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Granvik, Anton; Fernández Incógnito, Ester

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Anton Granvik* and Ester Fernández Incógnito

Evaluating the importance of construal for choosing between alternating forms: the case of Spanish change-of-state verbs *hacerse* and *volverse*

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Abstract: This paper offers a new approach to the alternate use of Spanish *hacerse* 'to make (reflexive)' and *volverse* 'to (re)turn (reflexive)' to express a change of state. *Hacerse* and *volverse* belong to the core of the family of change-of-state verbs in Spanish and constitute a prime example of alternating forms. The aim is to evaluate the importance of the notion of construal as an explanation to alternation. We do this by testing one of the major explanations regarding the difference between *hacerse* and *volverse*, namely that of Delbecque and van Gorp (Delbecque, Nicole & Lise van Gorp. 2012. *Hacerse* y *volverse* como nexos pseudo-copulativos. *Bulletin hispanique* 114(1). 277–306, Delbecque, Nicole & Lise van Gorp. 2015. The pseudo-copular use of the Spanish verbs *hacerse* and *volverse*: Two types of change. *Cognitextes* 13), who suggest that the distinction is one of construal. A sentence completion task involving priming and non-priming visual stimuli is used to investigate to what extent the distinct conceptual images associated with *hacerse* and *volverse* affect the choice of verb in given contexts. The results show little evidence of the importance of construal for the choice of verb. Instead, established V + ADJ combinations seem to have a greater impact on choosing either verb. This calls into question the applicability of construal as an explanation to alternation, especially from the perspective of choice between alternating forms.

Keywords: construal; alternation; change-of-state verbs; Spanish

1 Introduction

Construal is a fundamental notion in cognitive linguistics, with its strong emphasis on meaning being omnipresent in linguistic structure (Geeraerts 2006). It refers to "the fact that a particular situation can be construed [linguistically] in alternate ways" (Verhagen 2007: 48). In Langacker's (1993: 447) terms, "expressions which evoke essentially the same conceptual content can nonetheless be semantically distinct because they construe that content in alternate ways – with respect to the perspective adopted, for example, or the relative *prominence* of various substructures". As these quotes show, construal is a concept that allows differentiating between synonymous or alternating forms.[1]

However, while there obviously is a difference between expression pairs such as *specks in the sky* and *a cluster of stars* or *X is above Y* and *Y is below X* (Verhagen 2007: 49–50), the question remains whether language users, when producing an utterance, decide (consciously or unconsciously) to construe the content in a certain way.

Our study takes the discussion of construal to the level of choice between alternating lexemes by analysing the use of the verbs *hacerse* 'to do (reflexive)' and *volverse* 'to (re)turn (reflexive)' together with six adjectives to

1 For recent examples of corpus-based analyses, see Delbecque and van Gorp (2012, 2015), Krawczak et al. (2016), Granvik (2018), Krawczak and Glynn (2019), and Soares da Silva et al. (2021).

***Corresponding author: Anton Granvik**, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland, E-mail: anton.granvik@helsinki.fi. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0414-1631
Ester Fernández Incógnito, Department of Languages, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Västra Götaland, Sweden, E-mail: esterfernandezincognito@outlook.com

express a change of state. *Hacerse* and *volverse* belong to the core of a large family of change-of-state verbs in Spanish (van Gorp 2017). It has been claimed that they are highly grammaticalized, and they also share the tendency to combine with a broad spectre of attributes, often the same ones (e.g. van Gorp 2014: 488; Vergara Wilson 2014: 47).

In combination with the adjectives selected for this analysis (modal *posible* 'possible', *imposible* 'impossible', *necesario* 'necessary', and *imprescindible* 'essential, indispensable', and perception adjectives *borroso* 'blurred' and *transparente* 'transparent') both verbs are frequently attested in corpus data such as the *Corpus del español del siglo XXI* (Real Academia Española). The change-of-state events expressed by these verb-adjective combinations often involve inanimate entities, a detail that distinguishes the present study from earlier ones, which have mainly focused on animate subjects. In combination with these six adjectives, *hacerse* and *volverse* can thus be seen to alternate (Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española 2009: §38.4a; van Gorp 2014: 266), as shown in examples (1) and (2), involving the adjective *posible* 'possible':[2]

(1) *Muchas veces, esta postura frente al sexo* ***se*** _____ ***posible*** *después de una situación crítica.*
'Often times, this attitude towards sex becomes possible after a critical situation.'
(Real Academia Española, from 2004)

(2) *Esta perspectiva solo* ***se*** _____ ***posible*** *con la modernidad*
'This perspective only became possible with modernity'
(Real Academia Española, from 2013)

In a series of studies, Delbecque and van Gorp (2012, 2015; van Gorp 2014, 2017) argue that the difference between the Spanish change-of-state verbs (CSVs) is one of construal. In their characterization of *hacerse* and *volverse* they rely on the basic meaning of the verbs. *Hacer* 'to do, make' is portrayed as referring to making and creating something, while *volverse* is associated with turning (around) and returning. The idea is that these concrete meanings are reflected in the use of *hacerse* and *volverse* as CSVs, and impact the relationship between the subject and the attribute involved in the change-of-state event (van Gorp 2014: 54–56), thus leading to different construals (see Section 2). In van Gorp's terms:

> the different CSVs do not simply express the notion of change, but the meaning of each verb can be described in terms of a conceptual image that the verb imposes on the S–A relationship. More specifically, we will argue that this conceptual image originates in the semantic source of the verb, i.e. it is related to the basic meaning(s) that the verb lexeme has outside the pseudo-copulative construction. (van Gorp 2014: 54; our translation)

The aim of this paper is to evaluate the importance of construal by testing if the different construals of *hacerse* and *volverse* affect the choice of verb in a sentence completion task involving a priming cue (see Section 3).[3] The set-up is based on a previous quantitative analysis (Granvik and Fernández Incógnito 2020) of data extracted from a large reference corpus of present-day Spanish, Real Academia Española.

2 Background: Spanish change-of-state verbs and construal

Spanish has the peculiarity of possessing up to a dozen pseudo-copular CSVs, as well as many lexically specific verbs (e.g. *enfriarse* 'to cool down'). Examples (3)–(6) illustrate the situation, showing four of the most prominent Spanish CSVs, *hacerse, volverse, ponerse* 'to put (reflexive)' and *quedarse* 'to stay (reflexive)'.

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2 We have left the verbs out of the sentences because of the difficulty in deciding which word suits the two sentences best. In Real Academia Española, the eliminated verb form is *vuelve* in (1) and *hizo* in (2).

3 Previous studies (such as the ones by Delbecque and van Gorp 2012, 2015) focus on already existing examples, which are used to capture the conceptual images of the verbs involved in the usage context. We approach the situation from a different perspective, investigating whether the proposed conceptual images affect the choice of verb in a context where no verb is present but needs to be inserted.

(3) *El once de Ronaldo* ***se hizo dueño*** *del partido.*
'The (starting) lineup headed by Ronaldo became the owners of the game [= took over the game].'
(van Gorp 2014: 109)

(4) *[L]uego,* ***al volverse sordo****, pasó a desempeñar el cargo de guardabosques.*
'Then, when he became deaf, he took a position as forest guard.'
(van Gorp 2014: 109)

(5) *Personalmente* ***me pongo enfermo*** *sólo de pensar en esa continua afrenta que tenemos clavada en el sur.*
'Personally I get sick just thinking about this continuous uproar that we are stuck with in the south.'
(van Gorp 2014: 302)

(6) ***Se quedó viuda*** *al final de la guerra, sin hijos, alabado sea Dios.*
'She became a widow at the end of the war, without children, God be blessed.'
(van Gorp 2014: 355)

The existence of several verbs for expressing a change of state has intrigued Spanish grammarians for a long time. There have been many attempts to describe the intricate semantics of the dozen CSVs in Spanish (e.g. Alba de Diego and Lunell 1988; Bybee and Eddington 2006; Conde Noguerol 2013; Coste and Redondo 1965; Delbecque and van Gorp 2012, 2015; Eddington 1999, 2002; Fernández Incógnito 2019; Ibarretxe-Antuñano and Cheikh-Khamis 2019; Morimoto and Pavón Lucero 2007; Porroche Ballesteros 1988, 1990; Rodríguez Arrizabalaga 2001; van Gorp 2014, 2017; Vergara Wilson 2014). An often-sought solution has been to try to identify features capturing salient and distinctive aspects of the change-of-state event involving the different verbs, such as the syntactic structure of the expressions, the semantics of the adjectives and nouns functioning as attributes or direct objects, the event structure of the change-of-state events, the different kinds of change involved, and so on.

Despite the large number of previous studies, there is no generally accepted solution, mainly because of the undeniable fact that there is a considerable degree of overlap among the verbs (see Eddington 1999, 2002). In the present study, the overlap between *hacerse* and *volverse* is interpreted as an alternation following Pijpops's (2020) criterion (vi) – that is, forms "that have some special theoretical relation to one another" – given that they belong to the family of CSVs. We also adopt Pijpops's (2020) criterion (iv), where alternating forms "present a choice point for an individual language user". As Eddington (2002: 922) puts it, "Spanish speakers are apparently free to use more than one change-of-state verb in a given context".

For the purposes of this paper, three studies stand out. First, as stated above, Delbecque and van Gorp (2012, 2015) argue that the verbs can be distinguished through the different construals they impose on the change-of-state event, based on their concrete, spatial uses. *Hacerse* profiles an incremental, self-generated, intentional, and positively assessed process of change, whereas *volverse* construes change as an inversed, decremental, unexpected, and negatively assessed process (Delbecque and van Gorp 2012: §98).

Second, Ibarretxe-Antuñano and Cheikh-Khamis's (2019) description is based on the fundamental assumption of (cognitive) construction grammar (Hilpert 2019) that there is a difference in meaning between two (sub)constructions (Goldberg's [1995] principle of no synonymy). In Ibarretxe-Antuñano and Cheikh-Khamis's (2019) family of change-of-state constructions, each verb, when inserted into the constructional pattern SUBJECT + VERB + ATTRIBUTE, constitutes a (sub)construction of its own, carrying a particular meaning. For example, *volverse* is characterized as referring to a "state Y radically different from previous state Z" and *hacerse* as the "appearance of a new state regardless of previous state" (2019: 10).

Finally, Bybee and Eddington (2006) emphasize not the semantics of the CSVs, but rather their tendency to combine with (clusters of) semantically related adjectives (or nouns). The alternation in the use of the verbs is not highlighted in their exemplar model but is of course present in the form of overlap between the different clusters. These are centred around prototypical exemplars and overlap is expected at least between the clusters' peripheries (Bybee and Eddington 2006: 324).

3 Data and methods

In order to evaluate the importance of construal, we started out with Delbecque and van Gorp's (2012, 2015) construal model[4] and developed a questionnaire in which participants are presented with sentences including empty slots and asked to choose between *hacerse* and *volverse* (similar to examples (1) and (2) above). The target sentences included in the questionnaire all stem from the Real Academia Española corpus and originally contained a form of either *hacerse* or *volverse*. The twist of the questionnaire is that, before completing each sentence, the participants watch a video clip depicting a scene involving the concrete, physical senses of one of the two verbs (e.g. somebody returning home or making/doing something). The idea is to investigate if the visual scenes presented in the videos affect the choice of verb. According to the construal hypothesis, seeing a video with a "(re)turn" scene should trigger the use of *volverse* whereas seeing a video involving a "doing" scene should trigger *hacerse*, following the logic of (structural) priming (Hare and Goldberg 1999).

When addressing construal, it needs to be kept in mind that the notion is crucially dependent on the semantics of the expression under focus (in our case, *hacer* 'to do, make, create' and *volver* '(re)turn'). If *hacerse* construes a change-of-state event as progressive, intentional, gradual, and positive, this stems from the meaning of the verb. However, what happens when the verbs that give rise to the construal are absent from the context, as is the case in a sentence completion task? Does the usage context around the empty slot reflect the semantics of *hacer* and *volver*, respectively, or at least support or comply with the conceptual image imposed by them?[5]

The questionnaire was designed to address this question and, thus, to offer a new approach to studying the choice between *hacerse* and *volverse*. The informants are presented with sentences including an empty slot and have to make their choice based on the sentence context. Since the results of our corpus analysis (Granvik and Fernández Incógnito 2020) indicate that the contextual clues may not be enough, we used videos as additional input to the task, with the idea of evaluating if visual stimuli evoke the conceptual image of the verbs strongly enough to trigger the use of the "matching" verb.

The sentence completion task was designed as an online questionnaire which, apart from gathering personal information (age, nationality, native language, language competence), includes 12 video clips and 12 sentences to be completed. The 12 sentences are divided into six target sentences and six fillers.[6]

The target sentences involve six verb-adjective combinations, chosen specifically on the basis of two criteria. First, a distinctive collexeme analysis (Gries and Stefanowitsch 2004) performed on all uses of *hacerse/volverse* with these adjectives in Real Academia Española reveals clearly different preferences for the six adjectives. As Table 1 shows, *borroso* 'blurred' and *transparente*, show a strong preference for *volverse* (indicated by the high odds ratio values, 7.13 and 5.55, respectively). Two other adjectives show a strong preference for *hacerse*, namely *posible* and *necesario* (indicated by low odds ratio values, 0.15 and 0.35, respectively), while the remaining two, *imposible* and *imprescindible* 'essential, indispensable', show no (collostructional) preference for either verb.[7]

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4 In Granvik and Fernández Incógnito (2020), we evaluate how the construal model fares in a quantitative analysis of corpus data. Using data from CORPES XXI, 754 occurrences of *hacerse* and *volverse* were annotated in order to capture salient contextual features and determine to what degree they support different construals. The results show little evidence of a difference in construal between the two verbs, the only salient semantic feature being the presence of negative connotations in the usage context of *volverse*. This result is in line with Delbecque and van Gorp's (2012: §98) model; other observations, on the contrary, do not conform with the construal model (e.g. graduality of change).

5 This is expected to be the case. Many alternation studies find contextual features that support the different construals (e.g. Soares da Silva et al. 2021). On the other hand, there are also studies that fail to identify features that support different construals (Granvik 2018; Krawczak et al. 2016; Krawczak and Glynn 2019).

6 See https://www.1ka.si/a/347487&preview=on. The number of sentences was kept low to assure more responses and to control for the most relevant contrasts (see below).

7 The collostructional analysis uses the Fisher-Yates exact test to calculate *p* values on 2 × 2 tables for each V + ADJ combination. While the *p* value indicates the (low) probability of the numerical distribution, the odds ratio value can be interpreted as indicating the odds for finding one of the verbs with the adjective in question as compared to the other verb. A value of 7.13 thus indicates that the odds for finding *volverse* with *borroso* are seven times higher than for *hacerse*, whereas the value of 0.15 indicates, reversely, that the odds for finding *hacerse* with *necesario* are also almost seven times higher than with *volverse* (1/0.15 = 6.667; see Schmid and Küchenhoff 2013).

Table 1: Distinctive collexeme analysis showing the strength of association between *hacerse* and *volverse* and the six adjectives in Real Academia Española.

	Number of adjective tokens	Number of tokens with *volverse*	Number of tokens with *hacerse*	Fisher-Yates	Odds ratio
borroso	1,672	39	24	3.97e-14	7.13
transparente	6,986	43	34	3.29e-13	5.55
imposible	27,612	46	142	0.048	1.42
imprescindible	8,673	44	227	0.3487	0.85
posible	98,982	20	253	1.96e-07	0.35
necesario	79,484	53	1,511	3.54e-75	0.15
Number of verb tokens with these adjectives		**245**	**2,191**		
Total number of verb tokens		**30,519**	**133,780**		

Second, the examples are typical cases of the V + ADJ combinations in our previous corpus analysis (Granvik and Fernández Incógnito 2020).[8]

The videos are similarly divided into six priming scenes and six fillers. They have a duration of between 3 and 10 s and depict easily recognizable everyday situations, such as a father and his son returning home (*volver*); a very hot day (reflecting the fact that *hacer* is used as a meteorological verb, e.g. *hace calor* 'it does heat' translates as 'it is hot'); someone making (*hacer*) cookies; and so on.

Apart from acting as distractors, the fillers include two potentially interesting scenes and sentences. For example, one clip shows someone putting a book onto a shelf and is followed by a change-of-state sentence where the CSV *ponerse* 'to put (reflexive)' is a potential choice. The idea behind these fillers is to provide additional insight into the priming capacity of the visual stimuli.

Each sentence was paired with a preceding video clip, but the order of the pairs was pseudo-randomized. No questionnaire started with a target sentence and there were never more than two target sentences in a row. In order to guarantee the participants' attention, after they filled in the background information, the questionnaire started with a video clip and an instruction to describe what the video shows. The videos and the sentences were always displayed on separate pages. The sentences were presented in the middle of the screen, and below that were presented the alternatives (two or three verbs) from which the participants had to choose.

The questionnaire was set up so that one adjective from each group (those preferring *hacerse*, those preferring *volverse*, and those without preference) was paired with a priming video clip, while the other was paired with an anti-priming clip (i.e. a video depicting a scene involving the opposite conceptual scene; see Table 2). In this way, there was always a contrast within the three adjective groups, with one of the sentences being primed and the other anti-primed.

The online questionnaire was distributed in June 2021 using our personal and professional networks, mainly in Spain. It was completed by a total of 43 participants. The majority (58 %) were aged under 30, 12 % were between 30 and 40, and 30 % were older than 40. Of the participants, 81 % were of Spanish nationality, with 9 % being American native speakers of Spanish and another 9 % European non-native speakers. Eleven percent of the informants were not native or bilingual Spanish speakers (where by "bilingual" in this context, we mean speakers of Spanish plus another national language of Spain).[9]

8 Typical, here, means that the selected target sentences include the most frequent contextual traits for each V + ADJ combination as found in the corpus analysis.

9 All reported a C1 or C2 level of Spanish (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). As Fernández Incógnito (2019) shows, at this level the use of the CSVs usually follows that of native speakers, so no distinction between different speakers has been done in this paper.

Table 2: Distribution of the choices of *hacerse* and *volverse* with regard to adjective preference and priming stimuli.

Target sentence with original verb		Verb preference for adjective	Priming stimulus	Number of tokens of *hacer(se)*	Number of tokens of *volver(se)*
S1	*se* hizo *posible la invasión*	*hacerse*	*volverse*	43	0
S2	*se* hace *necesario aclarar*	*hacerse*	*hacerse*	26	17
S3	*se ha* hecho *imposible divertirse*	No preference	*volverse*	3	40
S4	*yo me había* vuelto *imprescindible*	No preference	*hacerse*	2	41
S5	*el rostro se iba* volviendo *borroso*	*volverse*	*volverse*	6	37
S6	*su cara se* volvió *transparente*	*volverse*	*hacerse*	2	41

4 Results

The main results of the sentence completion task are presented in Table 2. Based on the figures in the two rightmost columns, our first observation is that seeing an event showing the conceptual image associated with the CSV – turning/returning or doing/making – has little impact on the choice of verb. In five out of the six sentences, the majority of the participants chose the same verb that was originally used in the target sentences: *hacerse* in S1 and S2, and *volverse* in S4, S5, and S6.

The only sentence where an influence of the video clip can be observed is S3. There is no collostructional preference between *imposible* and either verb, but when the video clip depicts a returning scene (a man returning home with his son), the participants seemed to be influenced by this video and chose *volverse*. This goes counter to the original sentence, which had *hacerse*.

Table 2 also shows that *volverse* was chosen by the majority of participants (more than 85 %) in four of the six sentences (S3–S6). *Volverse* thus seems to be the most natural option overall, with one important exception. In sentence S1 *hacerse* was chosen by all participants. This happened despite this sentence being preceded by a video stimulus illustrating a turning event, and despite the situation carrying negative connotations, a contextual feature associated with *volverse* (Delbecque and van Gorp 2012; Granvik and Fernández Incógnito 2020). This result goes contrary to the construal hypothesis and suggests that *hacerse posible* is identified as a fixed combination (in accordance with the collostructional attraction between the two). Finally, in S2 both verbs were chosen by a large number of participants. Here *necesario* prefers *hacerse*, *hacerse* was originally used, and the video stimulus primed for *hacer*, but 17 of 43 participants still chose *volverse*. This unexpected result underlines the participants' preference for *volverse* over *hacerse*.

The sentence completion task allows us to draw several conclusions. First, in five of the six sentences both verbs were chosen at least twice, indicating that both are possible choices in the target sentences. Second, *volverse* stands out as the go-to verb compared to *hacerse*, except in combination with *posible*, where not a single participant chose *volverse*. Third, exposing Spanish speakers to visual scenes involving the events referred to by the two verbs has little impact on the choice of verb. There is, once more, an exception: *hacerse imposible* becomes *volverse imposible* when primed by a *volver* clip in S3. The lack of importance of the video stimulus finds support from two of the fillers, where the lexical choices made by the participants showed no influence of the video: for example, seeing Mr. Bean being left behind by a bus did not trigger the use of *quedarse* 'to stay, remain (reflexive)'.

Overall, the preferred V + ADJ combinations (e.g. *hacerse posible* and *volverse transparente*), as indicated by the collostructional analysis (see Table 1), appear to have more influence on verb choice than presenting participants with visual input (corresponding to the conceptual image of the verb).

5 Discussion

Can speakers of Spanish choose which verb to use to express a change-of-state event involving the adjectives *borroso*, *imposible*, *imprescindible*, *necesario*, *posible*, and *transparente*? The results from the sentence completion

task indicate that, although the less-preferred alternatives are only marginally present (5–14 %), with five of the six adjectives included in the analysis – *necesario*, *imposible*, *imprescindible*, *borroso*, and *transparente* – there is a possibility of choice between *hacerse* and *volverse*, that is, alternation.[10] Nevertheless, the fact that *volverse* was chosen a total of 176 times whereas *hacerse* was chosen only 82 times (in a proportion of two-thirds vs. one-third of the time) suggests that *volverse* is a default option and *hacerse* more restricted. In practice *hacerse* is limited to two adjectives, modal *posible* and *necesario*.

A first conclusion is thus that, if there is a choice between *hacerse* and *volverse* with the six adjectives involved, for most speakers it is an automatic one. The participants mainly recur to V + ADJ combinations that already exist in their constructicons, units that might be considered prefabs (Bybee and Torres Cacoullos 2009; Vergara Wilson 2009).[11] In four out of six cases, the prefab includes *volverse* + ADJ, whereas with *posible* it involves *hacerse*. Only for one of the six adjectives do the choices vary considerably: with *necesario*, both *hacerse* and *volverse* were chosen by a large proportion of informants (60 vs. 40 %). The alternation can thus be seen to be a more theoretically than practically relevant question. In the corpus data, both verbs are used with all six adjectives; but the statistical bias found in the corpus is enhanced in the sentence completion task. More research is needed, however, to determine to what degree this result can be generalized to other V + ADJ combinations.

Now, when speakers choose a verb, is this because they decide to construe the content in a certain way? Although our analysis does not warrant a definitive answer, the results from the sentence completion task suggest that construal is not a major factor when it comes to the choice of verb. This conclusion rests on the fact > observation that the informants are quite insensitive to priming by means of visual stimuli, and rather seem to choose the verb according to expected combinations (i.e. in accordance with observed collostructional tendencies). It is also consistent with affirmations such as the following, stemming from the analysis of corpus data: "In … expressions of 'becoming' the semantic features of the verbs do not play a significant role in the choice of adjectives used with them" (Vergara Wilson 2009: 275; cf. Bybee and Eddington 2006: 324).

This raises the crucial question of whether construal is a phenomenon affecting the choice of verb in a given situation. Do speakers decide to construe the content in a certain way? Despite the limitations of our study – our questionnaire approach involving video stimuli is, of course, not a well-established method for assessing the importance of construal; it is rather a first attempt at tackling this issue – our results combined with the fact that construal is intrinsically tied to specific lexemes or expressions (i.e. form, in general) suggest that construal might rather be seen as an explanation arrived at through conscious linguistic scrutiny of and reasoning around observed data than as a factor actively motivating language use.

This bold suggestion finds support in corpus-based studies, where researchers have failed to find clear proof for differences in construal (e.g. Glynn and Krawczak 2019; Granvik 2018; Granvik and Fernández Incógnito 2020; Krawczak et al. 2016); or in studies of alternations where meaning differences are not even considered as motivating factors (Fagard and Krawczak 2017; Rosemeyer and Schwenter 2019).

What is important here, however, is not that a construal account such as the one proposed by Delbecque and van Gorp (2012, 2015) is wrong or inadequate. Our aim has not been to challenge the model proposed by Delbecque and van Gorp (2012, 2015) for the Spanish CSVs, but rather to use it to test to what degree the conceptual images involved in the construal account influence the choice between two alternate forms. Our results are not to be taken as evidence directed against the construal account. We also do not claim that there are no differences in construal between *hacerse* and *volverse*. However, since our results show little impact of the conceptual images on the choice of form, we hypothesize that the association between verb and adjective may be a better predictor.

What this paper suggests, then, is that construal may not be the best way to approach an alternation, at least not from the perspective that sees an alternation as a choice point between alternate forms. Before making the

10 This is also what was found in our corpus-based analysis (Granvik and Fernández Incógnito 2020), where one-third of the analysed examples could not be distinguished on the basis of contextual factors.

11 An anonymous reviewer pointed out that collostructions or collocations can be an effect of differences in construal. It is, indeed, possible that construal is important when (semi-)fixed patterns arise. However, within (semi-)fixed structures the role of construal for the selection of one form over another is bound to lose its importance over time.

choice, the construal may simply not be there yet. Conversely, if the forms giving rise to alternate construals are included in the linguistic material which is analysed (i.e. *hacerse* and *volverse* in Delbecque and van Gorp [2012, 2015] and *se* in Soares da Silva et al. [2021]), it may be impossible not to find construal effects. These and many more methodological and theoretical questions regarding the importance of construal for differentiating between alternating forms and influencing the choice of form need to be addressed in future research.

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