

Verb Classes with Eventive Infinitives in Spanish

Antonio Fábregas and Soledad Varela

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

1. Eventive infinitives and lexical classes

Infinitives have been studied from a variety of perspectives, one of which is the fact that they may behave as nouns and verbs (Hernanz 1999). Although they usually act as either one or the other, there is one particular class of infinitives (Eventive Infinitives, EI) which exhibits at the same time noun and verb behaviour. As nouns, they can be combined with determiners and adjectives –that agree with them–, and with a genitive subject (1a). As for their verb properties, they can appear with adverbs and direct objects –often bare nouns– (1b).

- (1) a. **Ese constante** gritar **de Pedro** por la habitación (fue presenciado por todos).
Lit. That constant shout.INF of Pedro all over the room (was watched by everyone).
b. El beber **cerveza constantemente** de Pedro (fue presenciado por todos).
Lit. The drink.INF beer constantly of Pedro (was watched by everyone).

We will focus on EI's that denote events, and not situations or propositions (cfr. Zucchi 1993). These EI's, that we will call Perception Eventive Infinitives, PEI's, are specifically selected by verbs of perception, such as those in (2).

- (2) *escuchar*, 'to listen', *oír*, 'to hear', *ver*, 'to see', *mirar*, 'to observe', *presenciar*, 'to watch', *admirar*, 'to admire', *percibir*, 'to perceive', *notar*, 'to note', *observar*, 'to witness', *captar*, 'to pick up'...

PEIs are restricted to a particular class of verbs. Previous analyses (cfr. Demonte & Varela 1997), using a Lexicalist perspective, have focused on the inherent characteristics of the verbs and, more specifically, on their *Aktionsart* as lexical items (cfr. also Verkuyl 1972). In this construction, achievements (3a) and accomplishments (3b) are ungrammatical, as well as state verbs (3c), because the aspectual information associated with these classes of verbs in the Lexicon is incompatible with the properties of PEI's.

- (3) a. *El intenso llegar de Pedro a la habitación (fue presenciado).
Lit. The intense arrive.INF of Pedro to the room (was watched).
b. *El rápido construir la casa de los albañiles (fue presenciado).
Lit. The fast build.INF the house by the workers (was watched).
c. *El saber inglés de Paula (fue presenciado).
Lit. The know.INF English of Paula (was watched).

State verbs cannot appear in the PEI construction because they do not have a proper eventive role (Davidson 1967). Given that the verb that selects the PEI has to identify the event role contained in the predicate in order to have a proper semantic reading, we expect that a predicate without the appropriate event role will give rise to an ungrammatical result.

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Whereas achievements and accomplishments are ungrammatical because they are telic events (Demonte & Varela 1997), PEI's require atelic events. However, this second restriction presents a problem. All the emission verbs in (4) are atelic and non-stative –‘activities’ according to the Vendler-Dowty classification–, but give different grammaticality results.

- (4)
- a. *Vi el constante sangrar del niño.
Lit. I saw the constant bleed.INF of the child.
 - b. *Presenció el continuo sudar de los jugadores.
Lit. I witnessed the continuous sweat.INF of the players.
 - c. *Oí el constante silbar de aquellos niños.
Lit. I heard the constant whistle.INF of those children.
 - d. Oí el constante tintinear de la moneda.
Lit. I heard the constant tinkle.INF of the coin.
 - e. Escuché el misterioso crujir de la madera.
Lit. I listened to the mysterious creek.INF of the wood.
 - f. Presenció el continuo destellar de la luz.
Lit. I witnessed the continuous twinkle.INF of the light.

These verbs cannot be grouped in any evident way by their conceptual semantic properties, as we see in the contrast between *silbar* and *crujir*. Instead of the Lexicalist explanation, based on the inherent properties of each specific lexical item, we propose a configurational analysis that focuses on the abstract representation of the word on a syntactic level, that is, its lexical relational structure (LRS, Hale & Keyser 1993, 2002).

The structure of this article is as follows. First, we will introduce the lexical class of emission verbs proposing a distinction between verbs of emission of substance and verbs of manner of emission. In a second section, we offer an analysis of the different LRS of each class and we provide formal evidence that the structures proposed are correct. In a third section, we show that the acceptability of the EI construction is directly related to the LRS of each class of verb. Finally, we discuss some predictions that can be made based on our theory and reach some conclusions.

2. Two classes of emission verbs

The class of emission verbs, as classified by Levin (1993), includes four subclasses: verbs of emission of substance, smell, sound and light. This classification is based on conceptual criteria, specifically the assumption that substances, light, sound and smell are different entities. In contrast, we propose a two-fold classification that reflects the formal properties of emission verbs. We argue that verbs of emission of substance are configurationally different from the other three classes, which can be grouped together. We will introduce formal evidence that shows that languages such Spanish do not classify sounds, lights and smells differently. Our classification is the following:

- (5) a. Verbs of emission of substance: *sudar*, ‘to sweat’, *sangrar*, ‘to bleed’, *vomitar*, ‘to vomit’, *llorar*, ‘to cry’, *estornudar*, ‘to sneeze’, *eructar*, ‘to belch’...
- b. Verbs of manner of emission: *tintinear*, ‘to tinkle’, *crujir*, ‘to creek’, *bramar*, ‘to roar’, *destellar*, ‘to twinkle’, *resplandecer*, ‘to glow’, *brillar*, ‘to shine’, *heder*, ‘to stink’, *chispear*, ‘to sparkle’...

2.1. The morphological productivity of the two classes of verbs as evidence of the distinction

Before proceeding with the analysis of the LRS of the two classes, we will show that there is independent evidence for proposing such a distinction. One piece of evidence has to do with the lexical productivity of these verbs. The verbs from the first group, verbs of emission of substance, have a different nominal productivity than the verbs from the second group, verbs of manner of emission.

The result nouns that can be derived from verbs of emission of substance consist of two types of words. In some of these verbs (6), the base noun, from which the verb is morphologically derived, is also the result noun, denoting the substance that is produced as an effect of the process of emission.

- (6) sangrar, ‘to bleed’, → sangre, ‘blood’; vomitar, ‘to vomit’ → vómito, ‘vomit’; llorar, ‘to cry’ → lloro, ‘crying’; estornudar, ‘to sneeze’ → estornudo, ‘sneeze’...

In other verbs, result nouns are constructed by taking part of the morphological base of the verb and adding to it a specific nominal suffix (7).

- (7) sudar, ‘to sweat’ → sud- + -or, sudor, ‘sweat’

As for the event nouns derived from emission of substance verbs, the nouns that denote the process are precisely the eventive infinitives themselves. EI’s from emission of substance verbs are complex nominals in the sense of Grimshaw (1990: 56-59) and can denote a process in its development (8a) or the result brought about by that event (8b) (cfr. also Pustejovsky 1991).

- (8) a. El sangrar del niño dura ya varias horas.
Lit. The bleed.INF of the child lasts already several hours.
b. El sangrar del niño es abundante.
Lit. The bleed.INF of the child is plentiful.

Let us now consider verbs of manner of emission. This class of verbs have result nominals that tend to keep the verbal morphology, unlike result nouns from emission of substance verbs. There are two options here. The first one is to use the suffix *-ido* (9), particularly productive with verbs denoting sounds.

- (9) bramar, ‘to roar’ – bram-ido; crujir, ‘to creek’ -cruj-ido; chillar, ‘to yell’, -chill-ido; latir, ‘to beat’ – lat-ido...

Other event nouns do not use any affix at all, but, when the verb has been derived from a noun, in many cases, they systematically keep the verbal affixes. Even in those instances where it is possible to identify a noun within the base of the verb, as in (10), *parpadear*, the result nominal is not that noun (as happens in verbs of emission of substance), but rather a deverbal noun that keeps the verbal morphology (10b).

- (10) a. parpadear, ‘to flicker’, from párpado, ‘eye-lid’.
b. parpadeo, *not* #párpado

Event nouns in this class of verbs are, again, expressed by EI’s. However, unlike the EI’s of verbs of emission of substance, the denotation of EI’s from verbs of manner of emission only refers to the ongoing process in its development (11a), and not to the result. Observe the contrast between (11b) and (8b).

- (11) a. El crujir de la madera dura ya varias horas.
Lit. The creek.INF of the wood lasts already several hours.
b. *El crujir de la madera es abundante.
Lit. The creek.INF of the wood is plentiful.

2.2. Eventive Infinitives as event nouns

EI’s are equivalent to event nouns in *-ción*. The relationship between event infinitives and nouns in *-ción* has not gone unnoticed in traditional Spanish grammars where infinitives are considered words that denote the ‘action in movement’ (Bello 1847). Coherently, EI’s, as nouns, denote processes and not culminations. EI’s are not possible with verbs that do not indicate a process. Equally, nominalizations in *-ción* can be carried out with verbs that have a process. The example in (12) shows that achievements, which are instantaneous changes of state without a process, lack nominalizations in *-ción* (Bordelois 1993).

- (12) a. llegar, ‘to arrive’ → *llegación, llega-da
b. nacer, ‘to be born’ → *nación, naci-miento

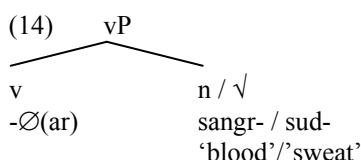
If EI's and nominalizations in *-ción* are equivalent, it follows that verbs of emission do not have a nominalization in *-ción* (13) as an instance of morphological blocking –as understood in Aronoff (1976)–.

- (13) a. *crujir*, ‘to creak’ → **crujición*
 b. *vomit*, ‘to vomit’ → **vomitación*

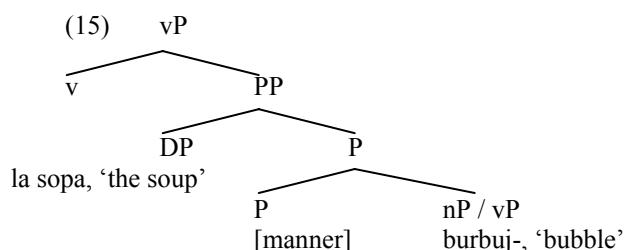
3. An LRS analysis of the two classes of emission verbs

Let us recapitulate up to this point. We have proposed a distinction between two classes of verbs of emission, emission of substance and manner of emission, both of which can produce Eventive Infinitives (EI), although with different denotations. Only one of these classes, however, the manner of emission verbs, can produce Perception Eventive Infinitives (PEI) and be selected by perception verbs. In this section we will propose and motivate a particular Lexical Relational Structure for each class.

Let us begin by explaining our assumptions about how words are constructed. First, we assume that words have an internal structure that is basically syntactic. More specifically, we follow the postulate that words contain internal structural relationships that define crucial aspects of their formal behaviour and determine parts of their semantic interpretation (Hale & Keyser's LRS's). Secondly, we assume that there is a distinction between roots and functional projections (Marantz 1997, 2001), in such a way that roots lack grammatical category and functional heads provide them with this information. In accordance with this perspective, we propose the following lexical relational structure for a verb that denotes the emission of a substance.¹



When this structure is transferred to Logical Form, the configuration is translated into semantic notions. The head little *v* is interpreted as the function CAUSE and the External Argument (EA) semantically associated with it is interpreted as the originator of the event, that is, as the abstract function SOURCE (Mateu 2002), which in a verb of emission is interpreted quite literally. The internal argument, a noun or a bare root, is interpreted as the caused object, the entity resulting from the process. In contrast, the LRS of a verb of manner of emission is depicted as follows:



In this structure there is a particular relational head with a meaning of manner, P[manner]. This constituent selects as its internal argument the entity that defines the manner: in the verb *burbujear*, ‘to flow like bubbles’, the noun *burbuj(a)*, ‘bubble’, defines the manner in which the emission event takes place. The specifier of this relational head is the argument that acts or behaves in that particular way, for example, *la sopa*, ‘the soup’, in the sentence *la sopa burbujea*, ‘the soup bubbles’, which is interpreted as ‘the soup flows like bubbles’. It is important to point out that the manner preposition cannot be analysed as an adjunct. In the first place, the semantics it provides is not optional, but crucial

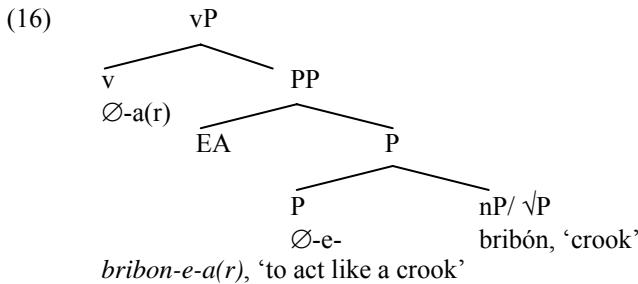
¹ The reason to represent the base *sud-* as a root and the base *sangr(e)* as a noun, is explained in section 2.2. (cf. particularly the configuration in (23)).

to the interpretation of the verb. Secondly, Mateu (2002) has shown that adjuncts cannot be a part of the internal structure of a word.

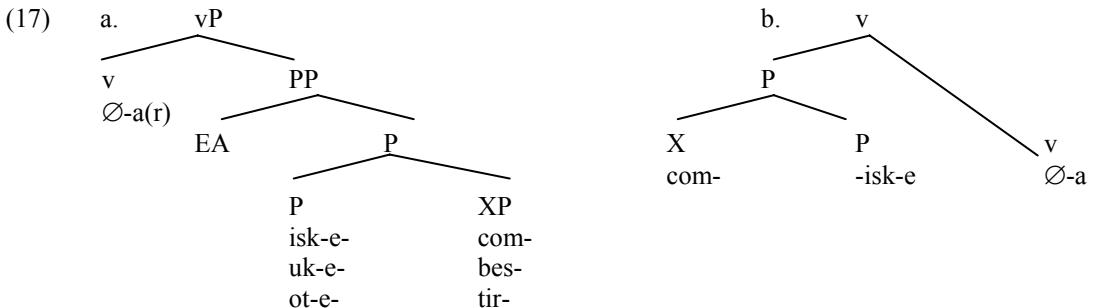
In the following paragraphs we will investigate the nature of the manner preposition, and we will provide evidence of its existence.

3.1. Evidence of the existence of P[manner] in Spanish

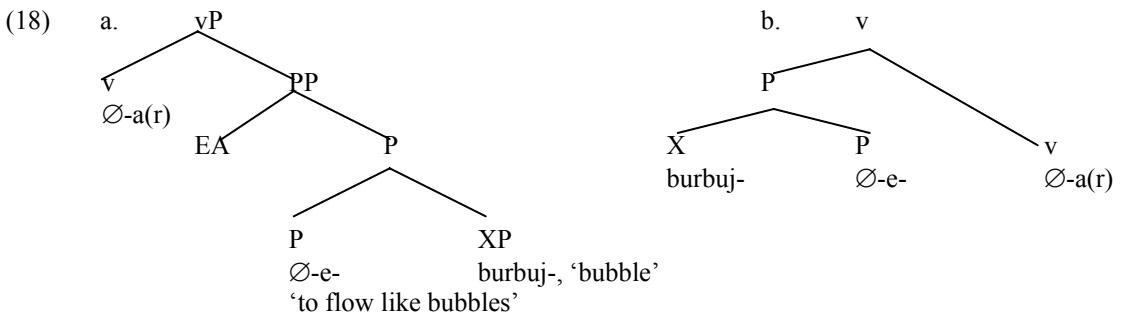
We suggest that in Spanish the relational head of manner may be phonologically explicit in lexical syntax, where the spell out is zero plus a theme vowel *-e-*. We follow Oltra's analysis of theme vowels as dissociated morphemes inserted in every functional head. Let us observe that according to our analysis, Spanish *-ear* is not to be considered a single head, but rather the result of the morphological merging of two heads, little *v* and P manner. This suffix is present in most verbs that express manner.



The manner of some verbs of activity is modified by adding an infix, such as *comisquear* –to eat in an irregular manner–, *besuquear* –to kiss in an irregular manner–, and so forth. We propose that in these cases the infix is the manifestation of the manner relational head. (17a) shows the syntactic representation of this type of verbs and (17b), the structure of the word after morphological merger.



In those verbs of manner of emission that are derived from nouns –cfr. the structure in (15)– the constituent *-e-* is also present, as shown in (18) in the case of *burbujear* (cf. also *parpadear*, *chisporrotear*, *chispear*, and so forth):



3.2. Evidence for the structure proposed

Let us now revise the evidence adduced in favor of the differentiation between the two classes of emission verbs. Our first piece of evidence has to do with the possibility of having an additional direct

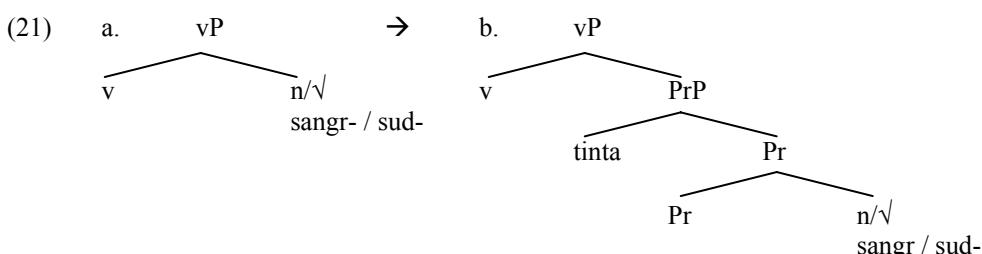
object. As is known, emission verbs are intransitive. However, some of them accept cognate direct objects. The two classes that we have identified behave differently in that regard: verbs of emission of substance can assume an additional direct object.

- (19) a. sangrar una sangre espesa, sangrar agua...
Lit. to bleed thick blood, to bleed water...
b. vomitar la comida
Lit. to vomit the food
c. toser sangre
Lit. to cough blood

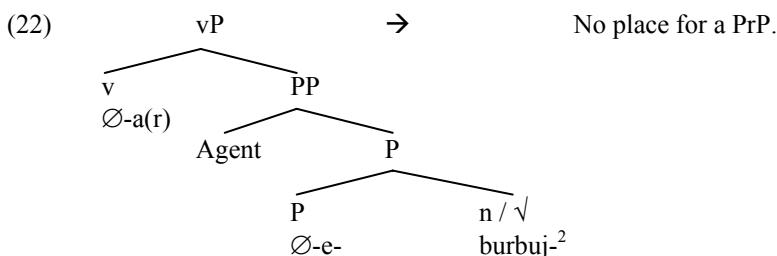
In contrast, the second subclass that we have proposed, manner of emission, does not accept this type of direct object.

- (20) a. *resplandecer una luz fuerte
Lit. to shine an intense light
b. *tintinear un sonido alegre
Lit. to tinkle a happy sound

This difference can be explained by the LRS of the two classes of verbs. (21a) represents the intransitive version of this type of emission verbs. When these verbs take a cognate direct object, we suggest that the additional argument is introduced by a predicative structure (PrP, Bowers 2000), as shown in (21b). In this configuration, the direct object of the verb is the subject of the predicative relationship. Let us note that in the transitive version the root is still the morphological base of the verb, and therefore must also be the complement of the head PrP. If these were not the case, the root would be unable to morphologically merge with little *v* (Marantz 2001).



In contrast, the structure that we have proposed in (15) for manner of emission verbs leaves no room for the merging of the predicative structure, since the internal argument is already a relational structure. Consequently, it is not possible to add a cognate direct object.

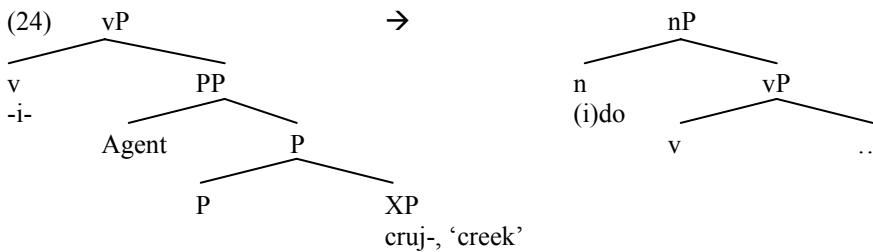


² The case of verbs such as *gotear*, ‘to drip’, and *chorrear*, ‘to gush’, warrants a special comment. The presence of *-ear* does not make them intransitive –*gotear sangre*, ‘to drip blood’, *chorrear sangre*, ‘to gush blood’–, a fact that may be considered a counterexample to our proposal. Note, however, that the bases of the verbs are the nouns *gota*, ‘drop’, and *chorro*, ‘jet’, respectively. These are relational nouns that denote portions of a certain substance: *gota de X*, *chorro de X*. We propose that the direct object (DO) is introduced by the relational noun, and we assume a structure such as $[_{VP} v^0 [_{PP} [DP] P^0 [_{XP} [[DO] X^0 [nP\ gota / chorro]]]]]$ for these verbs. Other transitive verbs with *-ear* also have bases that are semantically relational, such as *capitanear*, ‘to lead’, whose base is *capitán*, ‘captain’.

The second piece of evidence for the distinction proposed has to do with lexical productivity. As we said in 1.1., result nominals derived from verbs of emission of substance must cancel the verbal morphology, and, in some cases, add nominal morphology. This is explained by the fact that in the structure proposed in (14) -repeated here as (23)- the noun is under little *v*. It is important that the verb *sudar* (23b) is constructed over the bare root, as shown by the fact that it lacks the nominal suffix *-or*, present in *sud-or*. This contrasts with *sangrar* (23a), which is based on the full nominal form *sangr(e)*.



Contrary to this, the nominalization of a verb of manner of emission keeps the verbal morphology. This is due to the fact that manner is a semantic category that can only be present in verbs; the nominal must be constructed over the verbal head based on the structure in (15), here (24).

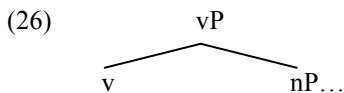


4. Interaction with perception eventive infinitives (PEI's)

We propose to reformulate the restriction on the infinitives that can be PEI's in terms of the presence of an argument that measures the event. As it is well known, a measurer is an argument that can be used to determine the development of the event, because the subparts in which it can be divided can be paired with subparts of the event in process. Having a measurer does not presuppose being telic.

- (25) There cannot be a measurer argument in the event expressed by a verb in a PEI.
- i. All telic events have a measurer argument (*to eat an apple*)
 - ii. Some atelic events have a measurer argument (*to eat apples*)

In a configurational theory, the meaning of the construction is derived from the syntactic disposition of its constituents. In particular, we propose that LF interprets an nP that is the internal argument of little *v* as an argument that measures the event.



The consequence is that verbs of emission of substance have a measurer due to their internal LRS, and therefore are ungrammatical in the PEI construction.

Manner of emission verbs do not share this structure, so, accordingly, we expect that these verbs will not have a measurer. Although some prepositions, specifically those that denote paths, may also measure the event, the preposition of manner is not one of them (27).

- (27) In LRS, a manner preposition does not bound the event of the verb.

As for other transitive verbs in *-ear*, such as *veranear*, 'to spend the summer', *amarillear*, 'to yellow', or *martillear*, 'to hammer', it is interesting to note that they are not manner verbs. Having proposed that *-ear* is not a single affix, but the combination of two theme vowels, we can expect that the sequence *-ear* will be the spell out of different configurations.

The consequence is again straightforward: manner of emission verbs are good candidates to appear as PEI's.

To sum up, our analysis derives crucial parts of the grammatical behaviour of emission verbs, such as their Aktionsart, from their internal LRS; consequently, we do not consider that the aspectual information of a predicate is an idiosyncrasy that has to be listed in the Lexicon, but rather we try to relate it to the internal configuration of the word.

5. Predictions of our analysis

Our analysis predicts that verbs with a direct object will be grammatical as PEI's if the direct object does not bound the event: verbs of inherent direction without a path (28a), verbs of perception (28b), verbs of speech (28c) or verbs of activity without change of state (28d).

- (28)
- a. el mudo levantar y dejar caer las manos [propio de los hombres de edad] (J. Marías)
Lit. Lit. the soundless rise.INF and fall.INF the hands [characteristic of the aged men]
 - b. este mirar el color actual [con ojos del pasado] (Ortega y Gasset)
Lit. this watch.INF the current colour [with eyes of the past]
 - c. ese malicioso criticar a todo bicho viviente de Juan (Varela 1979)
Lit. that evil criticise.INF everyone of Juan
 - d. ese continuo mascar el chicle de menta
Lit. that constant chew.INF the mint chewing gum

We can observe some interesting contrasts in the case of these direct objects. A direct object that denotes the location with a verb like *barrer*, 'to sweep', does not delimit the event, and therefore is grammatical in the construction with EI (cfr. 30a); in contrast, a patient object such as *polvo*, 'dust', delimits the event, because the subparts of the event can be measured with the subparts of the dust, so the appearance of this type of complement makes the structure ungrammatical (cfr. 29b).

- (29)
- a. (Presencié) ese afanoso barrer toda la habitación.
Lit. (I witnessed) that industrious sweep.INF all the room.
 - b. *(Presencié) ese afanoso barrer todo el polvo.
Lit. (I witnessed) that industrious sweep.INF all the dust.

We predict also that verbs of manner of movement with an inferred path (cfr. 31a, Morimoto 2001: 56-57) will be ungrammatical in this construction, because subparts of the path are equated with subparts of the event of movement. In contrast, verbs such as *tambalearse* or *balancearse* do not imply a path, that is, there is no constituent that binds the event, so they are grammatical as PEI's (cfr. 30b).

- (30)
- a. *Presencié el rápido nadar de los niños.
Lit. I witnessed the fast swim.INF of the children.
 - b. Presencié el repetitivo tambalearse de aquel borracho.
Lit. I witnessed the repetitive stagger.INF of that drunkard.

Finally, we predict that some verbs of manner of movement with an inferred path will be interpreted as verbs that denote a certain sound instead of movement when they appear in the PEI construction. As verbs that denote sounds do not have an inferred path, a way to save the grammaticality of the sentence when a manner of movement verb appears as a PEI is to reinterpret it as a verb that denotes sound. This is the case in the sentences in (31).

- (31) a. {Oí / ?? observé} el cojear del marinero por el puerto.
Lit. I {heard / ?? saw} the hobble.INF of the sailor through the harbour.
- b. {Oí / ?? observé} el arrastrar de los muebles por la puerta.
Lit. I {heard / ?? saw} the drag.INF of the furniture through the door.

In the absence of an analysis such as the one we have presented, the contrast in (31) and the inferred reading of the PEI's as a verb of sound would be an enigmatic property of Spanish, which could not even be derived from any obvious pragmatic principle.

6. Conclusions

In the first place, Syntax is characterised in the Generative Framework as a reduced set of operations (three in the Minimalist Program, Chomsky 1995) that, by interaction, give rise to well-formed derivations. In contrast, the Lexicon is, by definition (Halle 1973), a level where there is room for idiosyncrasies that allows a much wider set of operations than syntax. Thus, a syntactic explanation as the one we have pursued is, *ceteris paribus*, more predictive and minimises stipulation.

Secondly, a lexical analysis of verbs that considers their aspectual properties gives rise to –we believe– a contradiction. It is a well established fact that it is not the verbs themselves, but the whole predicate that can be characterised as an activity, an achievement, and so forth. This fact has been pointed out by Verkuyl (1972), and has been fully developed in the work of Tenny and other authors, who have pointed out the role of the internal argument in the definition of the aspectual properties of the predicate. In a Lexicalist view, only words (or special phrases called ‘idioms’) are taken into consideration, so the analysis is forced to ascribe the verbal head to an aspectual class, even though it is the entire phrase that belongs to the class. A syntactic account such as the one we have adopted in this article avoids this contradiction, because it analyses the properties of whole phrases, not only heads.

Finally, we have used formal evidence to back up our analysis, instead of relying on the intuitions about the conceptual meaning of a certain predicate, which in some cases may be misleading. This approach also has the benefit of leading to a reduction of the number of classes of verbs of emission.

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