paçiençia soffrio que le diesen a beuer fiel e vinagre *todo buelto en vno* (hist.es.14.1).

‘for patience he suffered that they gave him to drink gall and vinegar all turned in one.’

9. DO: Direct Object.

This meaning implies a rotative movement exercised by an agent on a patient, the direct object. This movement leads to a resultative state and the verb becomes telic.

2.3. *Change of property: DO of volver and subject of a small clause (patient) > “to make it” + adjective or NP (causative)*

2.3.1. *The causative interpretation*

In this structure, an agent/cause modifies the property of a patient, by making it acquire a new property. *Volver* displays this causative meaning (“to make something/someone acquire a property”) from the 16-17th as shown in (27) and (28). Before that time, *tornar (en)* was the most common form (Yllera 1980; Suárez 1999: 321):

(27) Que *desamor lo vuelve todo feo*. (CDH, 1561 Milán Luis, *El cortesano*, España)

‘That lack of love makes everything ugly.’

(28) Que quien este camino *lo vuelve más dificultoso y obscuro* de lo que él lo es, es la carne, (CDH, 1609, San Juan Bautista de la Concepcion, *Apuntes sueltos en torno a la reforma*).

‘That he who makes this path more difficult and obscure than it is, is the flesh.’

The causative meaning still exists in Modern Spanish (*volver* + adj.):

(29) Biralbo me contó luego [...]: que en aquel instante *el terror lo volvió invulnerable* (Crea, A. Muñoz Molina, *El invierno en Lisboa*, 1987).

‘Biralbo later told me [...]: that at that moment terror made him invulnerable.’

In (29), the agent/cause (*el terror*) exerts an action on an individual (*Biralbo*) and this action affects the nature of *Biralbo* who undergoes a change of property (*ser invulnerable*). This corresponds to a causative meaning whose structure has been described as follows (Dowty 1991; Demonte & Masullo 1999: 38.3.2.2; Mendikoetxea 2000; Ramchand 2008):

A cause, *el terror*, (CAUSE) > makes (BECOME) > it is, X + adjective, (STATE).

It can be assumed, as Comer & Enghels (2017) and Vivanco (2020) do for *poner*, that *volver* retains, in part, its directional sense. It is a metaphorical extension of the semantic core of the verb since it expresses a movement towards a limit.¹⁰ In its causative sense, it directs an entity towards a state, a culminating point, the end of the movement. On one hand, the subject of *volver*, agent-cause (*el terror*)

10. According to Gómez Vicente (2020) it is a semantic extension process related to metaphors: change of state is change of location.

“changes” a patient-object (*Biralbo*) until he acquires a new property (*invulnerable*), and, on the other hand, the subject (*Biralbo*) moves towards the property, the resultative state, the end of the telic event (*ser invulnerable*). Once it has acquired the property, it can no longer progress in its acquisition.

Instead, it is conceivable that this causative construction originates in the old meaning of “to mix, to turn something into” because the physical movement contained in “to mix” became a metaphorical movement in the causative construction “to make”. Both offer the same construction (*volver en*) as we can observe in the following examples:

(30) *e bolviólo en uno* con agua de fuentes (hist.es.13.2).
‘to mix’

(31) *La volverá en oro* (nar.es.17.8).
‘to turn it into gold’

Volver, thanks to a metaphorical extension of a movement towards a limit, has broadened its meaning. It goes from ‘mixing a substance’, (*bolviessa estos polvos*) to ‘changing something/someone into’ and results in a resultative state (*volver en oro*).

2.3.2. *The syntactic structure*

Syntactically, the structure “to make + direct object + adjective” is a complex transitive structure. As we have seen, ‘become’ in *volver(lo)* consists of two sub-events: an achievement (Vendler 1957), the moment at which the property is acquired (transition from state A to state B) and a state (being + property). *El terror lo volvió invulnerable* means that terror, the cause, leads him to a final state ‘he is invulnerable’ (‘X es invulnerable’). *El terror* is the subject (external argument), cause of the event; *lo* is both the direct object of *volver* and the subject of the resultative state “ser invulnerable”. In this case, “X es invulnerable” is described as a “small clause” (Stowell 1981/1983; Contreras 1987). The small clause is a quasi-propositional unit of predication without verbal inflection. The patient (*Biralbo*) which is the direct object of *volver* plays the role of the subject of the small clause and therefore corresponds to an “exceptional case marking” (Hernanz 1999: 2236, 2240; Campos 1999: 1541; Mendikoetxea 2000; Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach 2009: 425). The predicative complement *invulnerable* is part, in this case, of the complements selected by the main verb since it cannot be elided (Cárdenas 2019):

(32) *El terror lo volvió invulnerable* (*causative verb*).

(33) **El terror lo volvió* (*full verb*).

On the other hand, small clauses are sensitive to the aspectual properties of the main predicate, which can select either an *individual* (i-level) or a *stage* predicate (s-level) (Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach 2009: 430). Individual level (i-level) pred-

icates are commonly understood as expressing permanent or inherent properties and stage level predicates (s-level) express accidental properties (Kratzer 1995). In Modern Spanish, the small clause can only refer to an adjective of individual level in “X es + adjective”. The acquired state is a permanent property, an individual level predicate (i-level) (RAE-ASALE 2009: §38.2p-q). The terror leads him to acquire the definitive property of being invulnerable. *Volver* only combines with adjectives of i-level like (34) but not with adjectives of s-level like (35):

(34) El sufrimiento lo volvió *malo* (Corpes, M. Mayoral).

‘Suffering made him bad’ (*ser malo*)

(35) *El sufrimiento lo volvió *cansado*.

‘Suffering made him tired’ (*estar cansado*)

This is not the same in the history. In the 16th and 17th, *volver* combines with both, i-level adjectives as *feo*, *pardo*,

(36) Que desamor lo vuelve todo *feo*. (CDH, 1561 Milán Luis, *El cortesano*, España)

‘lack of love makes everything ugly.’

(37) Y los nublados lo vuelven *pardo* (CDH, 1603-c1607, San Juan Bautista de la Concepción, *Pláticas a los religiosos*)

‘And the clouds make him brown.’

and, from the 16th until the beginning of the 20th, also with adjectives of s-level as we will observe in (38) and (39) where “to be ground” (*molido*) and “to be full of delights” (*lleno de delicias*) combine with *estar* and refer to a resultative state anchored in time and space: *estar molido/lleno de delicias* (**ser molido/lleno*):

(38) salvo que el trigo que llevare de cada persona lo vuelva *molido* (CDH, 1531-1555, Anónimo, *Ordenanzas del Concejo de Gran Canaria*)

‘except that the wheat which he shall take from each person he shall return/turned it milled.’

(39) “¡Bébetelo ahora, y Alah lo vuelva *lleno de delicias* para tu corazón!” (CDH, 1916 Blasco Ibañez Vicente, *Traducción de Las mil y una noches*)

‘Drink it now, and may Allah make it full of delights for your heart!’

However, we will notice a certain ambiguity between the causative meaning (“to make”) and the meaning of “to bring back, to return” which is also possible in (38) and (39). The same applies to (40), in which *volver* displays a certain ambiguity between the motion full verb “to return” and the causative verb “to make”:

- (40) para que guarde al muchacho que pelea en las trincheras, y *nos lo vuelva contento*, como queremos que vuelva (CDH, 1937 Agraz Antonio, «*Por la señal...*», Romances publicados en la CNT)
 ‘that he may keep the boy who fights in the trenches, and return him to us happy/make him happy for us, as we wish him to return.’

The salient meaning is the one that contains the motion meaning: “return him, give him back to us happy”, but we cannot exclude the causative meaning without any spatial meaning “to make him happy to us”.¹¹

The possibility of combination with an s-level adjective which will completely disappear in the second half of the 20th indicates that the spatial motion meaning anchored in time is still in force. We can postulate that this kind of ambiguity contributed to the semantic change meaning of *volver*.

Although most of the change-of-state verbs naturally link with stage-level predicates (*enrojecer*), Vivanco (2015: 305) specifies that some of them, in Spanish, refer to an i-level change of state as *rejuvenecer* (‘to rejuvenate’), *envejecer* (‘to get older’). Due to its motion meaning, *volver* can combine with both until the first half of the 20th. As it lost its spatial feature, it will combine exclusively with adjectives of i-level. The hypothesis is that *volver* expresses a change-of-state that leads to an s-level state, and ends expressing a change-of-state that leads to an i-level state.

2.3.3. Characterizing and identifying interpretation

The small clause *ser* + adjective displays two kinds of interpretation: a *characterizing* interpretation and an *identifying* interpretation. If we have a glance at the two following examples,

- (41) al hombre rudo le *vuelve sutil*, al cobarde *valiente*, al perezoso *listo* (epis. es.19.4).
 ‘the rough man is made gentle, the coward courageous, the lazy man clever.’
- (42) para que el frío no me lo *vuelva un terrón de hielo* (CDH, 1935, Hernández Miguel, *Los hijos de la piedra. Drama del monte y sus jornaleros*).
 ‘so that the cold does not turn him into a lump of ice.’

Sentence (41) displays the characterizing reading whereas (42) presents the identifying one. With the characterizing reading, the adjectives (*sutil*, *valiente*, *listo*) attribute a quality that enables to characterize the respective individual subjects *hombre rudo*, *cobarde*, *perezoso* (RAE-ASALE 2009: 15.5o; Fernández Leborans 1999: §37.1.2; Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach 2009: 318). No identification relation is established between the reference of the subject (*hombre rudo*, *cobarde*, *listo*) and the reference of the adjective (*sutil*, *valiente*, *listo*). On the contrary, sentence

11. To some of native speakers, this interpretation is not possible. This would show that probably in 1937, s-level adjectives like (*estar*) *contento* cannot combine anymore with *volver*.

(42) displays an identifying reading since an identity relation is established between the reference of the subject (of the small clause) *lo* and the reference of the NP (*un terron de hielo*). No property is assigned to the subject. However, its reference is identified (RAE-ASALE 2009: §37.5j; Fernández Leborans 1999: §37.3.2).

Instead, (42) is not very natural in Modern Spanish, since the unique reading in Peninsular Spanish is the characterizing one as shown in (43)-(46):

(43) [Franco] Convirtió el pasado en ridículo. *Lo volvió grotesco*. (Corpes, 2001, Bueno Álvarez, J. A. *El último viaje de Eliseo Guzmán*).

‘He made the past ridiculous. He made it grotesque.’

(44) El sufrimiento *lo volvió malo* (Corpes, M. Mayoral, España).

‘Suffering made him bad.’

(45) Esa actitud *lo volvió serio y amenazador* (Corpes, Morales, C.).

‘This attitude made him serious and threatening.’

(46) al malo sólo el cariño *lo vuelve puro y sincero* (Corpes, 2012, Figueras Albi, Elena, *Creímos que también era mentira*).

‘only affection makes the bad guy pure and sincere.’

We will have to notice two things: the first one is that, as written above, the adjectives (*grotesco, malo, amenazador, puro y sincero*) attribute a characteristic to the subject of the small clause (*el pasado, lo, el cariño*). The second one is that in Peninsular Spanish, the subjects usually refer to inanimate objects (*sufrimiento, actitud, cariño*) and lack volitional features. In (43) the subject of *volver* refers to an animate individual, but we understand that it should be interpreted as a cause of the event and not as a volitional agent: “*unintentionally*, he made it grotesque”.

However, if we have a glance at the diachrony, from the 15-16th until the beginnings of the 20th, *volver* allows for both readings: the *characterizing* reading and the *identifying* reading. At the beginning, only participles as *vuelto* display the characterizing reading:

(47) La demestracion es verle el color *vuelto en verde o citrino* (tec.es.15.5)

and from the 16th it allows conjugated forms (*lo vuelve, me habéis vuelto*):

(48) No digo aquel don Tristan muy amado, Que desamor *lo vuelve todo feo* (CDH, 1561 Milán Luis, *El cortesano*, España).

(49) pues a mí de derecho *me habéis vuelto tuerto*, dejándome una pierna quebrada (nar.es.17.4).

As to the identifying reading, we notice that until the 17th, *volver en* + NP competes with the construction *convertir en* + NP:

(50) pero ¿adónde *la* habían de hallar, si está encantada y vuelta en la más fea labradora que imaginar se puede? (nar.es.17.9).

‘but where could she be found, if she is enchanted and turned into the ugliest farm laborer imaginable?’

(51) ver brincar y subir sobre su pollina a *la convertida en labradora Dulcinea* (nar.es.17.10).

‘to see Dulcinea, who has become a farmer, prancing and climbing on her pullet.’

The identifying reading of *volver* seems to have completely disappeared in the 20th in Peninsular Spanish since it cannot be constructed with a NP with a causative meaning (**lo volvió un niño responsable/aviador*, RAE-ASALE 2009: 38.4g).¹² Instead, it is still in force in American Spanish. The range of possibilities is widespread. It can be constructed with a NP and a determiner:

(52) ese otro costado negativo que *lo vuelve una patología* (Corpes, 2010, Rolón, Gabriel, *Los padecientes*, Argentina).

‘that other negative side which makes it a pathology.’

(53) En el cuento *lo volvió un pájaro con el pecho amarillo y la cabeza roja* (Corpes, 2004, Castro Caycedo, Germán Más *allá de la noche*, Colombia).

‘in the story turned it into a bird with a yellow breast and a red head.’

The sentences (52)–(53) convey the identifying meaning as the change-of-state implicates an equivalence between both referents *lo* and *patología* and *lo* and *un pájaro con el pecho amarillo y la cabeza roja*.

However, American Spanish also displays constructions of *volver* + NP that seem to exhibit a characterizing reading with a superlative or relative meaning, i.e. which expresses the highest degree of the quality. In those following examples,

(54) la mamá de tanto pobretearlo *lo volvió un inútil* (Corpes, 2009 Barros Pavajeau, Luis: «José». *Los salmos de la sangre*, Colombia)

‘his mother pitied him so much that he became worthless.’

(55) bueno José / ¿quién le o *lo volvió un humorista?* ¿cómo fue? (Corpes, 2002, Corales, Cita con la intimidación, 30/05/02, Caracol Radio, Colombia)

‘well José / who made him a humorist? How was it?’

The subject is characterized as belonging to the class of “the useless, the humorists” (*inútil, un humorista*), i.e. it is attributed the properties shared by all the individuals of the set as an exemplar of the set. It also implies that the inferred quality “useless” or “humorist”, is to be taken in the highest degree. The NP introduces a

12. It is the exclusive use of *convertir* in Peninsular Spanish in the 20th–21st.

certain evaluative characteristic of the subject (RAE-ASALE 2009: 37.2.2; Leonetti 1999: 852). This may be due to the telic structure of *volver*. The culminating point of the degree of the property expressed by a superlative coincides with the culminating point of the achievement ('become').

This is identical with the use of "emphatic *un*+ NP" in American Spanish:

(56) y lo vuelve *un caos de preguntas* sin responder (Corpes, 2002, Martínez Salguero, Jaime *El combate místico*, Bolivia).

'and turns it into a chaos of unanswered questions.'

(57) Que llegó al paraíso y lo volvió *un infierno* (Corpes, 2012, Bertón, Catalina: «Vietnam: cinco sentidos». *El Observador. Seisgrados*, Uruguay).

'Who came to paradise and turned it into hell.'

NPs such as "chaos" (*caos*) in (56) or "hell" (*infierno*) in (57), are called 'emphatic' because they convey a metaphorical interpretation of the attribute: they are read metaphorically, from the prototypical properties of 'chaos' or 'hell' (Bosque 1996: 66). The meaning forces us to infer the attribution to the subject of the most outstanding and characteristic quality of the class, according to the cultural stereotypes of the speakers.

2.4. Change of property: subject (patient) > "To become" (anticausative)

Volver is also used in an intransitive construction with an anticausative meaning: *volverse* + adj/NP. The subject is the agent and the patient who acquires a new property. It is called anticausative because it expresses a change-of-state, but it lacks a cause.¹³ The first example in our Corpus appears in the 16th and the uses are increasing from the 17th. The change-of-state affects a patient who is the subject of the verb: "children become Christian" in (58) but the cause is not specified:

(58) Y estando en poder de cristianos algunos dellos, especialmente los niños, se *buelven cristianos* (epis.mx.16.1).

'And being in the power of Christians, some of them, especially the children, become Christians.'

Volverse, from the 17th, displays a characterizing reading as in (59) and when used with *en*, an identifying reading, as in (60):

(59) à la manera que *el agua dulce*, entrando en la Mar, *se buelve salada* (téc. es.17.1).

'in the way the fresh water, entering the sea, becomes salty.'

13. We cannot develop here the role of the clitic *se*. It is the mark of anticausativity, since *volverse* conveys the meaning of a change-of-state that is apparently spontaneous because it lacks a causer.

- (60) porque si *un gato acosado*, encerrado y apretado *se vuelve en león*, yo, que soy hombre, Dios sabe *en lo que podré volverme* (nar.es.17.8).
 ‘for if a cat that is harassed, enclosed, and squeezed turns into a lion, I, who am a man, God knows what I may turn into.’

In (59) the quality of being salted is attributed to the water whereas in (60) the cat turned into a lion.

The characterizing interpretation *volverse* + *adjective* (intransitive) which is still in force until the 21st seems to originate in the semantic feature of the spatial motion of *volver*. As we can observe, from the 17th until the beginning of the 20th, *volverse* may be used with an s-level adjective that refers to a temporary property, combined with a complement anchored in time or in space:

- (61) ni entendían en otra cosa que en llegar dineros y *procurar volverse ricos a sus casas* (hist.es. 17.1.1).
 ‘nor were they interested in anything else but getting money and trying to come back rich at home.’

(61) means “they came back rich”. We will observe that *volverse* is still interpreted as a motion verb (“to come back”) with a predicative complement as ‘being rich, once being rich’. The location complement *a sus casas* (‘home’) shows that it refers to an event anchored in time and space. The intentional verb “to try” (*procurar*) coincides with the sense of a movement started by a subject. The mere deletion of *a sus casas* would delete the space and time anchoring and would produce the actual meaning “they became rich”.

In the same way, example (62) shows that, at the beginning of the 20th, *volverse* can still combine with s-level participles since *callado* refers to *estar callado* (“quiet at that time”), not to *ser callado* (“quiet all the time”):

- (62) Bernarda: Ahora *te has vuelto callada*. La Poncia: Me estoy en mi sitio, y en paz (tea.es.20.1).
 ‘Bernarda: you have stopped talking. La Poncia: I am in my place, and in peace.’
 ≠ ‘you have become a silent person’

A few examples indeed display an ambiguity between both interpretations, a definitive state-change (‘become’ + attribute) and a temporary state-change (‘become’ + predicative) as does (63):

- (63) ¿Adónde habrá paciencia para que un pobre como yo, por ejemplo, se despidiera de su familia, deje su lugar, se venga a Madrid, se esté años y más años, gaste su hacienda, suba y baje escaleras, [...] salude porteros, pase enfermedades, y al cabo *se vuelva peor de lo que vino?* (epis.es.18.2).
 ‘Where will there be patience for a poor man like me, for example, to say goodbye to his family, leave his place, come to Madrid, stay for years and

years, spend his money, go up and down stairs, [...] greet doormen, get sick, and in the end return worse than when he came?’

This example presents both interpretations: “return worse” (to come back + predicative) or “become worse than when he came” (to become + attribute), where in the first case the change-of-state “worse” (*peor*) refers to an acquired property, an s-level participle, and in the second interpretation, to an essential and definitive property, an i-level participle. The verb probably lost progressively its semantic spatial feature in the course of time and allowed for a larger number of combinations. As it lost its spatial feature, at the same time, the participle lost its time feature.

3. Change of location

If the rotate movement affects the *location* of the patient, *volver* displays three constructions. In a transitive construction with a direct object, the direct object is the patient who undergoes the change of location (3.1. “to return” or “to bring back”). In an intransitive construction, the subject of the verb is the patient who undergoes the motion, the change of location (3.2. “to come back”). In a periphrastic construction, the subject metaphorically undergoes a motion toward an event (3.3. “to do it one more time”).

3.1. Change of location: DO (patient) > “to bring it back” or “to return it” (transitive construction)

Semantically, the change may affect the whole patient and makes him change location by means of a “rotative movement”. As stated by Eberenz (1998: 110) *volver* means “both the process of the movement experienced by the entity expressed in the syntactic subject and the causative production of the same by another person, i.e. ‘to go back’ (intransitive value) and ‘to return’ or ‘to bring back’ (transitive value)”. This use has produced two meanings: ‘to bring it back’ and ‘to return’, two varieties of the factitive meaning that will disappear completely in the 19th.

The meaning of “to bring it back” is called factitive because someone tries to have an object returned to them, to the subject of the verb. At first, from the 14th, verbs like *mandar*, *ordenar* ‘order’ are often used to express a command and attribute a factitive value to the construction:

(64) Ca quella fechizera medea que *faze volver los cursos çelestiales* & *faze con sus encantamentos boluer los rrios* alas fuentes do Naçen (hist.14.8).

(65) Y *mandé volver las barcas y canoas* al bergantín (epis.es.16.6).

(66) Las holandillas pintadas [...] y así *me ordenará* el remitirlas a Madrid, *volverlas a Cádiz*, (epis.es.17.2).

From the 17th, there is no need to use any command verb. (67) is also considered factitive since it means that the emperor had the city of Zaragoza returned (go back) to the king (“hizo que la ciudad volviera al rey”):

- (67) El emperador *volvió* al rey *la ciudad de Zaragoza* (hist.es.16.1.1).
 ‘the emperor had the city of Zaragoza returned to the king.’

Volver with the meaning of *devolver* (‘to return’) is still used until the 18th:

- (68) que ponga en libertad a Enrico Bransvico con su hijo Carlos, y les *vuelva su tierra* (hist.es.17.1.5).
 ‘to release Enrico Bransvico and his son Carlos, and to return their land to them.’
- (69) *volvieron la mayor parte de las cosas* que se le habían quitado (hist.es.17.1.5).
 ‘most of the things that had been taken away from him were returned.’
- (70) *volviendo el papel* a Dona Ambrosia (tea.es.18.6).
 ‘returning the paper to Dona Ambrosia.’

However, sometimes, it is possible to hesitate between two interpretations. Examples as (71) and (72) display an ambiguity between the full verb “to go back, to return” and the factitive meaning “to bring back”:

- (71) trató Su Majestad que convenía *volver el príncipe* en España, y con él Maximiliano, rey de Bohemia, para llevar la reina María su mujer (hist.17.1.6).
 = the prince should return to Spain (‘para que el príncipe volviera a España’)
 = to bring the prince back to Spain (‘para hacer que el príncipe volviera a España’)
- (72) les había de dar otros tantos españoles *para los volver en salvo* (epis.es.16.4).
 = to return safely (‘para que volvieran a salvo’)
 = to make them safe and secure (‘para hacer que estuvieran a salvo’)

Maybe due to its ambiguity, this use disappeared in the 18th. *Volver* will lose its factitive meaning and *devolver* (“to return”) which indicates the place from which the movement originates by means of the prefix *de-*, will replace it completely in the 19th:

- (73) pero, viendo la obstinación de Montfort en no *devolver sus tierras* (hist.es.19.1).
 ‘but, seeing Montfort’s obstinacy in not giving back his lands.’

3.2. *Change of location: subject (patient) > “to come back” (intransitive construction)*

Diachronically, the intransitive use emerges after the transitive one as it only appears in the 15th-16th, a long time after the first uses of *volver* as a transitive verb.¹⁴ The first example of the intransitive use of *volverse* in our Corpus, dates to the 15th:¹⁵

- (74) que non *se boluiese* ninguno a su casa (hist.es.15.2)
 ‘that no one should return to his house.’

Corominas & Pascual (1983-1991) states that it emerged late. *Volver* begins to rival *tornar* from the middle of the 15th century onwards, but they did not mean the same:

the verb fully preserved the sense of the rotary or inversion movement, which in *tornar* must have been lost by that time. (Eberenz 1998: 119)

Volver develops an intransitive use in the following way: instead of “rolling, making roll” in Latin and “stirring, clearing the sea” in Medieval Castilian, where an agent exerts a *continuous* rotary movement on a patient, the rotative movement is experimented just *once*: *él volvió*, “he twisted, he returned”. The lexical properties of *volver* whose aspectual structure is now telic (“to twist once”) may be more appropriate to express motion and change-of-state, from A to B.

From the 16th, *volver(se)* is increasing and replaced totally *tornar*: The intransitive use is completely consolidated and there is no need to add the clitic *se* as a mark of intransitivity. Both forms can alternate:

- (75) Los moros *se volvieron* a su ciudad (hist.es.16.1).
 ‘The Moors returned to their city.’

- (76) *volvió* a Cataluña con el propósito de hacer guerra a los infieles (hist.es.16.1).
 ‘he returned to Catalonia with the purpose of waging war against the infidels.’

3.3. *Metaphorical change of location: subject (patient) > “to do it one more time” (periphrasis)*

The verb has developed a periphrastic construction *volver a* + infinitive from the beginning of the 16th. As pointed out by Yllera (1980: 198), periphrastic uses with *volver a* are still very rare in the 15th. This periphrasis expresses the repetition of the same event (RAE-ASALE 2009: 28.3.1g; Declerck 1991: 277), as in (77) where the prince promises again that he would come back:

14. This occurs in many languages as in English with *he broke the window* (transitive) vs. *the window broke* (intransitive).

15. A reviewer points out that this meaning is already present in certain works of Alfonso X, copies of which date from the 14th century.

(77) Y manda que los obedezcan, y que el príncipe se parta luego, y *vuelve a prometer su breve venida* (hist.es.17.1-6).

‘And he commands that they obey them, and that the prince depart immediately, and again promises his soon coming.’

As pointed out by many linguists (Zielinski 2014: 237; Fernández Martín 2015: 215), this use comes from a metaphorical spatial movement, since, as in the proper use of the verb, “coming back to a place” (78), it refers to a coming back movement to an event (79):

(78) *Volvió a Madrid* > he came back to a place.

(79) *Volvió a prometer* > he came back to the event of “promise”.

The coming back movement to a temporal event will produce the iterative meaning: “to do it again”. The question is how it displays this interpretation. If we say *volvió a visitar al rey*, the agent went back to an event, anchored in time and space, “visiting the King”. Instead, *prometer* in (79) does not refer to an event anchored in space. An event that lacks a spatial anchor is more difficult to be interpreted as a goal and will be reinterpreted as a temporal event.

Volver broadens its meaning as it will combine with both spatial places and time events. The verb is grammaticalized and becomes a grammatical tool (“to repeat”).¹⁶ However, as pointed out by Roca Pons (1959: 12) it does not lose completely its concrete meaning since it links with a metaphorical spatial movement (“to come back”).

The periphrasis *volver a* + infinitive allows for two readings in Modern Spanish, the *iterative* meaning, and the *restitutive* meaning. In the iterative interpretation, the patient subject performs the action for a second time and is involved in the event; in the restitutive meaning, the patient returns to a previous state (stage-level). Both interpretations display a spatial metaphor of “return” as the subject goes back to an event or to a state. If we have a glance at these examples, where the subject can be animate (*grupo provida, Patrick*) or inanimate (*el aceite de oliva, Metro de Madrid*),

(80) el grupo provida “Life” *vuelve a ofrecer dinero* a una pareja de Oxforshire que está dispuesta a abortar sus dos gemelos (*Crea, El Mundo*, 15/08/1996). ‘pro-life group “Life” again offers money to Oxforshire couple willing to abort their twins.’

(81) El aceite de oliva *vuelve a reinar en la mesa* (*Crea*, 1995, *La Vanguardia*, 30/03/1995).

‘Olive oil reigns again at the table.’

16. Some linguists as Comer & Enghels (2017: 9) define it as “semantic whitening”. Indeed, the fact that these constructions originate from metaphorical extensions of locative semantism forces us to speak of partial semantic whitening (“blanqueamiento parcial”) because it retains its metaphorical sense of a “movement in direction to”.

- (82) Patrick me abrió. [...] Me vio, y *volvió a entrar*, dejando la puerta entreabierta. (Crea, 2002, Paz Soldán Edmundo, *La materia del deseo*).
 ‘Patrick opened the door for me [...] He saw me and went back inside, leaving the door ajar.’
- (83) Metro de Madrid *volverá a abrir* en la noche de este miércoles “para seguir garantizando la movilidad” tras el temporal (*europapress*, 13/01/2021).
 ‘Metro de Madrid will reopen on Wednesday night “to continue guaranteeing mobility” after the storm.’

we observe that (80) and (81) display an iterative interpretation: “the group *provida*” offers money for the second time, i.e. is involved in the whole event of “offering money” and, olive oil reigns again at the table, i.e. is involved in the action of “reigning at the table” for a second time. In both sentences, the subject (*grupo provida*, *aceite de oliva*) undergoes a metaphorical location change, since it goes back to the event referred to by the infinitive. Instead, (82) and (83) display a restitutive interpretation: Patrick had gone out and went back in; he did not enter for a second time. He returned to a previous situation: being indoors. In (83), the metro was close, and it reopened. It did not open for a second time. It turned to a previous state, to be open.

In the history of the periphrasis, in the 16-17th, it seems that, at first, the verb takes on a restitutive meaning.¹⁷ Examples as (84) and (85) are widespread:

- (84) [el estoque] lo volvió a *meter en la vaina* (hist.es.17.1.3).
 ‘[the rapier] was put back in the sheath.’
- (85) [el cuerpo de Pedro Luis] de sepultado lo volvieron a *desenterrar* (hist.es.17.1.5).
 ‘[the body of P.L.] after it was buried was dug up again.’

(84) acquires the meaning of “put the rapier in the sheath” because he had taken it out, but not, he put it in it one more time. It returned to a previous state “being in the sheath”. (85) means he was buried, and they dug up, not they dug up one more time. This cannot be surprising, since at first, *volver* had not completely lost its motion spatial meaning. A state is easier to conceive as a goal to reach (*volver a > estar metido / desenterrado*, “to be put back”/ “dug up”). We observe that in both sentences, there are two changes of location: the one of the subject and the one of the direct object. There is a metaphoric change of location of the subject who goes back to the event of “putting the rapier in the sheath” or “digging up the body” (*meter el estoque en la vaina*, *desenterrar el cuerpo*); if the infinitive is transitive, the direct object undergoes the change-of-state, the spatial movement “being dug up”, “being in the sheath” (*estar en la vaina*, *estar desenterrado*).

17. According to Vatrican (2018: 133) restitutive meaning would be the intermediate stage of the grammaticalization.

Two factors may explain restitutive interpretation precedes iterative interpretation. On the one hand, we observe in our corpus that at first, in the 17th, *volver a* + infinitive acquires the iterative meaning when it is used with an element of iterativity that can disambiguate the sentence, like *otra vez*, *de nuevo* or the prefix *-re*. This combination allows us to understand that the iterative use is not yet fully established:

(86) Y la ciudad volvió a estar *otra vez* debajo del yugo de los moros (hist.es.16.1-1).
‘And the city was once again under the yoke of the Moors.’

(87) la volvieron a *reedificar* (hist.es.17.1-2).
‘they rebuilt it again.’

(88) [la caja] la volvía cerrar *de nuevo* y envolverla con lienzo (epis.es.17.2).
‘[the box] I closed it again and wrapped it in canvas.’

On the other hand, a few examples display an ambiguity across the 16-17th between the motion meaning (“to go back to a place”) and the periphrastic meaning (“to do it again”):

(89) Otro día *el rey volvió a visitar* al rey de Navarra (hist.es.16.1-1).

(90) Entrega a esos hombres ese dinero, que ya es suyo, y *vuelve a consolar a este triste padre tuyo*, que en esta desierta arena dejará la vida, ¡si tú le dejas! (nar.es.17.7).

(91) hasta que el Rey Católico *volvió a gobernar en Castilla* (hist.es.17.1-1).

The sentence (89) exhibits the extreme ambiguity between the spatial meaning, to go back to visit the King or the temporal meaning, to visit him a second time. In both cases, “visiting the King” had previously occurred. In all these examples, the infinitive refers to a dynamic event anchored in space and time (*visitar*, *consolar*, *gobernar*). The subject of *volver* is animate and volitional. These infinitives refer to events with a space-time anchoring and are capable of being conceived as goals.

Obviously, this is not the case for stative verbs, which describe properties of the subject, but not stages in which they are involved at a given moment.¹⁸ In Spanish, the periphrastic construction starts with lexical combinations that are progressively extended (Garachana 2016: 140). We formulate the hypothesis that periphrastic meaning will be consolidated when its uses expand since the infinitive can be a stative verb,

18. This explains the grammaticality in French of *retourner* + dynamic verb in *il est retourné dormir* (‘he went back to sleep’) and its ungrammaticality when used with a stative verb in **il est retourné être heureux* (‘he went back to be happy’).

(92) mas deseaba el almirante tanto la paz, que, [...] *volvió a querer* tratar de ella (hist.es.17.1-2).

‘but the admiral wanted peace so much that, [...] he wanted to deal with it once again.’

(93) hasta que Ribagorza *volvió a tener título de condado* (hist.es.16.1.1).

‘until Ribagorza regained its county title.’

or be in passive voice,

(94) para que el rey don Enrique perdiese la esperanza de *volver a ser ayudado del rey de Aragón* (hist.es.17. 1-6).

‘so that King Henry would lose hope of being helped again by the King of Aragon.’

(95) y como sobrevino la muerte del rey *volvió a ser proveído* el vizconde de Rocabertí del cargo de lugarteniente (hist.es.17. 1-6).

‘and since the death of the king occurred, the viscount of Rocabertí was again provided with the position of lieutenant.’

subjects can be inanimate,¹⁹

(96) antes que se comenzase a gozar de *la paz* y aun hubiese seguridad della, *se volvió a romper* (hist.es.1-6).

‘Before peace could begin to be enjoyed and there was even security, it broke out again.’

(97) De allí a poco *volvió a sonar la trompeta* (hist.es.17.1-2).

‘Then the trumpet sounded once again.’

the infinitive can be a meteorological verb,²⁰

(98) A las once de la noche *volvió a tronar y relampaguear* (hist.es.17.1-5).

‘At eleven o’clock at night it thundered and flashed again.’

Since the subject has lost its volitional feature, the spatial movement (“to go back”) cannot be initiated anymore and needs to be reanalyzed as “to repeat”. As say Heine, Ulrike & Hünemeyer (1991: 29), the grammaticalization “can be interpreted as the result of a process that has problem solving as its main goal”. The

19. As Hopper & Traugott (1993: 97) explain for the future, “the future meaning becomes established (...) when inanimate incapable of volition begin to appear as the subjects of *will*”.

20. Garachana (2017) states that the progressive use of animate individuals and impersonal constructions allow for combining the auxiliary with meteorologic verbs that imply compliance with basic criteria of periphrasis.

problem of going back to an event for an animate individual or for an inanimate object is solved with the reanalysis of *volver* as to go back in time, not in space; therefore, the same event or the same situation occurs for the second time.

In Modern Spanish, without any context, the more natural interpretation of *volver a* is the iterative one. It can display a restitutive interpretation in a very few contexts. Melis (2006: 911) defends that iteration implicates the need to have a time interval between one occurrence and another of the referred situation; repetition has disappeared when the interval between both events has disappeared. The author gives the following example for the restitutive interpretation:

- (99) Desde que esa frutera Cecilia ha abandonado su puesto en el mercado, *no he vuelto a comer buena fruta*.
 ‘Since that fruit seller Cecilia has abandoned her stall in the market, I have never eaten good fruit again.’

In our opinion, the so-called restitutive interpretation is due to the fact that “eating good fruits” (*comer buena fruta*) does not refer to the temporal event of “eating fruit” but to the property of eating *always* good fruit. The individual goes back to the permanent situation of eating good fruit. However, the property also implicates the repetition of the event “eating fruit”. We don’t think this interpretation is the restitutive one since it does not refer to a *stage* (resultative state) but to a *property* that implicates the iteration of the same event.

Other linguists say that verbs which express a change-of-state with a resultative state will easily produce the restitutive meaning (Garachana & Rosemeyer 2011; Fabricius-Hansen 2001). We think this is not sufficient to allow for this interpretation. As shown in these examples, *turbar* and *sorprender* comprise a dynamic event (“to disturb, to surprise”) and a resultative state (“being disturbed, being surprised”). Instead, the meaning is not the restitutive one but the iterative one, as they did the action one more time:

- (100) el mismo rey de Francia levantaba nuevos movimientos de guerra, para *volver a turbar la paz* de Italia (hist.es.17.1-3).
 ‘the king of France himself raised new movements of war, in order to disturb the peace of Italy again.’
- (101) Marisa Berenson *volvió a sorprender a todos* con su extrema elegancia (Crea, 2001, Rivera de la Cruz, Marta, *Fiestas que hicieron historia*).
 ‘Marisa Berenson surprised everyone once again with her extreme elegance.’

We notice that, to obtain the restitutive meaning, the infinitive not only needs to express a change of state with a resultative state. It also needs two characteristics: expressing a motion and being intransitive. In most of the cases, restitutive interpretation comes from an infinitive which expresses a change of location, and which is intransitive, as *sentarse*, *incorporarse*, *tumbarse*, *caer*, in (102-105):

- (102) —¿Trae pistola? —le pregunta la mesera, cuando él *vuelve a sentarse* (Corpes, 2001 Aridjis, Homero *La zona del silencio*).
—‘Do you have a gun? —asks the waitress, when he sits down again.’
- (103) Raquel se ha echado en el sofá, se saca los zapatos con los pies, [...] Apenas se siente cómoda *vuelve a incorporarse*, suelta la botella (Corpes, 2001 Franco, Jorge *Paraíso Travel*).
‘Raquel lies down on the sofa, pulls off her shoes with her feet, [...] As soon as she feels comfortable, she sits up again, drops the bottle.’
- (104) Al quedarse solo B se quita los zapatos, busca sus cigarrillos, enciende la tele y *vuelve a tumbarse* en la cama (Corpes, 2001, Bolaño, Roberto: «Últimos atardeceres en la tierra». *Putas asesinas*).
‘Left alone B takes off his shoes, looks for his cigarettes, turns on the TV and lies back on the bed.’
- (105) El dueño de la casa se apoyó a continuación sobre los brazos de su butaca e hizo ademán de levantarse. [...] A la mitad, su cara se torció en un rictus de dolor y *volvió a caer sobre el asiento* (Crea, 2000, Silva, Lorenzo, *El alquimista impaciente*).
‘The owner of the house then leaned on the arms of his armchair and tried to get up. [...] Halfway through, his face twisted into a rictus of pain, and he fell back onto the seat.’

The grammatical subject of *volver* is the patient of the verb, the one who turns to be in a previous state (“to be sit”, “to be straightened”). As an example, in (102), what is repeated is not the event of sitting but the state of being sit. The subject must be involved in the event and undergo a change (*sentarse* > *he sit*).

4. Conclusions

In this paper, we have tried to show that the semantic change of *volver* consists of a reanalysis of the roles of agent and patient in its semantic structure and, consequently, of the syntactic distribution of the subject and the direct object. At first, in the 13th-14th centuries, *volver* is transitive and expresses a continuous revolving movement exerted on an object. From this transitive use come the causative and anticausative constructions. We claim that this transitive use allowed *volver* to develop the sense of change of a property: *to stir* > *to mix* > *to make something* +adj/NP (causative) > *to become* (anticausative). It is only from the 15th century that *volver* develops an intransitive use of spatial displacement towards a boundary and produce factitive uses and a periphrasis of iteration. The intransitive use allowed the development of the sense of change of location: *to go back* > *to bring back*, *to return* > *to do it again* (periphrasis). The substitution of *tornar* for *volver* perhaps is due to the acquisition of telicity, since it goes from expressing a continuous movement to a single rotating movement, a metaphor

that will allow it to become a verb of change-of-state, and probably be more apt to express movement and change-of-state than the verb *tornar*, which had lost semantic content and telicity.

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