

On the morphosyntax of evaluative deverbal verbs in Catalan and Spanish

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In this talk I will discuss the internal structure of a set of verbs in Catalan and Spanish illustrated in (1a)-(2a). They have generally been described as being derived from the corresponding verbs in (1b)-(2b) through affixation of an apparently evaluative, quantitative, or intensive affix that, in the nominal environment, forms diminutives, augmentatives or pejoratives (3) (e.g. Pena 1993; Di Tullio 1997; Rifón 1998). In the verbal domain, they have been said to refer to the iteration of the verbal action, its intensification, the loose manner in which the action is carried out, or a combination thereof.

(1) Catalan

a. amargotejar	cuetejar	allargassar	ploriquejar
turn bitter	wag the tail (int.)	lengthen too much	whine
b. amargar	cuejar	allargar	plorar
make bitter	wag the tail	lengthen	cry

(2) Spanish

a. bailotear	juguetear	lloriquear	pintarrajear
dance poorly	frolic	whine	daub
b. bailar	jugar	llorar	pintar
dance	play	cry	paint

(3) Evaluative nominals

a. peot	petitet	donassa	torricó	(CAT)
big foot	little boy	big woman	little tower	
b. grandote	amiguete	gatico	tontarra	(SP)
big boy	buddy	little cat	dummy	

These verbs raise questions related to the status of evaluative affixes, their internal syntax and how their syntax interfaces with their variable semantics, also in relation to their productivity.

Building on Fábregas & Varela (2006) Tovená & Kihm (2008) and Oltra-Massuet & Castroviejo (2014), I will develop an analysis of these forms within the Distributed Morphology framework.

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