

## On the (im)possibility of *-ble* adjectives from unaccusatives in Germanic and Romance

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When faced with unaccusative-based *-ble* cases like Catalan *agradable* ‘pleasant’, Spanish *perdurable* ‘long-lasting’, English *perishable* (DiSciullo 1997) or German *verwesbar* ‘decay-able’ (Flury 1964), an analysis of *-ble* adjectives as selecting transitive verbs undergenerates the number of adjectives that speakers find acceptable (cf. Aronoff 1976, Anderson 1992, Riehemann 1993); on the other hand, accounts that assume a unique *-ble* requirement for an internal argument overgenerate (cf. Williams 1981, Oshita 1994, Gràcia 1992, 1995), since most unaccusative verbs cannot become bases for *-ble*, as illustrated by the impossibility of Catalan *\*cabell creixible* ‘growable hair’, Spanish *\*tren llegable* ‘arrivable train’, English *\*emergeable truth* or German *\*passierbarer Unfall* ‘happen-able accident’ (Siebert 1999; but Riehemann 1993). Interestingly, under certain circumstances, such impossible forms become perfectly acceptable in Spanish, e.g. *Llegó todo lo llegable* ‘It arrived everything that could arrive’, or not quite as ungrammatical as one would expect in German, e.g. *?Es passierte alles Passierbare* ‘It happened everything that could happen’ (G. Müller, personal communication), although they remain ungrammatical for (most?) Catalan speakers and are impossible in English. In this talk I discuss the properties of this small set of existing unaccusative-based *-ble* forms in these languages and contrast them to the impossible ones in an attempt to contribute a better understanding of the conditions underlying deverbal *-ble* affixation, which in turn, may shed light onto the general properties of unaccusatives and the architecture of grammar.

### References

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