

“Is the trust-ee trust-able?” On English suffixes with a passive meaning*

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This paper discusses the relationships between affixation and voice in English. The passive voice is usually studied in relation to verbs: ‘passivizability is a property of verbs –which is natural, given that V is the only lexical category mentioned in the structure index of the transformation’ (Chomsky, 1970: 41). The passive is viewed either as the result of a transformation or derivation (also described as a movement or raising operation –from complement to subject position) or a syntactic construction which can be identified through formal elements (an auxiliary –generally *be*, a verb in the past participle form, an optional *by*-phrase). The passive is far from being a unitary construction. A wide array of phenomena fall under the ‘passive’ label:

- *get*-passives: *I told Al once that if he got elected president, my main goal would be to stay out of his way.* (*Guardian* 2000)
- *have*-passives: *One player, Emmanuel Adjogu, had his winner's medal stolen* (*Guardian* 2000)
- passives without an active counter-part: *He is rumoured to be in Russia, Kazakhstan, or India* (*Guardian* 2000)
- prepositional passives (with a complement prepositional phrase): *the EC is an expanding political and economic force which is not going to be walked over by anybody.* (*Times* 1991)
- prepositional passives (with an adjunct prepositional phrase): *Charles Stuart (...) decided that raffling off a night in the haunted turret bedroom would raise money for charity and lay the ghosts of a room that has not been slept in for 300 years.* (*Times* 1991)
- medio-passives: *Land around Montalcino sells well above the average for Tuscany.* (*Guardian* 2000)
- constructions involving *want* or *need* + V-ING: *In fact, much of the material we recovered still needs looking at.* (*Guardian* 2000)
- ‘pseudo-passives’: *Martin can be relied on to score 50 tries a season.* (*Times* 1991)
- ‘ergative’ forms: *Santa's given the briefing, the door opens, the child walks in.* (*Guardian* 2000)

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However, passive phenomena do not only occur at the syntactic level. Lexical suffixes also exhibit passive properties, particularly two prototypical ‘passive’ suffixes: *-ee* and *-able*. The former is a noun-forming suffix and the latter an adjective-forming suffix. Both are used to produce derivations from transitive verbs mainly (although some lexemes can also be derived from intransitive verbs such as *escapee*). The base can exceptionally be nominal (*biographee*, *fashionable*) or adjectival (*niceable*), although the examples of adjective + *-able* only occur as word play:

- (1) ‘Lesley is one of the bestest most niceable, smartyer, most coolable, most able to have relyingness, and totally funable people you will ever meet.’ (<http://profiles.friendster.com/1347440>).

In most occurrences in the corpus, though, *niceable* is wrongly formed on the model of *likeable*, *agreeable*.

It seems a well-established fact that suffixes such as *-able* and *-ee* have passive or medio-passive properties. To take just a few examples in the literature, Chomsky (1970: 56) mentions an ‘imbedded passive’ in the case of *-able*; for Roeper & Van Hout (2000) ‘*-able* is a lexical affix with passive properties’; for Roeper (2005: 130) ‘there is a form of passive hidden in the suffix *-able* which involves a requirement that the subject be filled by a THEME or an object, exactly as in the grammar of sentences’; for Bauer (1983: 246-247), writing about *-ee* nouns, ‘the unifying factor is the ability of all the nouns to appear as subjects of verbs with passive form.’ My aim will be to demonstrate that a ‘passive instruction’ (namely a patient-oriented relation) is indeed encoded in the suffixes discussed here. The passive interpretation is based on a paraphrase using the underlying verb and this raises the further issue of the status of the gloss in linguistic description. I will argue that suffixes do have a lexical-semantic meaning and that this meaning can be summed up in a ‘schematic form’¹ as defined in the ‘Theory of Predicative and Enunciative Operations’ (‘Théorie des opérations prédicatives et énonciatives’ initiated by Antoine Culioli). A schematic form represents a bundle of features that subsumes all the specific functions found in a particular utterance. It is not merely a constituent integrated within a composition, but rather an abstract scenario (taking into account all the possible variations). Culioli (1987: 115-116) gives the following definition:

The analysis of a marker (i.e. not simply a label but a *marker of an operation* or possibly of a poly-operation) must result in a formal representation having stable and verifiable characteristics. From this formal representation, which I call the *schematic form*, supplementary forms are constituted that are deformations of the base form. The question is to understand how these patterns of deformation are organised.

¹ Proposals have been made in other theories, such as Model Theoretic Semantics or Lexical Conceptual Structures (Jackendoff 1990), to give formal representations of a core meaning or conceptual structure within a lexical semantics framework (‘primitives’ or ‘skeleton,’ defined by Lieber 2004: 16 as containing a ‘hierarchical arrangement of functions and arguments’).

(Translation: Ronald Flinham & H el ene Chuquet.
http://www.sil.org/linguistics/glossary_fe/defs/TOEEn.asp])

[L'analyse d'un marqueur (entendu non pas au sens d' tiquette, mais de marqueur d'op ration ou  ventuellement de polyop ration) doit aboutir   une repr sentation formelle ayant des caract ristiques stables et contr lables. A partir de cette repr sentation formelle, que j'appelle forme sch matique, se constituent des formes suppl mentaires qui sont, en fait des d formations de la forme de base. La question est de comprendre l'organisation de ces dispositifs de base.]

The passive interpretation will be dependant on the interaction between the semantic content of the base, the nature of the event described by the base which the affixed word is derived from (the suffix being a projection from the verb)² and context. The fact that derivational processes in the case of *-able* and *-ee* are not always 'meaning-preserving'³ (the meaning of a derived word is more restricted than the meaning of its base) must be taken into account. A further dimension needs to be considered: this is the attitude of the speaker and the construction in discourse. The coining of a new derived word (or a word perceived to be new) is linked to either a valuation or the presence of a qualitative element. Qualification is a central concept in the Theory, along with quantification. An occurrence of a notion is delimited both quantitatively (its existence is guaranteed) and qualitatively (the occurrence has specific properties). A notion is defined as:

a complex system of representation organizing physico-cultural properties of a cognitive nature. The notion exists before words enter into categories; it is a generator of lexical units. (...) Though possessing a certain degree of stability that is necessary for communication, notions are not fixed rigidly once and for all: on the contrary, they are dynamic and vary from one individual to another and from one situation to another. A notion can only be apprehended through its occurrences, whether they be phenomenal or enunciative.

(*Glossaire fran ais-anglais de terminologie linguistique du SIL, English definitions of key terms in the Theory of Enunciative Operations*,
http://www.sil.org/linguistics/glossary_fe/defs/TOEEn.asp)

Valuation is part of qualification. This term refers to the attitude of the speaker, including involvement, intention or judgment. Valuation allows the speaker to come up with such words as *niceable*, *coolable*, *funable* in (1). Otherwise there would be no plasticity. Language would be totally static and no possibility for new formations would be possible.

The first section of this article gives an overview of the historical development of the suffixes *-able* and *-ee*. The second section examines the concepts of 'passive voice' and 'agentivity.' The third section tries to provide a definition for 'passive nouns.' The other sections focus on context-based analyses. They address the

² The suffix 'carries a meaning projected from the verb' (Roeper: 2007).

³ This expression is taken from Chomsky (1970: 55).

problem of the discursive conditions necessary to realize the potentiality of the root-suffix combination and the qualitative value of the suffixes.

The theoretical framework is that of cognition and more particularly of the Theory of Predicative and Enunciative Operations.

The study is based on a corpus compiled from the British National Corpus (<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>), *The Guardian* and *The Observer* on CD-ROM (2000), the internet, and a personal corpus of books and newspapers.

1. Historical development: *-able* and *-ee*.

1.1 *-able*

This suffix has a Latin origin and was borrowed from French. The root of *-able* is *habilis* (*skilful, able to*) which was reduced to *-bilis, -bilem, (abilem)*. In French, new formations in *-(a)ble* (i.e. not loans from Latin) are attested from the 12th–13th century (Source: TLF, *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*). In English, *-able* became a productive suffix in the latter half or beginning of the 15th century (Source: O.E.D.). Until the latter half of the 14th century, all the words in *-able* were French loans: *marriageable*⁴; *variable, honourable, accordable, agreeable, charitable* (Jespersen 1942: 399). According to Strang (1970: 188), the first recorded examples of coinages all have the prefix *un-*: *unbelievable; unspeakable; unknowable* (c. 1400). The meaning of *-able* was influenced by the development of the adjective *ABLE*.

1.2 *-ee*

The suffix *-ee* was borrowed from the French past participle suffix *-é* (e) from Latin *-atus*. The French past participle suffix is itself derived from Latin *-atus (-ata)*. Words in *-ee* were at first technical legal words. Jespersen (1942: 220) gives the following list: *appellee, assignee, committee, donee, lessee, presentee*. It is interesting to note that there were pairs of correlative words like *apelour (appellor)* and *apelé (appellee)*. For the O.E.D.:

subsequently the terminations *-or* and *-ee* were freely added to English verb-stems to form nouns, those in *-or* denoting the agent, and those in *-ee* the passive party, in such transactions as are the object of legislative provision.

The corpus of modern English on which this study is based shows that words that are not lexicalised (*murderee* for instance) very often occur with their correlate in *-er/ -or*. Marchand (1969: 267) states that ‘the substantive in *-ee* is a passive noun (originally a substantivized French second participle), the substantive in *-or* is the

⁴The earliest usage of the word is recorded by the O.E.D. in 1440. *Marriageable* is “now rare” according to the O.E.D. and has been replaced by *marriageable*. However *marriageable* has not completely disappeared and a search on the internet shows that this term is still used in blogs and in the title of a recent essay.

agent noun.’ Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1550) only mention a relation which is paraphrased as ‘one who is the object of the verb’ for *-ee*.

1.3 *Passive and non-passive derivations*

Paraphrases given by dictionaries for adjectives derived in *-able* are variations of the following expression: ‘that can / may be V-EN.’ For example, the word *washable* is thus explained: ‘able to be washed, especially without damage’ (O.E.D.); ‘able to be washed in a washing machine without being damaged’ (*Cambridge*); ‘something that is washable can be washed without being damaged’ (*Longman*). So it is invariably a paraphrase with a passive construction in *able*, *can* or *may*, that is to say a modal auxiliary, or a modal adjective expressing the possibility or potentiality related to a non-mentioned agent. However, the semantic content of the suffix is not exclusively a passive one. Jespersen (1942: 399) notes that some adjectives do not have a passive interpretation. *Answerable*, for example, can have two possible meanings according to the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*: ‘1. be answerable to somebody (for something), to have to explain your actions to someone in authority and 2. a question that is answerable can be answered.’ Another example is the adjective *changeable*. One of its senses is: ‘changing often: changeable weather.’ In that case, *-able* carries a modal sense only: obligation or potential. Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1555) make the same observation: ‘In addition, however, *-able* yields no passive meaning but rather has a sense paraphrasable as ‘apt to V’: *changeable* (weather), *perishable*, *suitable*, etc.’

As is the case with *-able*, the suffix *-ee* does not always have a passive meaning. Marchand (1969: 268) notes that ‘a few words have a non passive character. *Conferee* “one who takes part in a conference” is coined in phonetic imitation of *referee*.’ For the O.E.D.:

The derivatives in *-ee*, however, unlike the Anglo-French participial nouns after which they were modelled, have not usually a grammatically passive sense, but denote the ‘indirect object’ of the verbs from which they are derived. Thus *vendee* is the person to whom a sale is made, *indorsee* the person in whose favour a draft, etc. is indorsed, *lessee* the person to whom property is let.

The suffix is also used to adapt (the O.E.D. uses the verb ‘anglicize’) French words in *-é(e)* in modern English: *debauchee*, *refugee* (17th century), *divorcee* (19th c.), *evacuee* (20th c.)

There are also two homophonous *-ee* suffixes that fall outside the scope of this study: the diminutive suffix found in *bargee* (M17, *a bargeman*) and the suffix resulting from what Jespersen (1942: 222) calls ‘more or less arbitrary modifications of borrowed words’ (*dungaree*, *grandee*, *jamboree*, *goatee*).

2. *Passive voice and agentivity*

2.1 *The concept of ‘passive voice’*

Before going further with the discussion of passive suffixes, it will be useful to examine briefly the notions of ‘passive’ and ‘voice’ and try to define passivisation. It has been argued that it is a transformation that takes place either at sentence or at clause level. In the quest for universal primitives, passive constructions have been singled out and identified as a good example of such universal principles across languages, although the definition of what a passive form is remains controversial with respect to language typology. There are still discussions as to the inclusion within the domain of the passive voice of ergative constructions, antipassives, or ‘topic’ constructions. Shibatani (1988: 2) rejects the assumptions that ‘the central feature of passivization is the movement of an NP motivated by case-absorption’ and that ‘the advancement of a direct object to the subject universally characterizes passivization.’ For Shibatani (1988: 3): ‘Voice is to be understood as a mechanism that selects a grammatically prominent syntactic constituent –subject– from the underlying semantic functions (case or thematic roles) of a clause.’ Givón (2001: 125) has the same conception:

the prototypical passive voice is used primarily for agent suppression or de-topicalization. The fact that a non-agent argument –most commonly the patient– is then topicalized is but the default consequence of agent suppression.’

This semantic conception of the passive voice comes closer to the notion of CONSTRUCTION used in this article to refer to the passive rather than that of ‘mechanism’ or syntactic transformation. Lexical formation will be considered as a dynamic process. As Culioli (1990: 26) observes: ‘the message (is not) simply a vehicle for stable and ready-made information. (...) Meaning is not simply conveyed but reconstructed.’ [‘Le message (n’est pas) qu’un transport d’information toute constituée et stable. (...) La signification n’est donc pas véhiculée mais reconstruite.’]

2.2. Agentivity

The term ‘agent’ is sometimes equated with the subject of the verb: ‘The prototypical role of a subject is that of an agent, and the typical direct object is a patient.’ (Langacker 1999: 25). The feature /+volition/ is often seen as inherent to the definition of agentivity: ‘The semantic prototype for a subject is an agent, that is, an entity capable of volition that is moreover exercising his/her/its volition in the execution of the action denoted by the verb.’ (Croft 1993: 33). The definition of agentivity that will be used in the present article is the following synthesis between the above-mentioned definitions:

The canonical event model further subsumes two role archetypes, namely agent and patient. An agent volitionally carries out a physical action, being both the instigator and the source of energy. The term patient is used in a narrow sense to indicate an object that undergoes an internal change of state. (Langacker, 1999: 24)

The notion of agency implies at least a minimal action chain, wherein the agent induces a thematic process by exerting some force on the theme. (Langacker, 1999: 30)

The notion of agentivity is central to an analysis of derived words in *-ee* and *-able*. Let us take two examples: *trainee* and *unbreakable*. If we postulate a predicative relation such as ‘someone who is being trained for a job’ and ‘it cannot be broken’ (the definitions are given by the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 2003), then we can say that the activation of the passivized verb in the paraphrase automatically constructs a slot for agentivity. This is also the position of Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1555) for whom the suffix *-able* is ‘fundamentally related to the passive.’ Apart from a small subgroup discussed *infra*, a gloss in the passive can always be provided and a class of potential agents reconstructed. Things are not so clear with *-ee* as some derived nouns can designate agentive entities. Heyvaert (2006: 338) divides *-ee* nouns into three categories: ‘(1) patientive *-ee*, e.g. *adoptee, consultee, detainee, trainee*; (2) beneficiary *-ee*, e.g. *addressee, payee, presentee, grantee, promisee*; (3) agentive *-ee*, e.g. *escapee, resignee, returnee, attendee*.

In spite of common features, the two suffixes do not behave in quite the same way. A derived adjective in *-able* will indicate that the class of potential agents is constructed (e.g. *it cannot be broken by anyone*) when no potentiality is inferable from derived nouns in *-ee*. With *-ee*, the possibilities of formation are therefore much more limited as no explicit agent can be assigned - **trainee by X* as opposed to *trainable by X* as in the following occurrence: ‘*Maybe she's just not trainable by you*’ (<http://www.yesand.com/node/1009423>).

3. ‘Passive nouns’

3.1 *-ee* and *-er*

Elna Bengtsson (1927: 17) distinguishes two types of nouns (affixed or non-affixed): ‘nouns which are permanently passive (*addressee, employé⁵, payee*) and nouns which are temporarily passive, i.e. do not denote a state (*building, rider, seller*).’ The opposition between ‘permanent’ and ‘temporary’ is worth noting, even though it is debatable, as it refers to aspectuality and is in keeping with conceptions of *-ee* derivations being variations of past participle forms: ‘the passive core of *-ee* nominalization relates to the past participle’ (Heyvaert 2006: 354). Thus *retiree* could be glossed by *a retired officer* with a past participle having adjectival properties.

Nouns in *-ee* and ‘passive’ adjectives in V-EN are indeed close. Their proximity is highlighted by the quasi-adjectival use of *-ee* in compounds. A rather high proportion of nouns in *-ee* are used in noun-noun constructions: *evacuee children; sustainee offer; absentee ballot; women arrestees*.

Bengtsson defines nouns with a passive sense according to the following test:

⁵ Bengtsson gives the French form of the word.

A criterion applicable at least in most cases of the presence of a passive sense in a concrete noun is that the context should allow of a passive periphrasis of the noun by employing the corresponding verb.

The examples she gives are the following:

a pick: that which is picked in; boiling (in skim the boiling): that which is being boiled; change: money changed; hash: meat that is hashed or cut into small pieces.

It is worth noting that in the list given by Elna Bengtsson even non-affixed nouns have a verbal counterpart: *pick* (in this particular use) or *hash* can be considered as conversions from verb to noun. The word *hash* may also retain the passive meaning of the French loan found in the earlier words *haché* or *hachee*. She also includes a list of nouns derived with *-ee*: *advertisee, complainee, depositee, drawee, objectee, operatee, plottee, staree* and gives medio-passive equivalents for some derived words in *-er*:

cooker: 'a fruit that cooks well'; drier: a substance that dries quickly; toaster: a kind of cheese, bread or the like that toasts well or otherwise, as expressed.

Other examples include *tinter, broiler, freezer, suspender, loader*. Bengtsson (1927: 126) makes a separate class with words in *-er* or *-or*, which she calls the 'correlations' of the passive nouns in *-ee*, for example:

handler, 'something that has a specified feel when handled'; locker, 'a receptacle that may be locked'; shipper, 'a commodity that is shipped or adapted for being shipped.' The list she gives includes *baconer, bedder, boiler, breaker, broiler, cooker, drawer, enterer, feeder, folder, freezer, friers, layer, loader, minder, pickler, porker, poster, roaster, rubber, setter, slider, slipper, suckler, suspender, swinger, tinter, trailer*.

Bengtsson's analysis raises the recurrent problem of identifying a morphology for the passive. The verbal passive construction requires a form – the past participle – which is shared by the perfect and the adjective. In the same manner, suffixes are also polyfunctional: *-able* gives a passive orientation while *-ee* is compatible both with an active or a passive orientation. To make things even more confusing, *-er* seems to convey passivity for a very limited group of words. The suffix *-er* selects agents and *-ee* selects patients or themes⁶ which have to be human. The distribution is however not so clear-cut: *-er* is much more commonly used to form active agentive nouns⁷ – but can also denote 'object types' or instruments (e.g. *boiler*) or adverbial complements (e.g. *diner* = 'we dine *in the place*'). It seems difficult to determine what the core meaning of *-er* is. According to Marchand (1969: 279):

⁶ Under Radford's definition, 'a specific thematic role (sometimes also termed PATIENT) [is] associated with the entity undergoing the effect of some action.' (Radford, 1997: 273)

⁷ 'Deverbal derivatives are chiefly agent substantives with the meaning 'animate or inanimate substantive denoting the performer of an action, occasional or habitual.' (Marchand, 1969: 273)

the suffix *-er* can be tacked on to almost any basis: a simple or composite substantive or adjective, a numeral, all kinds of phrases, on the general semantic basis 'he who or that which is connected with or characterized by his or its appurtenance to –'

This gloss shows the difficulty in identifying a core meaning: it has to be formulated in very general terms to take into account all the possible values created by the association with a lexical base and all kinds of interferences: French loans (*accuser, commander, farmer, gardener, jeweller*) mixing in with native words (Marchand 1969: 276), 'sub-group effects' with derived lexemes formed by analogy inside a particular field. There is for example a sub-group of articles of clothing for nouns in *-er* (*slippers, drawers, trousers, jumper*).

To sum up, *-er* encodes an active orientation and *-ee* and *-able* a passive orientation. A few nouns in *-er* also allow a medio-passive reading:

- (2) Carlisle Codling. Excellent **cooker** – bakes well. Pick September. Ecklinville Seedling. Raised by Mr. Logan in 1800. Very large **cooker**. Flat round shape and regular size. White flesh. Cooks well. Pick late August – keeps until November. Originated in Belfast.
(<http://www.deaconsnurseryfruits.co.uk/summerautumncooking/>)
- (3) A dessert apple, acceptable also as **a cooker**. (...) Though a very well liked apple, it bruises very easily and so is rarely found in the shops. 'James Grieve,' the apple, was raised in Edinburgh, first recorded in 1893.
(<http://www.parkfruitfarm.co.uk/fruit%20varieties.htm>)
- (4) Try Early Victoria, the earliest ripening **cooker**, which cooks to a delicious froth in July and August; and James Grieve as an early autumn **eater**. (*Times* 91)

The medio-passive interpretation is correlated in (2), (3) and (4) by other medio-passive forms: *bakes well, cooks well, keeps until November* in (2); *bruises very easily* in (3); *which cooks to a delicious froth* in (4); by passive forms: *[it] is rarely found in the shops, [it] was raised*; and by 'passive' adjectives in *-ed* (*well liked*) and *-able* (*acceptable*) in (3). The relations are centred on the object *apple* and the agent is not relevant. A class of agents could be reconstructed through a paraphrase in the active voice (*you can cook the apple*) or in the passive (*the apple can be cooked by you*). The properties of the object are described and agentivity can only be reconstructed thanks to extra-linguistic knowledge: an apple cannot be an agent; secondly because the context allows no other interpretation (by default, the word *cooker* will be understood as a piece of equipment used for cooking food on). In (4), the word *eater* can be correctly interpreted because the pattern of formation is given just before with *cooker*. A third justification is specialization: the word *cooker* has become highly specialized and can refer almost only to apples (I have not found examples of the word *cooker* associated with other types of food in the corpus).

The suffix *-er* although agentive⁸ can be used with a medio-passive meaning apparently for the reason that it is compatible with potentiality (O.E.D.: a *cooker* is ‘a fruit, etc., that cooks well’; *Longman*: ‘a fruit, especially an apple, that is suitable for cooking but not for eating raw’; *Cambridge*: ‘a cooking apple’). The choice of one form is here exclusive of other forms. As a consequence, there are no occurrences of *cookable apple* in the corpus, although *-able* also denotes potentiality, perhaps because an adjective in *-able* will be used in technical contexts (when no food is involved: ‘a microwave cookable coating’) or when the presupposition is negative, i.e. one might think that the food cannot be cooked (‘I left some chicken out for about 4-5 hours. Is it still cookable?’).

With the suffix *-ee*, the underlying verb – which can express a process, an event or an activity⁹ – comes to express a state, that is to say an inherent quality in the case of nouns. In the terms of Enunciative Grammar, the predicative relation is said to be ‘validated’¹⁰. Thus **cookee*, if such a word existed (and not as the variation of *cookie*), would refer to the resulting state of something having been cooked (‘an apple’, to carry on with the same example). Barker (1998: 711) calls *-ee* derivation ‘episodic linking’ (it is also the title of his article). He defines this concept in the following words:

The referent of a noun phrase headed by an *-ee* noun must have participated in an event of the type corresponding to the verb stem. For example, in order to qualify as a *gazee* it is necessary to participate in a certain role in a gazing event.

The author also describes *-ee* derived nouns with reference to the stage-level /individual level¹¹ distinction. For him, the suffixation with *-ee* and *-er* ‘is the only productive way to form new stage-level nouns.’ For Heyvaert (2006: 349) there is:

a clear division of labour between agentive *-ee* and *-er* suffixation: while *-ee* nouns have a strong tendency to profile the *state* a person is in, typically – though not necessarily (cf *attende*) – as the result of having carried out a process once, *-er* formations designate entities which are characterized by the fact that they *can* or *will* carry out a process, or which carry out that process regularly)

The sub-class of nouns in *-er* having a medio-passive meaning is very small. Some of the formations fall into disuse because of the appearance of new techniques. For

⁸ A derived noun in *-er* is called a ‘subject nominal’ or ‘agent nominal’ by Spencer. (2005: 83)

⁹ For a definition of these terms, see Lyons (1977: 483).

¹⁰ ‘[A predicative relation] is said to be either validated if, for a particular situation, it is given the value p (the positive value) or not validated if it is given the value p’ (negative value): an enunciative origin asserts (i.e. declares that such is the case) that this value exists for the relation.’

(http://www.sil.org/linguistics/glossary_fe/defs.asp#toeEn)

¹¹ ‘Individual predicates such as *intelligent* are true of individuals, and someone is intelligent or not once and for all. Stage-level predicates such as *drunk*, however, can be true of an individual at one point in time, and false of the same individual at another point in time. Stage-level predicates therefore apply not to individuals, but to stages of individuals (roughly time slices of individuals).’ Barker (1998: 711-712)

example, the word *freezer* can no longer be used to designate ‘a thing that freezes’ but refers necessarily to the container.

The suffix *-ee* is not available to express potentiality; *-er* has been selected for that use, maybe because of the semantic proximity of the two suffixes. There sometimes seems to be some hesitation on the part of some speakers in the use of *-er/-ee* as a patientive suffix:

- (5) Reiki is a form of hands-on healing. The contact is very gentle offering compassion and care to the **receiver**. (...) Reiki is the Universal Life force and this energy passes through the practitioner to the **receivee**. It is pure and in no way harmful. Reiki works with the **receivee**, always going to where it is most needed on all levels; mental, physical, spiritual and emotional.
(<http://www.naturaltherapypages.com.au/therapist/15263>)

In (5), the subject is a beneficiary (*X receives care*). It could be assumed that there is a passive orientation at the semantic level since the subject does not take an active part in the process and is not the origin of the change of state from ‘not received’ to ‘received.’ In (6) below, the speaker makes up the word *sustainee* although only the word *sustainer* is chosen by the magazine *Free Venice Beach Head* (it appears seven times in the June issue). The speaker makes a sharp difference between a more active meaning (there is a dynamic element with *become*) and a passive meaning emphasized by the adjectival use of *sustainee*):

- (6) Hi! I would like to become a **sustainer** of my favorite newspaper and receive the fringe benefits. I'd like to advertise my child care business, ‘Karen's Kare’ for four issues as mentioned in the **sustainee** offer. (*Free Venice Beach Head*, June 2008
<http://www.freevenice.org/Beachhead/June2008/Beachhead-color.pdf>)

This use of *-ee* nouns meets a criterion defined by Barker (1998: 717) as the ‘lack of volitional control’ of the subject. The subject is then treated as a theme:

The use of an *-ee* noun entails a lack of volitional control on the part of its referent either over the occurrence or the duration of the qualifying event itself or (given a punctual qualifying event) over its immediate direct consequence.

The semantics of the verb *receive* in (5) seems to override the value of the suffix; the feature */+ agentive/* is backgrounded and only the features */+ human/* and */+ subjecthood/* become salient properties. This explanation is however not sufficient. We can imagine that out of context, the word *receivee* could be interpreted as ‘a person who is received’ on the model of *rescuee* ‘a person who is rescued’ (O.E.D.). There are no attested occurrences of N-*ee* with that meaning. The correct meaning is given by the opposition *practitioner/receivee* removing any ambiguity, or by a context where only one interpretation is possible:

- (7) Alimony counts as income to the **receivee** and is reduced from the **payor's** income prior to CS being calculated.

(<http://www.divorcesource.com/ubbthreads/showflat.php?Cat=0&Board=alimony&Number=436973&page=4&fpart=3>)

The difficulty in interpreting correctly the meaning of a derived lexeme may arise when there is a conflict between the semantic value of the base and the passive orientation of the suffix. The verb *borrow* implies a relation between two participants, with one of them on the receiving end. The two words *-borrower* and *borrowee-* could be thought to apply to the same participant, with an active meaning ('the person who borrows money') and a passive meaning ('the person who receives money, who is given money') instead of 'one from whom money is borrowed':

- (8) In the case of **borrower** and **borrowee**, the borrower is the person who receives the money, and the **borrowee** is the person who lends the money. A **borrowee** could be a bank. So you see how twisted this can get. It's best to consult a dictionary on some of these terms.
(<http://news.rootsweb.com/th/read/ABOUT-WORDS/2004-09/1096248384>)

3.2 *-able, -ing and -ion*

With *-able*, there is competition with another suffix too. If we consider that the function of *-able* is to reverse the predicative relation, then the suffix should not commute with a suffix such as *-ing* which preserves an active meaning. However, *drinking water* seems to be synonymous with *drinkable water*. This is not quite the case, though, as two perfect synonyms cannot co-occur for a long period of time in the lexicon. This principle is called *blocking* by Aronoff & Fudeman (2005: 218): 'Blocking involves two expressions, one potential and one actual. We say that a potential expression is prevented from occurring because another expression with the same meaning and function already exists.' In the case of *drinkable/drinking*, the two derived words have specialized. *Drinking water* is found in objective, descriptive contexts:

- (9) Water supply is obviously not a problem, but carry iodine tablets to purify **drinking water**, or a complete purifier (pounds 65), which will remove bacteria and viruses.

Drinkable water occurs with qualitative elements, *clean* in (9):

- (10) The crucial point is that clean, **drinkable water** has only been publicly available since the Victorian era. (*Guardian* 2000)

And of course when the adjective is not attributive, or when *drinkable* applies to another beverage:

- (11) As the champagne season gets underway, three bottles costing pounds 2,115, still **drinkable** after 86 years on the seabed, have been sold at Sotheby's in London. (*Guardian* 2000)

Drinking can appear outside the collocation *drinking+ water* if a qualitative element is present:

- (12) This is Gamay at its softest, fruitiest best. A supple, **easy-drinking wine** with very little tannin and notes of raspberry and banana.

The endeavour to establish strict categories of suffixes with passive orientation and suffixes with active orientation seems then bound to fail. No suffix carries that kind of instruction alone. A suffix such as *-ion* in (13) can be analysed as having passive properties¹²:

- (13) Mark James, who justified his **selection by Gallacher**, Sam Torrance and Bernhard Langer will find it increasingly difficult with a nucleus of exciting, young players beginning to form. (*Times* 91)

The noun *selection* can be paraphrased as ‘Mark James was selected by Gallacher.’ Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1550) give the following paraphrases for derived lexemes in *-ion*: ‘the process or state of,’ ‘the product of,’ ‘the institution produced by.’ Tom Roeper (2005: 133) defends the position that ‘if *-ability* carries an *obligatory* passive rule, *-ion* carries an *optional* one.’ For this author, there is a ‘hidden passive operation.’ Therefore, rather than speaking of instructions, it seems advisable to have recourse to the notion of ‘compatibility.’ A suffix is compatible with a passive orientation, but this does not exclude other uses depending on the nature of the base and analogies with other patterns. In (14) the underlying predicative relation can be glossed by <Labour selected Josie Farrington>:

- (14) Labour's unanimous **selection** was Josie Farrington, aged 50, who lives with her husband and three sons at the Preston end of the constituency.

3.3 Other suffixes

Other suffixes implying a resulting state occurring after a change of state (*-age*, *-ings*, *-ment*, *-ure*) can also be interpreted as having a passive meaning: *breakage* (‘X has been broken’), *drainage* (‘X has been drained’), *savings* (‘money kept in the bank’), *arrangement* (‘X has been arranged’), *closure* (X has been closed). The passive reading is made possible by the fact that the derived lexeme describes the result of an action; a change of state involves agentivity and control as well as an aspectual dimension. There are other suffixes, with a very low level of productivity, such as *-ant* in *insurant* ‘the person to whom an insurance policy is issued’ (O.E.D.), ‘the person insured, called also the insured’ (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>); *-and* in *multiplicand*: ‘a quantity to be multiplied by another, the multiplier’ (O.E.D.), *analysand* in the language of psychoanalysis (15) or *educand* (16):

- (15) Of course, when the **analysand** decides unilaterally to leave the analysis, it is because her or his competency has been so impaired by psychopathology that

¹² There is abundant literature on the subject, and particularly Chomsky (1970); Roepper (2005); Newmeyer (2005).

steps ought to be taken to protect the **analysand** from the loss of the ability to test reality. (<http://www.academyanalyticarts.org/hyman5.htm>)

- (16) The business of the educator is the making of stimulus-response bonds in the '**educand**' (student).

These suffixes are restricted to a technical use only and retain the meaning of the original suffix (*-andus*, *-a*, *-um* of the gerundive of Latin verbs in *-re*. Source: O.E.D.). Words such as *confirmand*, *educand*, *graduand*, *multiplicand*, *operand*, *ordinand* exhibit a passive meaning, thus *ordinand* can be glossed by 'a person who is about to be ordained; a candidate for ordination' and *graduand* 'one about to be graduated or to receive a university degree' (O.E.D.). The suffix involves both a passive meaning and the construal of a goal, as the reformulation *about to be* shows. The Latin gerundive conveys the meaning of 'future passive' which has remained in the suffix *-and*. This pattern has not given rise to new words; *-and* has never been a living suffix and the list of highly specialized, learned words has not been accrued in recent years. Some of the words in *-and* are in competition with words in *-ee*. Although the O.E.D. does not record *ordainee*, there are many occurrences of this word in the corpus, but in texts emanating from minor religions; the word *ordinand* and not *ordainee* appears on the site of the Church of England.

4. *Derived words in context: degrees of stability*

In this section, I will examine the parameters that come into play when a new unit is formed. To be interpretable, a new lexeme (or a lexeme which is rarely used) needs to undergo a process of referential stabilisation. Culioli (1990: 129) defines stability in the following manner:

Without stability, there would be no regulated adjustment, no communication (...) but stability should not be confused with rigidity or immutability. Linguistic phenomena form dynamic systems which are regular but which have a margin of variation due to a great variety of factors: they are phenomena which are both stable and malleable.
(Translation: Ronald Flinham & Hélène Chuquet.
http://www.sil.org/linguistics/glossary_fe/defs/TOEEn.asp)

[Sans stabilité, il n'y aurait pas d'ajustement régulier, pas de communication (...) mais la stabilité ne saurait être confondue avec la rigidité ou l'immuabilité. Les phénomènes linguistiques forment des systèmes dynamiques qui sont réguliers, mais avec une marge de variation due à des facteurs d'une grande diversité: on a affaire à des phénomènes qui sont à la fois stables et plastiques.]

Several types of stabilisation will be identified. A first subtype comprises highly lexicalised derived words (Quirk *et al.* [1985: 1551] use the expression 'frozen items') for which the recognition by a co-speaker is immediate:

- (17) I rather agreed with the vox-pop **interviewee** who said that the appeal of Cindy was not her ‘aspirations’ but her teensy-weensy clothes. (*Times* 91)
- (18) The simple duty to comply with the expressed parental preference would not be **workable** or sensibly effective if the authority, in applying its objective admissions criteria under section 6, was susceptible of being tainted by the parent’s subjective motives for the move. (*Times* 91)

Another means of ensuring referential stability is to use the derived words in a technical context. Specialized words acquire a high degree of stability as their comprehension is immediate between members of a linguistic community sharing the same knowledge. Words in *-ee* were first used in the context of law and were an inheritance of Old French: *appellee*, *assignee*, *bailee*, *invitee*, *conservatee*, *consignee*, *garnishee*, *payee*, *trustee* among others. They began then to be used in other fields, perhaps on the model of the legal words, in particular in American military jargon: *escapee*; *returnee*: ‘one who returns or is returned from abroad to his native land, esp. from war service or exile’ (O.E.D); *experimentee* (a term also used in psychotherapy), *civilian internee* (‘a civilian who is interned during armed conflict, occupation, or other military operation for security reasons, for protection, or because he or she committed an offence against the detaining power.’ - *DOD Dictionary of Military Terms*, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/>), *detainee* (‘a term used to refer to any person captured or otherwise detained by an armed force’); *evacuee* ‘a civilian removed from a place of residence by military direction for reasons of personal security or the requirements of the military situation) and the related words *expellee* and *refugee*. Words which are no longer fashionable fall into disuse (*deferree*, *enlistee*, *invadee*, *pillagee*, *selectee*, *shavee*, *surrenderee*); some of them have a second life in the context of online role playing games (*bombee*). Words derived in *-ee* have a tendency to develop in specific semantic fields. The word *abductee* has come to be mean ‘kidnapped by extraterrestrial beings’:

- (19) A group of **abductees** told the BBC about their experiences on Saturday. One of them said: ‘I’ve had several encounters with alien craft and I’ve had an alien implant removed from my body.’
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/sci_tech/2003/denver_2003/2769875.stm)

A word in *-ee* conveys an impression of technicality and a detachment that might appear necessary in order to ensure a stable metalanguage:

- (20) After invasion, **invadee** retreaters (who took another seat) mainly took another seat in close proximity to the invader, suggesting perhaps nonverbal threat. (Gilda Moss Haber, ‘Territorial Invasion in the Classroom: Invadee Response.’ *Environment and Behavior*, v12 n1 p17-32 Mar 1980)

The derivation of lexemes with the suffix *-able* is also facilitated by specialisation which more specifically occurs with compounding or prefixation: *machine-readable*, *stir-fryable*, *re-writable*. Otherwise, an adjective such as *readable* needs qualitative elements to appear (a few examples from the *Guardian* 2000: **still** *readable*, *a*

powerful and readable book, **universally** readable drama, The **most** readable contemporary history to be written; **extremely** readable; a **very** readable traditional history; **highly** readable; **compulsively** readable).

The second subtype comprises formations that might be understood out of context but for which an explanation is given in the context to avoid any ambiguity. In (21) the word *murderee* is explained in the rest of the sentence with the term *victim*; in (22) the theme of the whole passage is *murder* (*women murdered by men; dead woman; her murder*) and the word *woman* appears as the starting point of a passive form (*women murdered by men*) making easy and immediate the interpretation of *murderee*:

- (21) I'm just trying to get used to the idea of Mary Kelly's make-over by Cabinet, from boring to interesting, when it turns out he means Mary Kelly, the nineteenth century **murderee**, one of Jack the Ripper's **victims**. (*Guardian* 2000)
- (22) A few weeks ago I related the story of the memorial, in an Ottawa public park, to 'women murdered by men,' which included the name of a dead woman whose husband was still awaiting trial for her murder. He, understandably, complained that this statement of his guilt, carved on a stone plinth (each alleged **murderee** has a separate mini-memorial by the central big one), was deeply prejudicial to his forthcoming trial. (*Guardian* 2000)

The suffixation in *-able* behaves in the same way, although the two suffixes cannot always be attached to the same stem. For instance, there are very few examples of *murderable* compared to the number of examples of *murderee*. The occurrences of *murderable* found in the corpus are always used in an ironic manner. In (23), the suffix is attached with a hyphen to signal its unconventional character:

- (23) Stealing Oreos from a pregnant woman?! That's quite nearly a **murder-able** offense.
(<http://mothergoosemouse.com/2007/10/18/do-not-mess-with-a-pregnant-womans-food/>)

The following occurrence shows the proximity perceived intuitively between the two lexemes and the passive:

- (24) 'No man,' said Birkin, 'cuts another man's throat unless he wants to cut it, and unless the other man wants it cutting. This is a complete truth. It takes two people to make a murder: a **murderer** and a **murderee**. And a **murderee** is a man who is **murderable**. And a man who is **murderable** is a man who in a profound if hidden lust desires **to be murdered**.' (D. H. Lawrence *Women in Love*, ch 2)

One of the effects of creating un-lexicalized derived lexemes is to bring focus on them, especially in headlines, for example: 'The Hijackee Syndrome' (*Time*

Magazine: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,918419,00.html>). Aronoff & Fudeman (2005: 220) have observed that ‘evidence of the value of novel words comes from the fact that novel words are more common in contexts where salience counts, such as advertising or journalism.’

There is also a playful element in non-technical neologisms (or formations felt to be neologisms). The suffix *-ee* is used in pseudo-scientific language:

- (25) It is important to note that a hug is a mutual thing and both parties benefit: the **huggee** from having a shoulder to cry/lean on, and the hugger in knowing that the huggee turned to them. (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A603668>)

As is the case for *-ee* suffixation (Barker [1998: 702] notices that ‘The suffixes *-ee* and *-er* often occur as a matched pair’), words in *-able* which are not immediately comprehensible often occur in an environment where another derived form from the same base also occurs, for example *murderous* in (26):

- (26) Space is a commodity that's in short premium. The characters cram and cramp the frames with their creaking contradictions. They're all **murderous** and '**murder-able**.' And they are constantly running in and out of a marooned motel where Ram Gopal Varma might have shot the sequel to Darna Manaa Hai if Deepak Tijori hadn't. (<http://sify.com/movies/bollywood/fullstory.php?id=13720346>)

The words in the third sub-type cannot be understood directly. As the corpus shows, the comprehension of a non-lexicalised form in *-ee* or *-able* is ensured by a construction embedded in the text. A facilitation process (or *frayage*,¹³ a text that ‘breaks a path’ to the form considered) is often implemented, thus allowing much leeway in creativity. The facilitation process can go as far as providing a metalinguistic explanation:

- (27) In Case 2, one tries to kiss more times than the other wants to – in such case, the **kissee (the one being kissed)** is one up on the kisser since it is now clear that they like the kissee more than the kissee likes them back. (Game Theory and Kissing in Brazil: <http://ucb-unido-brazil.blogspot.com/2004/06/game-theory-and-kissing-in-brazil.html>)

- (28) Sir Bernard was **appointed** chairman of Northern regional authority in 1985 by Norman Fowler, the then social services secretary. The choice of a known Tory **appointee** is likely to be seized on by the Labour party, which has campaigned vigorously over the proliferation of Tory supporters in key health service posts. (*Times* 91)

Another facilitation process is what might be called a ‘passive environment’ which I will define as a ‘chunk’ of text (a semantic unit) in which a somewhat high proportion of passive forms and passive suffixes occur (passive forms are in bold characters):

¹³ French.

- (29) Annual leave **creditable** to an **eligible returnee** who has not yet returned to Federal employment **shall be held** in abeyance **by the employing agency** that identified such **employee** until his or her return.
(http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2002/janqtr/pdf/5cfr630.1308.pdf)

In (29), the topic of the utterance is *returnee* and the agent either cannot be mentioned (*creditable, eligible, employee*) or is demoted (*the employing agency*). In the above text, all the words used are highly lexicalized as no lexical innovation is expected in military administrative documents. In the word *returnee*, the suffix encodes a validated event and not a passive form. In this case, we can assume that the proximity of the perfect (*having returned*) to the passive BE + V_{-past} participle and the fact that *-ee* can only be attached to a base with /+human/ semantic features might account for the possibility of creating a weakly productive pattern where the derived noun is an agent, e.g. *escapee, resignee, retiree, returnee*. Heyvaert (2006: 346) gives a list of 23 agentive *-ee* nominalizations. Her analysis of these forms is the following:

- (30) (...) the general impression of ‘passivity’ or ‘undergoerhood’ can be traced back to the fact that *-ee* nouns designate downstream entities which are depicted as finding themselves in a certain *state*. (...) This state is typically the final, resultant state of the nominalized verb being carried out (by the designated – agentive– entity or by some other entity). (Heyvaert, 2006: 361)

A third facilitation process is the use of correlatives. In many instances, the use of a word with the suffix *-ee* is triggered (or prepared) by the occurrence of a word in *-er*:

- (31) Only the **handshaker** animation is included because the **handshakee** does not work. This means that this animation is a bit misaligned when you cue two sims for it. (<http://www.decorgal.com/designs/download.php?view.192>)
- (32) The **sprayer** and **sprayee** both earned free rides to the cop shop, where sprayee was photographed for evidence and the alleged sprayer was booked on suspicion of violating Section 244 of the California Penal code, assault by acid or a disfiguring chemical. (www.berkeleydailyplanet.com/issue/2005-02-11/article/20714)

Barker (1998: 718) referring to *-ee* as correlative to *-er* writes: ‘Though it is clear that the presence of *-er* serves as a cue making use of an *-ee* form more likely, *-ee* is not simply the dual of *-er*.’ Having recourse to *-er* is one of the means to open a path and allow immediate understanding. As Barker (1998: 710) notes: ‘The clearest requirement that must be satisfied by an *-ee* noun is that its referent must be sentient.’ This entails that the common denominator between N-*-er* and N-*-ee* is that the noun must have the feature /+human/. Such a restriction does not hold for *-able* whose core semantic value is the expression of potentiality.

The fairly high proportion of correlates in *-ee/-er* highlights a particularly salient feature, namely the participants in the situation¹⁴:

- (33) This traditional way of doing things might best be called **caller**-control. You are the **callee**; why aren't you in charge of how you receive your communications? (<http://www.rocketvox.com/blog/?p=25>)

More than a passive orientation proper, or a denotation of 'passivity' or 'lack of control' on the part of the participant selected by the *-ee* derivation, the construction is focused on the second participant, who is treated as the end-point of the relation. This could explain why there is sometimes some hesitation with regard to the status of that participant. It is often considered as the end-point of a passive relation, but can be construed as 'receiver' (as is made apparent in 33). The participation in the event can be semantically evaluated as an active one, which could account for the interchangeability of the suffixes *-er* and *-ee* as in the case of *escaper/escapee*.

There are also formations by analogy, in which case, the 'correlatives' are formations on the same pattern. A lexicalized word in *-ee* opens a path for a neologism:

- (34) Receiving the special knowledge makes the **abductee** or **contactee** feel 'chosen' and the recipient therefore has a special connection to the aliens. (<http://www.ufoabduction.com/thinking11.htm>)

Several of the above-mentioned features can combine in *-ee*. In (35) the word *startee* is made interpretable, despite its non-passive use, by correlation, metalinguistic explanations and a further stabilisation with a quasi-adjectival use before the noun *thread*:

- (35) Interactions between threads take place between a **starter** thread (a thread that starts a parallel thread) and a **startee** thread (the thread that is started). (<http://www.cag.lcs.mit.edu/~rinard/paper/ppopp01.pdf>)

There are many examples in the corpus of an adjectival use of *-ee* nouns:

- (36) Bron takes fewer pains, and his command of insult is shakier. He reports, for example, of the **lower-class evacuee children** who shared his grandmother's house during the war, that 'from their heads fell curious shapes and substances, most particularly lice.' (*Times* 91)

Derived lexemes in *-ee* can have an adjectival quality, hence the possible value of a past participle indicating a 'disjoined state,' namely a state that has no longer a connexion with the event and that exists on its own. In (37) below, the relation with the underlying event and thus with the change of state is not as backgrounded as in

¹⁴ I use the term 'situation' as defined by Lyons (1977: 483): '[a term] that will cover states, on the one hand, and events, processes and actions, on the other. (...) We will draw a high level distinction between static and dynamic situations.'

the case of N-*ee*. The past participle *evacuated* occurs along with *displaced*, another verb in the past participle:

- (37) Caring for **evacuated children** housed in the Astrodome: creation and implementation of a mobile pediatric emergency response team: regionalized caring for **displaced** children after a disaster. (http://www.find-health-articles.com/rec_pub_16735278-caring-evacuated-children-housed-astrodome-creation-implementation.htm)

The verb *displace* can yield a noun in *-ee* and appear in administrative contexts where the ‘person displaced’ acquires a special status:

- (38) Urban Renewal **Displacee** shall mean persons displaced from the specific property and/or displaced from the relevant Urban Renewal Plan Area by clearance and redevelopment activities carried out by the Boston Redevelopment Authority.
(<http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra/affordhousing/AHPrefs.asp>)

5. Across grammatical categories: schematic forms.

At this point of the analysis, it appears that the suffixes *-ee* and *-able* are not governed by strict morphological rules. As we have pointed out, there is a possibility to form derived lexemes directly on non-verbal stems:

- (39) I am having trouble with the **imageable** area and the media area when I print my documents. The imageable area is smaller than the media area and cuts off what I am trying to print. How do I fix this problem? I am using InDesign CS2. Thanks.
(<http://www.justskins.com/forums/how-do-i-change-the-imageable-area-to-fit-themedia-area-when-printing-6575.html>)
- (40) ‘Not the gaffer, but the **gaffee**’ Forget about the gaffe, it's the media mindset that makes so much of gaffes that is the real issue, says Clive James.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7392935.stm

As we saw in (35) with the word *startee*, even an agentive verb such as *start* can be turned into a passive form. The suffix *-able* can make an intransitive verb enter a transitive pattern:

- (41) We have recently made the solarium into an additional family room, equipped with TV, stereo, DVD, VCR, etc. It also is home to a comfortable queen-sized **sleep sofa**. An additional air bed makes the home **sleepable** for 10.

In *the home [is] sleepable for 10*, no underlying object seems to be recoverable; the active “counterpart” would be *the home sleeps 10*.

But unless they become lexicalised, such words can only occur in contexts where no ambiguity is possible. There is then a great deal of morphological freedom:

the sofa is described as a *sleep sofa*, with zero conversion, when *sleepable* is available.

As with the passive, a verb with an indirect object can be ‘passivized’ with –ee, for example, *complaine*:

- (42) I’ve often wondered ‘what kind of person complains about ads?’ (...) She was a close friend of one of my close friends, and was far from the anorak wearing, hermit like, cat-keeping fiend that I had imagined a **complaine** to be.
(<http://www.madcomments.co.uk/i-actually-met-an-advert-complaine/>)

Syntactic constraints on the verb do not necessarily translate onto the derivation process, although the constraints serve as a frame helping to form prototypical occurrences. The semantic schematic form that can be identified for the suffixes overrides these constraints.

It therefore seems very difficult to predict the possibilities of derivation with the two suffixes examined. If we take a word such as *eat*, which is transitive and so involves two arguments, chances should be that it will be unproblematic to obtain words derived in –able. This hypothesis is however not supported by evidence from the corpus: there are no occurrences of *eatable* in *The Times* (1991) nor in *The Guardian* (2000), and 9 occurrences of *uneatable* in *The Times* (1991) and one in *The Guardian* (2000). There are however examples in the internet corpus, for example:

- (43) ‘Beginner Vegetables: are all yam leaves **eatable**?’
(<http://davesgarden.com/community/forums/t/906639/>)

The word *eatable* is in competition with *edible* and although recorded in the O.E.D. seems substandard to many speakers. On the other hand, the formation of the word *eatee* should be blocked as the object of *eat* is not human; *eatee* should not be able to refer to a thing eaten. However, it is still possible to build a context in which the word can receive an interpretation, a reference to an animal for instance: ‘Nature’s Sytem: The Eater and The Eatee.’

(<http://ethunter1.blogspot.com/2007/04/natures-eater-and-eatee.html>).

In the same vein, complex formations such as *throw-out-able* can be found in the corpus:

- (44) When the shirts become too stained to wear in good company, but not so stained that they’re **throw-out-able**, they then become ‘gym shirts.’
(<http://shewalks.blogspot.com/2007/05/i-knit-therefore-i-am-lie.html>)
- (45) Re: Getting kicked out my house. (...) It doesn’t seem a **very throw-out-able offence**, though we don’t know the full situation.
(<http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=435324>)

There are few constraints on morphological processes; lexical creativity seems limitless and it is impossible to define strict blocking criteria. The schematic form (which is a bundle of abstract features) for –ee can be represented by the following features: + human (nature of the base), + passive (orientation - end-point of

relation), + transitive (underlying verb) and *-able*: + passive (orientation – end-point of relation), + potential, + transitive (underlying verb). The form only registers prototypical properties and does not exclude variations; but even in its ‘active’ sense, derived lexemes in *-ee* retain the feature ‘end-point’ (*receivee*, for example).

Conclusion

The common schematic form of *-ee* and *-able* seems to be the orientation of the underlying predicative relation that can be postulated from the construction of the verb the forms are derived from. The orientation is the reverse of the relation built by the active voice.

The creation of a lexical unit does not necessarily follow a rigid pattern. There is a prototypical construction (derivation from a transitive verb) and from this pattern, other syntactic and semantic patterns can be made by analogy. It is then left to the co-speaker to decipher the information given and come up with the right interpretation. There are in fact very few constraints on the derivational process. In the formation of words such as *biographicable* (where no underlying verb exists) the semantics of a transitive verb is mapped onto a noun. We can therefore say that semantics overrides syntax in such cases so that the most salient features, passivity and potentiality, can be constructed. However, forms that are further from the prototypical pattern will tend to have lower productivity (*returnee* for example).

Thus ‘passive suffixes’ *-ee* and *-able* seem to be two strategies for encoding the passive voice. The semantic core value of the suffix *-able* is the expression of the potential and that of *-ee* the marking of a human referent. There are also variations, tendencies, privileged associations that will add meaning according to the different contexts.

The use of these two suffixes borrowed from French also shows the capacity of English to adopt a grammatical element and then adapt it, give it flexibility and still retain a core meaning from its origins.

Once a derived word is produced, it has to be understandable. If the word is not highly lexicalised, then it is necessary to build a context, to open a path in order to facilitate comprehension.

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