

## Deriving *-ble* forms out of unergatives and unaccusatives

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This paper is part of a more extensive work in progress on deverbal formations ending in *-ble* and their relationship with sentential structures, specifically passive and middle constructions, within the theoretical framework of Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz 1993, 1994). Adjectives ending in *-ble* have been studied at great length, not only for their implications for the theory of morphology (Vendler 1968, Aronoff 1976, Val Álvaro 1981, de Miguel 1986 o Anderson 1992), but also for their impact on other areas of the theory of grammar, like semantics (Lyons 1977, Gràcia 1995) or syntax (Chapin 1967, Williams 1981, Kayne 1981). The main goal of this talk is to examine some new Spanish data that will contribute to a better understanding of the internal structure of *-ble* forms. These data are deviations from regular forms, i.e. those that select transitive verbal bases containing a theme in their argument structure (De Miguel 1986). Apart from some non-passive forms of the type *durable*, the theme of an unaccusative verb like *ocurrir* ‘occur’ does not admit the derivation with *-ble* (1a). However, it is possible to find the derived word *ocurrible* in certain constructions of the form (*V todo lo V-ble* ‘(V all) the V-ble’, (1b).

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|--|-------------------------|
| (1) a. Ocurrió un accidente            | *un accidente ocurrible |
| occur-3sgPast an accident              | an accident occur-ble   |
| b. Ocurrió todo lo ocurrible           |                         |
| occur-3sgPast all the-Neuter occur-ble |                         |

Similarly, even though an unergative verb like *dormir* ‘sleep’ does not admit *-ble* affixation (2a), and it is deemed deviant with a cognate object, the form *dormible* ‘sleep-ble’ can freely appear in constructions like (2b).

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|---|-------------------|-----------------------|
| (2) a. El bebé durmió                       | *un bebé dormible | ??una siesta dormible |
| the baby sleep-3sgPast                      | a baby sleep-ble  | a siesta sleep-ble    |
| b. Quería dormir todo lo dormible           |                   |                       |
| want-3sgPast sleep all the-Neuter sleep-ble |                   |                       |

In both cases, the semantic interpretation of the derived forms is essentially the same as that of any deverbal *-ble* adjective. These data cannot be explained in a model based on the lexicon as a generative component. If words are created in the lexicon prior to insertion in the syntax, it is unclear why apparently non-existing adjectives can be created in the lexicon but cannot be used as such. Likewise, if they are not admitted as bases, they should not exist at all. Such a situation is anticipated in a syntactic model like Distributed Morphology, where the only component that can generate structures is syntax proper. I propose that the QP that introduces the DP head, later realized by *lo*, measures out the extension or duration of the event, which makes it equivalent to a direct object, i.e. it provides the root with the internal argument required by *-ble*. I will further show that *-ble* imposes a second requirement, that of implying some agent (Roeper 1987), cause or natural force (Flury 1964). To account for non-agentive unaccusatives, I adopt proposals in Dowty 1979 or Tenny and Pustejovsky 2000 that associate duration with agency. This will in turn suggest an explanation for the existence of adjectives like *durable* or *perdurable*, non-prototypical unaccusatives with a measure argument expressing duration.

### Bibliography

- Halle, Morris and Alec Marantz (1993). Distributed Morphology and the Pieces of Inflection. In: K. Hale and S. J. Keyser (eds.) *The View from Building 20: Essays in Honor of Sylvain Bromberger*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 11-176.
- Halle, Morris and Alec Marantz (1994). Some Key Features of Distributed Morphology. *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics* 21: 275-288.