


## 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
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>a</i> to <i>Castiella</i> Castilla
			<i>dixiesse</i> tell-PST.SBJC3SG  finished-PTCP

<i>fasta que</i> until CONJ	<i>los otros</i> the others	<i>ouiesse</i> AUX-IPFV.SBJC3P
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<i>cerca d-acabadas</i> near of-finished-PTCP (CG, 12a)	<i>sus</i> POSS-3PL	<i>obras</i> works
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"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	<b><i>habemos</i></b> AUX-PRES1P	<b><i>mandado</i></b> 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
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(*Gastos de la catedral de Pamplona*, 1400, Spain, CORDE, s.v. *habemos mandado*)  
 "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
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<b><i>habemos</i></b> AUX-PRES1P	<b><i>de</i></b> PREP	<b><i>ir</i></b> to go-INF	<i>a aquella</i> to that	<i>vida</i> life
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<i>perdurable</i> everlasting	[ . . . ] <i>tenemos</i> AUX-PRES1P	<i>por</i> by	<i>derecho</i> law	<i>de</i> PREP
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<i>lo</i> it-ACU3S	<i>emendar</i> amend-INF	<i>a</i> to	<i>Dios</i> God
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(*Real Monasterio de Santo Domingo*, 1291, Spain, CORDE, s.v. *habemos de*)

"By knowing this and realising 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	<b><i>non</i></b> not
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<b><i>ouyesse</i></b> there be- IPFV.SBJC3S	<i>obispo</i> bishop	<i>et</i> and	<i>el cabillo</i> the chapter
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<i>della</i> of.ART	<i>rogase</i> beg-IPFV.SBJC3S	<i>a</i> to	<i>otro</i> someone else
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<i>que</i> that	<i>por</i> by	<i>y</i> there	<i>pasasse</i> go by-IPFV.SBJC3S	<i>que</i> that
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<i>lo</i> it-ACUS3S	<i>ffiziesse</i> do-IPFV.SBJC3S
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(*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) *Habían* *algunos* *hechiceros*  
There are-IPFV3P some sorcerers,
- ministros* *del* *diablo* *que* *los*  
ministers of.ART.S. devil that ACUS-3P
- inducían* *en* *algunos* *supersticiosos* *errores*  
incite-IPFV3P PREP some superstitious mistakes  
(*Apologética historia sumaria*, 1527–1550, Spain, CORDE, s.v. *habían*)  
“There were some sorcerers, ministers of the devil who led them into some superstitious mistakes.”
- todavía* *creo* *que* *habrán* *muchos*  
still believe-PRES1S that thereareFUT3P many
- que* *se declararán* *por* *V. M.*  
that declare-FUT3P in favor of Your Majesty  
(*Historia de Felipe II*, c.1619, Spain, CORDE, s.v. *habrán*)  
“I still believe that there will be many who will declare themselves in favor of Your Majesty.”
- aunque* *hubieron* *algunos* *indios*  
thoug therearePST3P some indians
- hicieron* *sus* *tiros,* *nada* *hizo*  
make-PST3POS-3P shoots, nothing do-PST3S  
(*Diario de la sublevación del año 1781*, c. 1781, Bolivia, CORDE, s.v. *hubieron*)  
“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) *Vea* *esto* *no* *es*  
Look-IMP2S this not be-PRES3S
- Rionegro,* *donde* *sí* *habemos*  
Rionegro where indeed there bePRES1P
- muchos blancos,* *por* *los* *cuatro* *costaos*  
many whites by the four sides  
(La marquesa de Yolombó, 1928, Colombia, CORDE, s.v. *habemos muchos*)  
“Look: this is not Rionegro, where there are many of us whites indeed, entirely white.”
- la organización* *no* *solicitó* *los permisos* *para*  
the organisation not request-PST3S the permissions for
- la venta de alcohol,* *por tanto* *hubimos* *varios*  
the sale of alcohol, therefore there be-PST1P several
- expositores* *que* *nos quedamos* *con* *el* *viaje*  
expositors who keep-PST1P with the trip  
(Blog “*Identidad y futuro*,” 2015, Chile)  
“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.”
- ¿cómo* *se* *consigue* *un experto?* *Aquí en* *la*  
How IMPER get-PRES3S an expert here in the  
*nube docente* *habremos* *varios*  
cloud teaching there many  
be-FUT3P
- listos* *a* *apoyar-nos*  
ready to support-INF-ACUS1P  
(Webpage, 2015, México)  
“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 cooptation 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% ( <b>4174</b> /4203)
XVII	10% (135/1411)	90% (1276/1411)	2% (105/4512)	98% ( <b>4407</b> /4512)
XVIII	2% (2/83)	98% ( <b>81</b> /83)	7% (13/2175)	93% ( <b>2162</b> /2175)
XIX	28% (29/97)	72% (68/97)	<0.5% (7/13,007)	99% ( <b>13,000</b> /13,007)
XX	8% (13/158)	92% (145/158)	<0.5% (5/16,508)	99% ( <b>16,503</b> /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.

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



<i>el</i> the	<i>estrecho</i> strait	<i>que</i> that	<i>habemos</i> AUX-PRES1P	<i>visto</i> seen-PTCP
<i>(Discurso de recepción en la Real Academia Española: Pasión y muerte del Conde de Villamediana, 1964, Spain, CORDE, s.v. habemos visto)</i>				
“To order an ordinary man to be killed, places a great man in the situation that we have seen.”				
<i>ya</i> already	<i>sabéis</i> know-PRES2P	<i>la</i> the	<i>voluntad</i> will	<i>que</i> that
<i>la Católica Reina mi Señora,</i> the My Lady the Catholic Queen	<i>é</i> and	<i>yo</i> I	<i>habemos</i> AUX-PRES1P	
<i>tenido</i> had-PTP	<i>é</i> and	<i>tenemos</i> have-PRES1P	<i>al</i> to.ART	<i>bien</i> good
<i>(Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar, 1963, Cuba, CORDE, s.v. habemos tenido)</i>				
“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> The	<i>más</i> most	<i>enriquecedor</i> enriching	<i>fue</i> be-PST3S	<i>cómo</i> how
	<i>contaban</i> relate-IPFV3P	<i>las tradiciones</i> the traditions	<i>que</i> that	<i>habían</i> there are-IPFV3P	
	<i>en</i> in	<i>sus</i> POS-3P	<i>pueblos</i> hometown		
	<i>(Manuscript, c. 2000, México)</i>				
	“What was most enriching was how they told of the traditions that they had in their hometowns.”				
	<i>no</i> not	<i>deben</i> AUX-PRES3P	<i>haber</i> be-INF	<i>fueros</i> exemptions	<i>ni</i> nor
	<i>privilegios</i> privileges <i>(TV, México)</i>	<i>respect</i> regarding	<i>e</i> of	<i>este</i> this	<i>problema</i> problem
	“There should not be neither exemptions nor privileges regarding this problem.”				
	<i>No</i> Not	<i>habían</i> there be-IPFV3P	<i>copias,</i> photocopies	<i>entonces</i> so	<i>reduje</i> reduce-PST1S
	<i>los horarios</i> the schedules	<i>para</i> for	<i>hacer-los</i> make-INF-ACUS3P	<i>en</i> on	<i>la</i> the
	<i>(Spoken language, México)</i>				
	“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) <sup>†</sup>	39% (22/57)	47% (27/57)	2% (1/57)	9% (5/57)
XXI	Google <sup>††</sup>	-	2% (4/160)	63% (100/160)	34% (55/160)	1% (1/160)
	SocialM	-	-	98% (105/107)	2% (2/107)	-

<sup>†</sup> Eventhough CREA shows 58 results of *habemos*, one of these was left out because *habernos* was mistakenly typed as *habemos* (*tú y yo podríamos habernos casado*). <sup>††</sup> 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)	De In	hecho, fact,	<b>habemos</b> there be-PRES1P	un a	equipo team	grande big		
	que that (Socialmention 2015)	seguimos AUX-PRES1P	trabajando working-gerund	en on	ello it			
	“In fact, we are a large team that continues to work on it.”							
	No generalizo Not generalize-PRES1S	que that	todos everybody	somos be-PRES1P				
	asi (sic) like that	y and	se (sic) know-PRES1S	que that	<b>habemos</b> there be-PRES1P			
	personas people (Socialmention, 2015)	que that	estamos be-PRES1P	orgullosos proud	de of	quienes who	somos! be- PRES1P	
	I do not generalize that we all are like this and I know that we are people who are proud of who we are.”							
	Con respecto Regarding	al to.ART	trato treatment	que that	se IMPER			
	les DAT-3P	da give-PRES3S	a to	las personas the people	creo believe-PRES1S			
	que that	no not	es be-PRES3S	muy bueno, very good,	ya que because			
	<b>habemos</b> therebePRES1P	personas people	muy very	ignorantes ignorant	y and			
	que that	nos AUX-1P	consideramos consider-PRES1P	con with	mucha so much			
	suerte lucky (Google, 2015)	como as	para	no not	tener have-INF	ese that	tipo kind of	de enfermedad illness
	“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.”							
	y and	si (sic) yes	<b>habemos</b> there be-PRES1P	personas people	que that			
	somos be-PRES1P	como like	somos be-PRES1P	de of	nacimiento birth			
	y and (Google, 2015)	no not	podremos can-FUT1P	cambiar change-INF				
	“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.

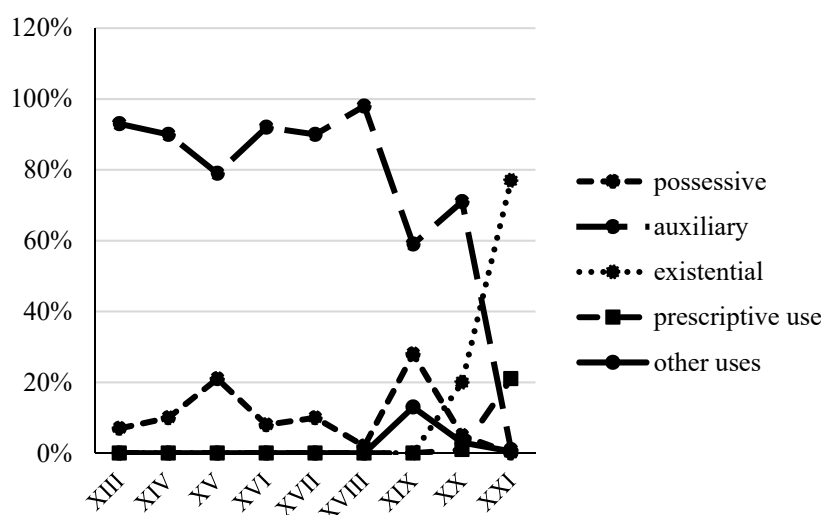


Figure 1. Meaning of *habemos* (*avemos*). Refunctionalization.

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	<b>que</b> who	<b>le</b> DAT-3S		
	damos give-PRES1P	fiebre fever	a to	la the	calentura temperatura	
	(Doña Bárbara, 1929, Venezuela, CORDE, s.v. <i>habemos personas</i> ) “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	<i>del</i> of.ART	<i>pueblo</i> people	<i>y</i> and	<i>de la</i> of the	<i>Patria!</i> homeland
	(El Papa verde, 1954, Guatemala, CORDE, s.v. <i>habemos</i> ) “There are still honorable men, including me, to defend the interests of the people and of the homeland.”					
	<b>habemos</b> there be-PRES1P	<b>maestros</b> teachers	<i>que</i> who	<i>tienen (sic)</i> have-PRES3P	<i>25años</i> twenty-five years	<i>de</i> enseñanza of teaching
	(Proceso, 1997, México, CREA, s.v. <i>habemos</i> ) “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	<i>inocentes</i> innocent	<i>de</i> of	<i>todo</i> all	<i>estos</i> these	<i>males</i> misfortunes
	(Socialmenton, 2015) “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	<i>y</i> and	
	<i>con</i> with	<i>convenios caducados</i> agreements expired	<i>tenemos</i> have-PRES1P	<i>un</i> a	<i>trabajo</i> job	
	(Socialmenton, 2015) “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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