

# Expressive Agreement in Italian

## **M.A. Thesis**

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# 1 Introduction

In this paper, I am going to introduce a novel binominal construction from Italian, which I will dub the *cazzo-of-N* construction. An example is given in (1).<sup>1</sup>

- (1) Prometti=mi di non usar=le mai più [quest-e cazz-o di  
promise.IMP=me C not use=it.F.PL never more this-F.PL EXPR-M.SG of  
forbici ]!  
scissors.F.PL  
'Promise me never to use these fucking scissors again!'

In this construction, the first noun ( $N_1$ ) is an expressive in the sense of Potts (2007): it expresses an emphatic attitude by the speaker towards the second noun of the construction ( $N_2$ ) as well as towards the situation as a whole at the moment of utterance. In this paper, I am going to show that the *cazzo-of-N* construction differs morpho-syntactically in many respects from other binominal constructions. In particular, I am going to focus on the construction's agreement pattern, which poses a theoretical challenge to a conception of syntax where all co-variation of features, including the co-variation of features on nouns and determiners, is modelled in terms of the operation Agree (Chomsky, 2000, 2001). The *cazzo-of-N*'s agreement pattern is such that the determiner agrees with the  $N_2$  rather than with the  $N_1$ , even though the  $N_1$  appears to be closer. Such a configuration stands in clear violation of Minimality, the locality constraint on the search space of Agree and Internal Merge (cf. Chomsky, 1995, 2000, 2001). In defence of this, I am going to argue that there is evidence that suggests that  $N_1$  is structurally very small, just a head, and that consequently, when it is internally merged at some point of the derivation, instead of merging in a specifier position, it merges directly with the attracting head. As a consequence, it incorporates syntactically and becomes inaccessible for further computation. In particular, D will probe past the  $N_1$  and agree with  $N_2$ . As an alternative I am going to propose that the  $N_1$  is a nominal root/head which merges with a functional head, Expr(essive), which has the function of deriving the special semantic type of expressive expressions. Consequently, in this approach,  $N_1$  is no longer the closest goal to D given that (i) closeness is defined in terms of asymmetric c-command between potential goals and (ii) that  $N_1$  cannot c-command  $N_2$  if it is embedded inside an ExprP.

The paper is organised as follows. In section 2, I am going to give a general overview of the *cazzo-of-N* construction: I am going to introduce the construction in section 2.1, show why it is interesting from the point of view of Agreement in section 2.2, describe

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<sup>1</sup>The abbreviations used in this paper are the following: 1 'first person', 2 'second person', 3 'third person', ACC 'accusative', AUG 'augmentative', CL 'clitic', DAT 'dative', DIM 'diminutive', EXPR 'expressive', F 'feminine', FUT 'future', IMP 'imperative', M 'masculine', NOM 'nominative', PART 'partitive', PEJ 'pejorative', PL 'plural', REFL 'reflexive clitic', SG 'singular'.

the construction's distribution in 2.3, and provide a semantic description of expressives and the construction's  $N_1$  in section 2.4. In section 3, I am going to give a review of previous accounts of closely related binominal constructions: in section 3.1 van Riemsdijk's (1998) monoprojectional treatment of  $N_1$  in terms of semi-functional nouns, in section 3.2 den Dikken's (2006) small clause analyses of the various Qualitative Binominal NP constructions and in section 3.3 an analysis by Español-Echevarria (1998) of certain  $N_1$ s as to be containing silent *pros*. In section 4, I will move towards an analysis, narrowing down logical possibilities. This section is divided in two parts. In section 4.1, two hypotheses will be entertained where the agreement between the determiner and  $N_2$  results from a local and minimal configuration at some point of the derivation. In section 4.2 the hypothesis is entertained that the  $N_1$  is deficient in some sense that lets the determiner probe past it. In section 5, two analyses will be proposed and discussed. The first, in section 5.1, will be based on the idea that the  $N_1$  is not accessible by Agree because it has incorporated into another head via head movement. The second analysis, in section 5.3, will build on the idea that the  $N_1$  is first merged with another head and that, as a consequence, it is too deeply embedded to intervene between the determiner and  $N_2$ . In section 5.5, I compare the two analyses. In section A I show some additional properties of the *cazzo-of-N* construction, namely its co-occurrence with other binominals and with adjectives. In section 6 I draw my conclusions.

## 2 Italian Expressive Agreement

### 2.1 The *Cazzo-of-N* Construction

The empirical domain that this paper will focus on is an Italian binominal construction which will be dubbed the *cazzo-of-N* construction. An example is given in (2).<sup>2</sup> This construction has not been described or analysed before to the best of my knowledge.

- (2) Con [questo cazzo di sole], oggi, non si vede proprio niente.  
 with this CAZZO of sun today not one sees really nothing  
 'You can really not see a thing with this fucking sun today.'

The literal meaning of *cazzo* is a vulgar term for 'penis', though it can be used in many other ways, similar to the usage of English *fuck* and *fucking*, with the main difference being that it maintains its nominal morphosyntax throughout. The other usages include,

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<sup>2</sup>Where not otherwise indicated, examples and judgements will be my own. I am native speaker of Italian. My Italian can be located on all linguistic levels in the south of Tuscany, the Tuscan Maremma, where my generation speaks a variety strongly adapted to the Tuscan regional standard with occasional influences from the neighbouring Roman dialects. In most examples, I will abstract away from irrelevant morpho-phonological differences between the written language and the variety I speak.

but are probably not restricted to its use as a negative polarity item (NPI) as in (3-a), a plain interjection as in (3-b),<sup>3</sup> an addition to *wh*-words as in (3-c), or a stem for other words as in (3-d,e,f).

- (3) a. Non ho fatto un cazzo oggi.  
not have.1SG done a CAZZO today  
'I have done fuck all/nothing today.'
- b. Ma mi lasci in pace, cazzo!?  
but me leave.2SG in peace, CAZZO  
'Fuck! Will you just leave me alone?!'
- c. Ma dove cazzo vai?!  
but where the.fuck go.2SG  
'Where the fuck are you going?!'
- d. Hai fatto una bella cazz-ata!  
have.2SG done a beautiful CAZZO-EVENT  
'You really fucked up!'
- e. Non lo invitare più quel cazz-one!  
not him invite.IMP anymore that CAZZO-AUG  
'Don't invite him anymore, that fucker!'
- f. Mi passi quel cazz-ett-ino lì per favore?  
me.DAT pass.2SG that CAZZO-DIM-DIM there please  
'Would you pass me that thingy/little doofer please?'

The meaning of *cazzo* in the *cazzo-of-N* construction is that of an *expressive* in the sense of Potts (2007), loosely corresponding to an emphatic attitude by the speaker with the expression that follows it, but also with the situation as a whole. The attitude can be either negative or positive and range from anger to amazement. In this paper, I will focus on a purely morpho-syntactic aspect of this construction, namely its agreement pattern. The determiner of the whole DP agrees with the other nominal (henceforth  $N_2$ ), rather than with *cazzo*. The  $\phi$ -features of *cazzo* are masculine singular, so the pattern becomes obvious when the  $\phi$ -features of the  $N_2$  are different. This can be seen for feminine singular in (4-a), feminine plural in (4-b) and masculine plural in (4-c).

- (4) a. Prometti=mi di non usar=la mai più [quest-a cazz-o di  
promise.IMP=me C not use=it.F.SG never more this-F.SG EXPR-M.SG of  
rob-a ]!  
stuff-F.SG  
'Promise me never to use that fucking stuff again!'
- b. Prometti=mi di non usar=le mai più [quest-e cazz-o di  
promise.IMP=me C not use=it.F.PL never more this-F.PL EXPR-M.SG of

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<sup>3</sup>See, e.g., Poggi (2009).

- forbici            ]!  
 scissors.F.PL  
 ‘Promise me never to use these fucking scissors again!’
- c. Prometti=mi        di non usar=li        mai più [quest-i    cazz-o        di  
 promise.IMP=me C not use=it.M.PL never more this-M.PL EXPR-M.SG of  
 coltell-i        ]!  
 knife-M.PL  
 ‘Promise me never to use these fucking knives again!’

## 2.2 The Problematic Agreement Pattern

### 2.2.1 Architectural Considerations

There are mainly two reasons why this agreement pattern should be surprising. The first is theoretical. In a minimalist conception of grammar, syntactic structure is built in a bottom-up derivation by the operations Merge and Agree (Chomsky, 1995, 2000, 2001). These two operations are driven by the need for syntactic objects to compute certain features before the end of the derivation. They are also constrained, however, by locality restrictions that reduce the search space. The relevant locality restriction here is *minimality* as defined in Chomsky (1995) in terms of the *Minimal Link Condition* (MLC) in (5).<sup>4</sup> *Closeness* in the MLC is defined in terms of closest c-command.

- (5) *Minimal Link Condition* (Chomsky, 1995: 311)  
 K attracts  $\alpha$  only if there is no  $\beta$ ,  $\beta$  closer to K than  $\alpha$ , such that K attracts  $\beta$ .

The later introduced operation Agree is restricted by the same kind of search-space locality. This can be seen in the definition provided by Zeijlstra (2012) in (6) (cf. Chomsky, 2000: 122–123).<sup>5</sup> Closeness is defined as follows in (7) (cf. Chomsky, 2000: 122).

- (6) *Agree*  
 $\alpha$  can agree with  $\beta$  iff:
- a.  $\alpha$  carries at least one unvalued and uninterpretable feature and  $\beta$  carries a matching interpretable and valued feature.
  - b.  $\alpha$  c-commands  $\beta$

<sup>4</sup>Precursors of this type of locality date back to the *Minimal Distance Principle* by Rosenbaum (1967), various definitions of *Barriers* (Chomsky, 1981, 1986) and Rizzi’s (1990) *Generalised Minimality*.

<sup>5</sup>The relevance of (7-a) (often termed the *Activity Condition*) within the DP will be mainly ignored in this paper. The problem in Italian is that it is not clear what unvalued feature Ns should have for them to be an active and thus a visible goal for  $\phi$ -probing by D since no such features are realised overtly in the language. For explicitness’ sake, it can be assumed that Ns as well as Ds in Italian carry an unvalued syntactic case feature, even though it is only realised overtly on pronouns (Ds). This would parallel languages such as German, where such an assumption must be made in order to have both Ns and Ds realise case morphologically.

- c.  $\beta$  is the closest goal to  $\alpha$
- d.  $\beta$  bears an unvalued uninterpretable feature.

(7) A matching feature  $G$  is closest to  $P$  if there is no  $G'$  in the c-command domain of  $P$  such that  $G$  is in the c-command domain of  $G'$ .

Generally, this means that, in a feature-driven derivational model of syntax where co-variation of features is treated as Agree-relations, Agreement between Ds and Ns should be modelled in terms of an Agree probe on D searching for some matching features on N. On such a view, in the structure in (8), (8-a) is the expected outcome because  $N_1$  is the minimally closest noun. (8-b), on the other hand, is ruled out because D c-commands  $N_1$ , which asymmetrically c-commands  $N_2$  and bears the same matching features.<sup>6</sup> In such cases  $N_1$  is said to intervene, or act as an intervener.

- (8) [DP D [XP N<sub>1</sub> [X' X N<sub>2</sub> ]]]
- a. [DP D[\* $\alpha$ \*:ab] [ N<sub>1</sub>[\mathbf{\alpha}:ab] ] [XP X N<sub>2</sub>[\mathbf{\alpha}:cd]]]
  - b. \*[DP D[\* $\alpha$ \*:cd] [ N<sub>1</sub>[\mathbf{\alpha}:ab] ] [XP X N<sub>2</sub>[\mathbf{\alpha}:cd]]]

However, the *cazzo-of-N* construction seems to exhibit exactly the illicit Agreement pattern in (8-b). In fact, given a naive interpretation of the element *di* ‘of’ in (9-a), *cazzo*, which has masculine singular  $\phi$ -features, should be in a position c-commanding the  $N_2$  *mosche* ‘flies’. Yet, the determiner probes across *cazzo* and is valued with the  $N_2$ ’s feminine plural  $\phi$ -features in violation of minimality.<sup>7</sup> Thus, (9-a) can be formalised as in (9-b), where I remain silent on the category of *di* ‘of’ for now.

- (9) a. l-e        cazz-o        di mosch-e  
           the-F.PL    EXPR-M.SG    of fly-F.PL  
           ‘The fucking flies’
- b. [DP D[\* $\phi$ \*:f,pl] [ *cazzo*<sub>[\mathbf{\phi}:m,sg]</sub> ] [XP X N<sub>2</sub>[\mathbf{\phi}:f,pl]]]

The second reason is an empirical one, based on parallels to other constructions. There are at least three bi-nominal constructions in Italian, which have the structure D-N-of-N, and in which the agreement pattern is not standard. In none of the three, however, does

<sup>6</sup>To avoid the distinction between uninterpretable vs. interpretable features made in Chomsky (2000), I will follow the Leipzig notation for structure-building features (cf. Heck and Müller, 2007): [\*F\*] is a probe feature that triggers Agree, [•F•] is a feature triggering (internal or external) Merge.

<sup>7</sup>Italian has two numbers, singular and plural, and two genders, masculine and feminine, the latter mapping onto various inflectional classes (see e.g. Acquaviva, 2009). The ‘normal’ nominal concord pattern is that all adjectives, quantifiers and determiners agree with the closest noun, as e.g. shown in (i).

- (i) [tutt-i    que-i    nuov-i    student-i    [di matematic-a]]  
       all-M.PL    that.M.PL    new-M.PL    student-M.PL    of    mathematics-F.SG

D agree with the  $N_2$ . The three constructions are the Qualitative Binominal NP (QBNP) construction, also known as the *N-of-an-N* construction (Napoli, 1989; Kayne, 1994; den Dikken, 1998; Bennis et al., 1998; den Dikken, 2006), the *Pseudopartitive* construction (Jackendoff, 1977; van Riemsdijk, 1998, 2005; Vos, 1999) and the use of certain NPIs (the literature given here is only a small subset of the existing work on these constructions).

### 2.2.2 The Qualitative Binominal NP

The QBNP construction can be characterised as a binominal in which the first noun ( $N_1$ ) is a noun used with a predicative function, and the second noun ( $N_2$ ) is the subject of this predicate. A typical example from Napoli (1989) is the one in (10-a). Two meanings are possible here, one attributive and one comparative. The comparative meaning is such that the doctor one is referring to is an idiot. In the attributive, the doctor is judged as an idiot for a doctor, not generally as a person. The possibility of having a second determiner is a reliable test to distinguish between the two variants in Italian, cf. (10-bc).<sup>8</sup>

- (10) a. that idiot of a doctor.  
 b. quell' ignorante di dottore (Attributive)  
 that ignoramus of doctor  
 c. quell' ignorante del dottore (Comparative)  
 that ignoramus of.the doctor

The sense in which the agreement pattern of this construction is not standard – as would be typical for a noun with a thematic complement, e.g. – is that the  $\phi$ -features of the  $N_1$  are at least partially determined by the  $N_2$ . When the  $N_2$  is plural, also the predicate  $N_1$  must be plural. So in terms of number, the two nouns must co-vary. Ultimately, however, the determiner of the whole nominal expression agrees with the predicate and not the  $N_2$ . This can be seen in the Italian example in (11-a).

- (11) a. que-i fior-i di ragazz-e  
 that-M.PL flowers-M.PL of girls-F.PL  
 b. quell-a cretin-a de-ll-a dottor-essa  
 that-F.SG idiot-F.SG of-the-F.SG doctor-F.SG

*Ragazze* ‘girls’ is plural, so also *fiori* ‘flowers’ must be plural. The  $N_2$  is also feminine, but the determiner *quei* ‘those’ is masculine (and plural) as the closer predicate  $N_1$ . With nouns for which gender is interpretable and which exist in both feminine and masculine,

<sup>8</sup>See den Dikken (2006: 163–164) for other differences between the attributive and the comparative QBNP constructions, for which Den Dikken proposes two different syntactic representations.

also gender must agree with the N<sub>2</sub>, cf. (11-b). This pattern contrasts with the *cazzo-of-N* construction, where the N<sub>1</sub> and the N<sub>2</sub> do not co-vary and D agrees with the N<sub>2</sub>.

### 2.2.3 Pseudopartitives

The *Pseudopartitive* construction is a binominal in which the N<sub>1</sub> denotes a quantity in some more or less functional way. English examples include *a lot of*, *a handful of* and *a glass of*. What makes this construction interesting from the point of view of agreement is that elements outside of the DP, a verb for instance, can sometimes agree with the N<sub>2</sub>, also a putative violation of minimality. The precise analyses that have been proposed will not be discussed here (but see Alexiadou et al., 2007: part III, chapter 2 for discussion). It is important to notice that regardless of whether an outside element can agree with the N<sub>2</sub>, as is the case with *sacco* ‘bag’ in (12-a), or whether it cannot, as is the case with *mare* ‘sea’ in (12-b), agreement inside of the DP conforms to minimality. The determiner of the whole expression will invariably agree with the closest noun, i.e. the pseudopartitive N<sub>1</sub>. Again, with the *cazzo-of-N* construction D invariably agrees with the N<sub>2</sub>.

- (12) a. C’ è venut-a/\*-o un/\*un-a sacco di gente  
 there is come-F.SG/\*-M.SG a.M.SG/a-F.SG bag.M.SG of people.F.SG  
 ‘A lot of people came.’
- b. C’ è venut-o/\*-a un mare di gente.  
 there is come-M.SG/\*-F.SG a.M.SG sea.M.SG of people.F.SG

### 2.2.4 Negative Polarity Items

*Cazzo* can also be used as an NPI, with the meaning of ‘nothing’ or ‘no’ when under the scope of negation. These elements also occur in front of the complex formed by prepositional *di* plus NP. An example is provided in (13). Here it can be seen that the past participle cannot agree with the feminine noun *gente* ‘people’. Rather, it seems that the participle agrees with the NPI as they are both masculine and singular.

- (13) Non c’ è venut-o/\*-a un/\*un-a cazz-o di gente.  
 not there is come-M.SG/\*F.SG a.M.SG/\*a-F.SG CAZZO-M.SG of people.F.SG  
 ‘Nobody came (there).’

A closer look at the minimal pair in (14) indicates that the  $\phi$ -features on the participle might be masculine and singular by default, rather than by agreement. So in (14-a) the participle might either agree with the object, or remain masculine as per default.<sup>9</sup> In

<sup>9</sup>My intuition is that in (13-a) the participle agrees with *casa* when there is one specific house which was not seen, while it is default when the object is generic.

(14-b) it has to remain masculine, else *sega* lit. ‘saw’ would be interpreted in its original meaning, rather than as an NPI expressing ‘nothing’.

- (14) a. Non s’ è vist-a/o un-a cas-a per chilometri.  
 not one is seen-F.SG/M.SG a-F.SG house-F.SG for kilometres  
 ‘We haven’t seen any houses for kilometres.’
- b. Non s’ è vist-o/\*a un-a seg-a per chilometri.  
 not one is seen-M.SG/\*F.SG a-F.SG saw-F.SG for kilometres  
 ‘We haven’t seen a thing for kilometres.’

It cannot be decided here, however, whether the agreement in (13) is default or determined by *cazzo* as a proper minimal pair would require *sega* in (14-b) to take a complement of which it denotes the cardinality of  $|0|$ . I am not aware, however, of a feminine variant of *cazzo* that can be used in the same structure.

Regardless of whether the agreement between the participle and the NPI-headed nominal is quirky in any way, the determiner always agrees with the NPI, the closest noun, just as expected. Again, this is different from the agreement pattern exhibited by the *cazzo-of-N* construction where the determiner agrees with the non-minimally closest N following *cazzo*.

### 2.3 Distribution of *Cazzo-of-N*

The construction, forming a DP, can occur in all positions where normal DPs can. It can surface in subject position (15-a), in object position (15-b), as the complement of a preposition (15-c), in coordination (15-d), as an adjunct (15-e).

- (15) a. [Quella cazzo di macchina] viaggia davvero un botto.  
 that Expr of car travels really an explosion  
 ‘That fucking car goes really really fast.’
- b. Togli=mi [quelle cazzo di mani] di dosso!  
 take.off.IMP=me.DAT those Expr of hands from body  
 ‘Take off those fucking hands (of yours) from me!’
- c. Non viaggierò mai più con [quella cazzo di compagnia aerea]!  
 not travel.FUT.1SG ever more with that Expr of airline  
 ‘I will never ever travel with that fucking airline!’
- d. Per colazione c’erano solo dei cazzo di biscotti e delle (cazzo di)  
 for breakfast there were only some Expr of biscuits and some Expr of  
 banane.  
 bananas  
 ‘There were only some fucking biscuits and some (fucking) bananas for  
 breakfast.’

- e. Il tuo amico mangia carciofi ogni cazzo di giorno.  
 the your friend eats artichokes every EXPR of day  
 ‘Your friend eats artichokes every fucking day.’

Equally, it can occur in several landing sites of movement, such as clitic right dislocation (16-a), topicalisation (16-b) or *wh*-movement, cf. (16-c).

- (16) a. L’ho comprato  $t_i$  per te [quel cazzo di troiaio] $_i$ !  
 it have.1SG bought for you that EXPR of shitty.thing  
 ‘I bought it for you, that fucking shit!’
- b. [Quella cazzo di macchina] non la guido di sicuro  
 that EXPR of car not it drive.1SG certainly  
 ‘As for that fucking car, I am certainly not going to drive it.’
- c. [Che cazzo di macchina] hai detto che vuoi?  
 what EXPR of car have.2SG said that want.2SG  
 ‘(Intended lit.) Which fucking car did you say you wanted?’

Finally, the construction can also function as a predicate in a copular clause, given the right context. For instance, if the question in (17-a) is asked, and it is perceived as a stupid question to ask (because the answer is obvious, for example), the answer in (17-b) can be uttered, repeating the obvious and adding the expressive to convey annoyance. This is very similar to English, in fact.

- (17) a. Q: Ma è una banana questa?  
 but is a banana this  
 ‘Is this a banana?’
- b. A: Sì, è una cazzo di banana! (... ma sei scemo?!)  
 yes is a EXPR of banana but be.2SG stupid  
 ‘Yes, it’s a fucking banana! (... Are you stupid or what?!)’

In addition, the *cazzo-of-N* binominal can occur without the indefinite article as the predicate of an exclamative copular clause. This is shown in (18).

- (18) [Cazzo di cretino] che non sei altro!  
 EXPR of idiot that not be.2SG other  
 ‘What a fucking idiot you are!’

It can be concluded that the *cazzo-of-N* construction has a nominal distribution similar to that of a DP, but also to that of a nominal constituent lacking the D-layer, an NP or a NumP.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup>For discussion of projections in the DP the reader is referred to Alexiadou et al. (2007: part II, chapter 3).

## 2.4 Meaning of Expressive *Cazzo*

This section will give an overview of the meaning of expressives in general and of the expressive use of *cazzo* in the *cazzo-of-N* construction in particular. Potts (2007) will serve as the guiding reference. In this paper, Potts names the following as the characterising properties of expressives: *independence*, *nondisplaceability*, *perspective dependence*, *descriptive ineffability*, *immediacy* and *repeatability*. I will illustrate these properties one by one with reference to *cazzo*. Before doing so, it should be mentioned that *cazzo* generally parallels more with the expressive *damn* rather than with the expressive *bastard*, for which other nouns would be used. These nouns, exhibit the agreement pattern mentioned for the QBNP construction (as in *quella merda di Kresge* ‘that.F-shit.F-of-Kresge’).

### 2.4.1 Independence

Potts defines *independence* as the property that “we can change or remove the expressive content of a phrase without affecting its descriptive content” (Potts, 2005: sect. 3.6.3). This can be illustrated for English *that bastard* in (19-a) and for *cazzo* in the example in (18-b), repeated here as (19-b). The descriptive contents remain the same. In (19-a) it remains that the guy Kresge is famous, irrespective of the fact that the speaker believes he is a bastard, and in (19-b) it remains that what the speaker is referring to is a banana, irrespective of the speaker’s expression of annoyance with *cazzo*.

- (19) a. That bastard Kresge is famous.  
b. A: Sì, è una cazzo di banana! (... ma sei scemo?!)  
yes is a EXPR of banana but be.2SG stupid  
‘Yes, it’s a fucking banana! (... Are you stupid or what?!)’

### 2.4.2 Nondisplaceability

The property of *nondisplaceability* is that “[e]xpressives cannot (outside of direct quotation) be used to report on past events, attitudes, or emotions, nor can they express mere possibilities, conjectures, or suppositions”, i.e. expressive meaning is only valid for the utterer at the time and place of utterance (Potts 2007: 169 with reference to Cruse 1986). A relevant example directly translated into Italian with *cazzo* is (20). What is interesting about (20) is that one would expect it to assert “that the speaker pours wine in *s*, the bottle in *s* drips in *s* and the speaker is in a heightened emotional state in *s*” (Potts, 2007: 171). However, the meaning one gets from (20) is one where the speaker is in a heightened emotional state right the minute when (20) is uttered. This is not consistent with the meaning given above, since the speaker might not be pouring any wine when uttering (20).

- (20) Ogni volta che verso del vino, la cazzo di bottiglia gocciola.  
 every time that pour.1SG PART wine the EXPR of bottle drips  
 ‘Whenever I pour wine, the damn bottle drips.’

### 2.4.3 Perspective dependence

As already mentioned, expressives denote perspectives toward a given situation at the moment of utterance. Mostly, it is the speaker’s perspective, as in (20)-(19). It can, however, also shift to somebody else’s perspective if the content and the context are right to make that holder (or *judge*) salient enough. Consider for example (21) (Potts 2007: 172, citing Kratzer 1999).

- (21) My father screamed that he would never allow me to marry that bastard Webster.

In (21), the negative perspective/emotion toward Webster is held by the father of the utterer rather than by the utterer herself. In other contexts, however, such a shift is impossible, indicating that the shift of perspective with expressives is limited. The same property can be found with *cazzo* in (22), where the negative perspective is that of *Il mi babbo* ‘my dad’ rather than that of the speaker. In fact, the speaker need not be in an emotionally heightened state at the moment of utterance here. It is the speaker’s father that was in an emotionally heightened state at the moment of the reported speech.

- (22) Il mi babbo m’ ha detto di non giocare=ci più con quei cazzo di  
 the my dad me has told C not play=with anymore with those EXPR of  
 canacci del vicino.  
 dogs.PEJ of.the neighbour  
 ‘My dad has told me not to play with the neighbour’s fucking dogs anymore.’

Potts proposes to encode this property of expressives directly into the denotation of the expressives themselves, by adding a *judge* argument  $c_J$  to the contextual tuple (with a speaker, a time, a location and a world).<sup>11</sup> Potts provides (23) as a first approximation of the perspective dependence (p. 175). The same definition can be extended to *cazzo* in the *cazzo-of-N* construction, with the addition that  $c_J$  may regard  $d$  not only negatively, but also (extremely) positively (which most likely extends to *damn* as well).

- (23) In a context  $c$ , an utterance of *damn* with the entity  $d$  as its semantic argument creates a context  $c'$  that is just like  $c$  except that it registers that  $c_J$  regards  $d$  negatively somehow.

<sup>11</sup>On the notion of *contextual judge*, see Lasersohn (2005).

#### 2.4.4 Descriptive ineffability

The descriptive ineffability of expressives becomes obvious when one tries to give a propositional paraphrase of them. Potts takes *bastard* as an example again, for which someone had claimed in an interview, that ‘vile contemptible person’ is the exact expressive meaning. Even though it is close, it is still far away, Potts notes, as it does not capture the affectionate use as in (24-a), and it restricts to humans, which is false in (24-b) (p. 176–177). The same difficulties can be found with *cazzo* (see example (15-a) for positive amazement).

- (24) a. Here’s To You, Ya Bastard!  
b. So my story begins with my X-Box [...] Unfortunately, the bastard won’t open. This is a problem.

#### 2.4.5 Immediacy

Potts claims that the following connection between honorifics and speech acts can be extended to expressives.

- (25) “expressions such as commands, prohibitions, or wishes clearly establish a relationship with the interlocutor, and hence should be treated from the attitudinal viewpoint [ just like honorifics]” (Tsujiura, 1978: 223)

This means that, just as the speaker of (26-a) commits to washing the dishes the moment he utters the sentence, the utterer of (26-b) commits to his negative attitude towards Kresge the moment he utters it. It follows from this immediacy that these commitments/attitudes cannot be revoked, hence the infelicity of the continuations which cannot undo the commitments (p. 180, example (26-a) from Searle 1969: 3).

- (26) a. I promise that I will wash the dishes later. (#But I made no promise that I’ll do it.)  
b. That bastard Kresge was late for work yesterday. (#But he’s no bastard today, because today he was on time.)

To show this property for *cazzo* one has to formulate the continuation in (26-b) somewhat differently. The problem is that when *cazzo* is inserted into a DP that is the predicate of a copular clause, the meaning is different from that when it is inserted into the subject DP, hence the ‘#’ sign at the beginning of (27-a) as it makes no sense as a whole. Similar problems should result from trying to apply the same test to English *damn* as can be seen from the still unacceptable translation. This might be fixed by reformulating the continuation from ‘be’ to ‘refer to as’, as in (27-b).

- (27) a. #Il tuo cazzo di cane mi ha morso ieri. (Ma oggi non è un cazzo  
 the your EXPR of dog me has bitten yesterday but today not is a EXPR  
 di cane perché è stato bravo oggi.)  
 of dog because is been good today  
 ‘# Your damn dog bit me yesterday. (But he’s no damn dog today because  
 he behaved today.)
- b. Il tuo cazzo di cane mi ha morso ieri. (# Ma oggi non lo  
 the your EXPR of dog me has bitten yesterday but today not it  
 chiamerei più un cazzo di cane perché è stato bravo oggi.)  
 call more a EXPR of dog because is been good today  
 ‘Your damn dog bit me yesterday. (But today I would not refer to him as a  
 damn dog because he behaved today.)

### 2.4.6 Repeatability

Finally, the repeatability of expressives is easily illustrated. Potts refers to the contrast between (28-a) and (28-b) (adapted from p. 182). The difference is that the expressive in (28-a) can be repeated numerous times in different positions of the clause. The addition of more *damns* simply expresses increasing heightening of the speaker’s emotional state. The same effect cannot be achieved with propositional content such as *i’m angry* in (28-b). This property extends to *cazzo*, which can be repeated just like *damn*, cf. (29). I want to add the point, here, that in this respect *cazzo* and *damn* differ from *bastard* or Italian *bastardo* which are not repeatable in the same way.<sup>12</sup>

- (28) a. Damn, I left my damn keys in the damn car.  
 b. #I’m angry! I forgot my keys. I’m angry! They are in my car. I’m angry!
- (29) Cazzo, ho lasciato le mie cazzo di chiavi nella mia cazzo di macchina.  
 EXPR have.1SG left the my EXPR of keys in.the my EXPR of car

## 3 Previous Accounts of Binominals

Since the *cazzo-of-N* construction is new in the literature, there are no previous analyses of this phenomenon. In this section I will give a review of two lines of argumentation that have been proposed for binominal constructions. One, which will be represented by van Riemsdijk (1998), is the mono-projectional approach, where the  $N_1$ s of these constructions are analysed as a (semi-)functional category. The other will be represented by den Dikken (1998, 2006) and argues for an approach where the two nouns are first

<sup>12</sup>Also, *bastardo* patterns morpho-syntactically with the QBNP rather than with the *cazzo-of-N* construction which can be taken to indicate that they should be teased apart. See also footnote 23 for the same point about the word-order inverse of the *cazzo-of-N*.

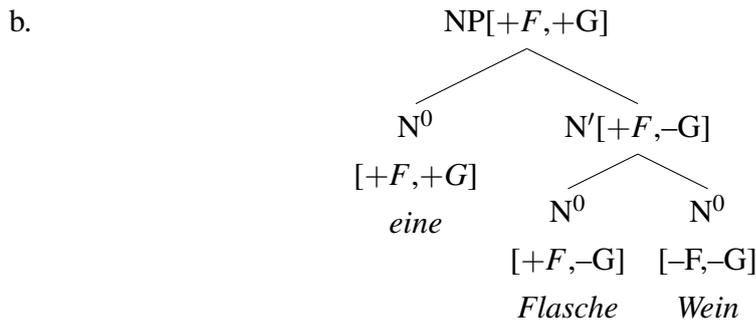
merged together in a small clause in which one noun is the predicate and the other the subject.

In addition, a third approach to account for a similar agreement pattern in Spanish will be reviewed. I will relate these approaches to the *cazzo-of-N* construction.

### 3.1 Van Riemsdijk (1998) and the Monoprojectional Approach

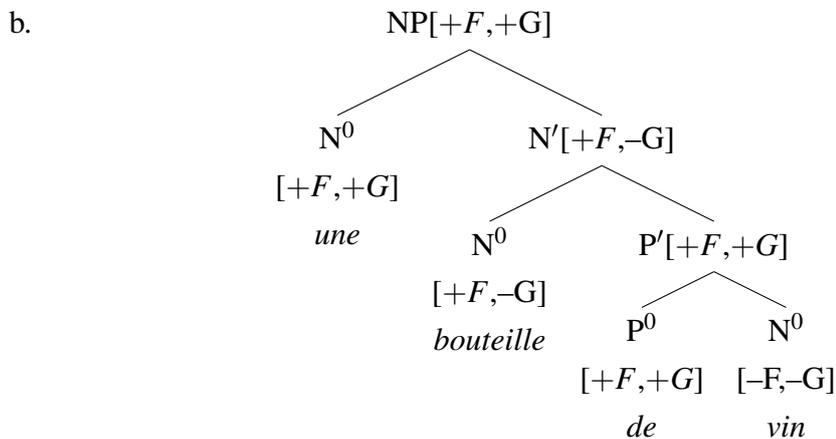
In van Riemsdijk (1998), a system is developed where a number of binominal constructions are analysed as single extended projections of one lexical noun. Hence Alexiadou et al. (2007) refer to this as a monoprojectional approach. The  $N_1$  of a pseudopartitive, for instance, is analysed as a semi-functional noun extending the projection of the lexical noun of which it denotes a quantity. This is implemented by (i) developing a feature system that encodes different degrees of functionality, and (ii) postulating a condition that restricts dominance relations between categories of one extended projection. The two binary features proposed are  $[\pm F(\text{unctional})]$  and  $[\pm G(\text{rammatical})]$ . Lexical nouns are  $[-F, -G]$  and functional elements are  $[+F, +G]$ . This leaves room for two semi-functional/semi-lexical categories  $[+F, -G]$  and  $[-F, +G]$ . In addition, van Riemsdijk (1998: 4) assumes that “in the unmarked case the lexical head and the corresponding functional head have the same categorial feature”, what he terms the Categorial Identity Thesis (cf. also van Riemsdijk, 1990). In short, this means that nouns can appear in functional positions by having a semi-functional make of  $[\pm F, \pm G]$ , but when they do they are still nouns. Concretely, a semi-functional noun would have, e.g., the following category features:  $[+N, -V, +F, -G]$ . The semi-functional status of such nouns is then what is taken to account for the fact that they are permeable for certain operations, as e.g. case assignment across them to the  $N_2$ . Still being nouns, however, it is possible to agree with them or modify them. Finally, the occurrence of semi-functional elements is restricted by the No Value Reversal (NVR) constraint. This basically states that no  $[-F]$  or  $[-G]$  may dominate a  $[+F]$  or  $[+G]$ , respectively (cf. van Riemsdijk, 1998: 25). The German pseudopartitive in (30-a) is then given the structure in (30-b) (cf. van Riemsdijk, 1998: 39).

- (30) a. eine Flasche Wein  
a bottle wine



A French pseudopartitive as in (31-a), which contains the prepositional element *de* ‘of’, is given the structure in (31-b) (van Riemsdijk, 1998: 40).<sup>13</sup>

- (31) a. une bouteille de vin  
 a bottle of wine



As mentioned above, the semi-functionality of the nouns is taken to be responsible for the fact that elements outside the DP can agree with or assign case to the N<sub>2</sub>. This seems to be fertile ground for an analysis of the *cazzo-of-N* construction. However, I am not going to adopt this approach. The reason is that, frankly, I do not understand how this should be reformulated into an Agree-based system since the pseudopartitive noun is both available and not available as a goal. The only possibility that comes to mind is to encode the functionality-features into the definition of Agree. As far as I can see this necessarily implies adding one or more disjunctions, a highly undesired result.

### 3.2 Den Dikken (2006) and the Small Clause Approach

Den Dikken (2006) proposes that any kind of relation between a predicate and a noun is to be analysed as a small clause (SC). He assumes SCs to be antisymmetric and nondirectional. The former means that any such relation is mediated syntactically by what he

<sup>13</sup>(31-b) seems to be in violation of the NVR because the [-G] of the semi-functional noun dominates the [+G] of the preposition-projection. I leave this matter open here as I will not follow this approach.

terms a RELATOR head (henceforth R). This head can come in different flavours and with different spell-outs. The latter means that both the predicate and the subject can appear in either the complement or the specifier position. Hence, the two possible types of SCs are (32-a) and (32-b) (cf. den Dikken, 2006: 11ff). Subject and predicate are to be understood as “the syntactic constituent of which the predication is predicated” and “the constituent that denotes the property ascribed to the subject” (den Dikken, 2006: 10).

- (32) a. [RP SUBJECT [R' RELATOR [ PREDICATE ] ] ]  
 b. [RP PREDICATE [R' RELATOR [ SUBJECT ] ] ]

From here he builds a theory of predication within which an analysis of the bare attributive, the attributive and the comparative QBNP is offered. I will go through them one by one.

### 3.2.1 Attributive QBNP

In the bare attributive QBNP, the predicate noun does not inflect for number and precedes the N<sub>2</sub> without the prepositional element *of*. For this construction, den Dikken proposes the structure in (33). In the bare attributive (as well as in the regular attributive) QBNP, the predicate is assumed to be generated in the specifier position of RP. The R head is empty, here. Also, no Num(ber) projection is generated for the predicate noun as it remains invariably uninflected (*Doctor Slop and doctor Bogey are idiot(\*s) doctors*). Rather, a Num projection is generated on top of the SC/RP.

- (33) a. Doctor Slop is an idiot doctor.  
 b. [NumP an [RP [NP idiot] [R' R=∅ [NumP [NP doctor]] ]]]

For the regular attributive QBNP, where the predicate noun may inflect for number, den Dikken proposes the structure in (34). Both nouns have their own Num projection as they co-vary in number. Also, a D projection, rather than a Num one as in the bare attributive, is generated as head of the whole construction. The R head is spelled out by an overt prepositional *of*, which den Dikken argues to be the result of a spell out which is sensitive to being in the environment of D. This structure can also be applied to the Italian attributive QBNP, with the addition that the indefinite of the N<sub>2</sub> is optionally omitted.

- (34) a. Doctor Slop is an idiot of a doctor.  
 b. [DP D=∅ [RP [NumP an [NP idiot]] [R' R=of [NumP a [NP doctor]] ]]]

In an Agree-based system, again, it is difficult to capture how exactly the DP-internal agreement works. I take it that the NumP which is generated on top of the RP in the bare attributive in (33) should be understood to agree with the NumP generated on top of the

subject NP. I deduce that the outer Num does not agree with the predicate NP because it does not have a Num projection. In order to capture this co-variation in terms of Agree, this would mean that the outer Num head has a probe and that this probe probes for Num. No minimality violation occurs because there is no Num c-commanded by the outer Num that also asymmetrically c-commands the subjects Num (as would be the case if the predicate NP had one). Adopting such an account on its own to capture the agreement pattern of the *cazzo-of-N* construction will be considered problematic (see section 4.2.1; but see section 5.3 where (34) will constitute the starting structure).

### 3.2.2 Comparative QBNP

For the comparative QBNP den Dikken proposes the structure in (35-b) (cf. den Dikken, 2006: 198).

- (35) a. a jewel of a village  
 b.  $[_{NumP} a [_{FP} [SIMILAR [_{NumP} (Num) [_{NP} jewel ]]]]_j [_{F'} LINKER+RELATOR_i [_{RP} [_{NumP} a [_{NP} village]] [_{R'} t_i t_j ]]]]$

Both the NPs have their own Num projection because they can both be plural, co-varying most of the time (see e.g. (11-a)). The RELATOR functor is realised by what Bennis et al. (1998) call the “spurious a”, i.e. an element which looks like an indefinite article but does not serve this function (see den Dikken, 2006: 175f for discussion). The functional head LINKER, spelled out by *of*, is required for two reasons. First, it serves as a landing site for head-movement of the RELATOR in order to extend the phase boundary of the small clause and render the two nouns equidistant for later operations (based on Chomsky’s (1995) domain-extending head movement). Second, it licences the predicate inversion movement by the predicate into its specifier position, which is required by the presence of an empty element inside the predicate, the abstract predicate *Similar* (cf. den Dikken 2006: 177ff for more detailed discussion of the derivation; den Dikken 2006: 115ff on phase-extending head movement). Similar to the bare attributive QBNP, the whole construction is headed by a NumP (and optionally determiners on top of that). The crucial difference, here, is that this Num co-varies with the predicate NP’s Num. This can be seen in the Dutch example in (36), where the outer indefinite article, the Num head, agrees with the singular  $N_1$ , rather than the  $N_2$  (den Dikken, 2006: 190).

- (36) die ramp van een getalscongruentiefeiten  
 that disaster of a number-agreement-facts

Modelling this in terms of Agree, I take it that the predicate-inversion movement is crucial here in that it puts the predicate NP in a position where it qualifies as the closest

goal nonetheless because it has a Num projection, reinforcing my conclusion about the bare attributive above. Again, such an approach would only be fruitful for the *cazzo-of-N* construction if it is the case that Num agrees only with Num, smaller categories being invisible, and if *cazzo* itself lacks this projection. However, as mentioned above, the second condition will be problematic. In fact, the same questions get more complicated when turning to gender if gender does not project a functional head and is rather an inherent part of the root.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.3 Español-Echevarria (1998) and Silent Nouns in Spanish

Español-Echevarria (1998) (EE) is concerned with the following data from Spanish comparative QBNPs. The predicate  $N_1$  is feminine and the subject  $N_2$  is masculine and the determiner can agree with either of them. Possibly unnoticed as EE claims this is not possible in Italian, both examples in (38) with proper names as  $N_2$ s seem perfectly fine to me in Italian, with the note that there is no fixed meaning for ‘cow’ with the agreement pattern in (38-a), as ‘stingy’ vs. ‘evil’ in Spanish (37). In fact, (38-c) is perfectly fine, too.

- (37) a. El rata de tu hermano  
the.M.SG rat.F.SG of your bother.M.SG  
‘Your stingy brother’
- b. La rata de tu hermano  
the.F.SG rat.F.SG of your brother.M.SG  
‘Your evil brother’
- (38) a. Que-l mucc-a de-l Rossi  
that-M.SG cow-F.SG of-the.M.SG Rossi  
‘That cow of Rossi’
- b. Que-lla mucc-a de-l Rossi  
that-F.SG cow-F.SG of-the.M.SG Rossi
- c. Ti voglio chiamare il mucc-a ... perché sei un  
you want.1SG call the.M.SG cow-F.SG because be.2SG a.M.SG  
mucc-on-e.  
cow-AUG-M.SG  
‘I want to call you ‘the cow’ because your a big cow.’

To resolve this, EE proposes an analysis where the agreement comes from a covert subject *pro* inside the predicate noun. He further proposes that this *pro* is the head of an N-N compound formed with the predicate noun. For the rest of the construction, EE follows the analysis given in Kayne (1994) so that the final structure is the one in (39).

<sup>14</sup>For discussion of whether gender projects its own head, the reader is referred to Alexiadou et al. (2007: part II, chapter 3).

(39) [DP e]<sub>DP0</sub> [CP [QP/NP [N [N imbécil ] [N pro]]]<sub>i</sub> de]<sub>C0</sub> [IP [el doctor ]<sub>j</sub>... [SC *t<sub>j</sub> t<sub>i</sub>*]]]

This analysis also seems a fruitful one for the *cazzo-of-N* construction. However, I take it as problematic to assume that *cazzo* forms an N-N compound with a silent *pro*. In fact, the N-N compound proposed by EE for the cases he discusses can be independently motivated (in Italian). Take for instance the compound in (40-a). It is a perfectly acceptable name for a super hero. The same is impossible for *cazzo* with *uomo* ‘man’, cf. (40-b), or any other noun, unless the literal meaning is construed. In fact, I find it impossible to even give an adequate English formulation of the intended meaning.

- (40) a. l’ uomo-mucca  
 the.M.SG man.M.SG-cow.F.SG  
 ‘(The) cow-man’
- b. #l’ uomo-cazzo  
 the man-CAZZO  
 ‘(The) dick-man’ but #‘intended meaning’

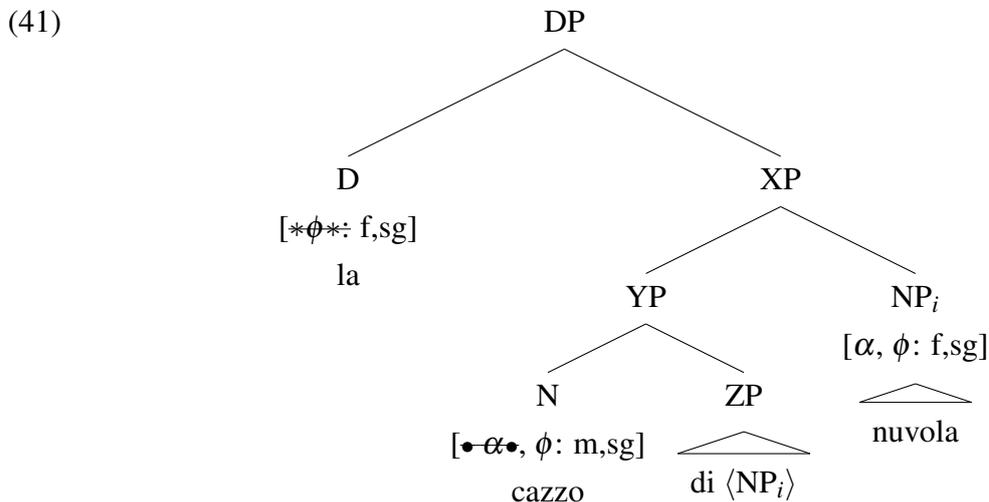
## 4 Towards an Analysis

In this section, I am going to explore the space of possible analyses. There are mainly two families of possible analyses in which the non-minimal agreement pattern of the *cazzo-of-N* construction can come about. The first will be called the *locality hypothesis*. The core idea of this hypothesis will be that there is a moment in the derivation where the determiner and the N<sub>2</sub> are in a local configuration so that agreement may apply without there being an intervener. Such configurations will involve movement of either the N<sub>2</sub> to a position above *cazzo*, or of the determiner itself, merged local to the N<sub>2</sub> first, and then moved above *cazzo* to head the whole DP. The second family will be called the *deficiency hypothesis*. There the core idea will be that *cazzo* itself is a deficient element. This must be assumed at least for number anyway, which remains invariable in this construction, so it might be shown to be lacking gender, too. There are two ways in which *cazzo* in its use in this construction might lack gender. Either it lacks it from the beginning, or it loses its gender-features in the course of the derivation. Finally, a third possibility is that *cazzo* is deficient of gender only in the sense that these features cannot be seen, for instance if the position in which *cazzo* is base-merged or moved to is such that it makes it invisible for a higher probing head.

## 4.1 The Locality Hypothesis

### 4.1.1 Extraposition

The first possibility that will be explored here is that a local configuration for Agree between D and the N<sub>2</sub> arises late in the derivation of the DP. This can be hypothesised to occur by extraposition of the N<sub>2</sub>. *Cazzo*, expressing emphasis with different connotations, would carry, e.g., a focus-related feature that attracts the N<sub>2</sub> which carries the corresponding feature. Such movement would target a position higher than *cazzo* itself. When the D head is merged, to head the whole construction, the DP, the extraposed N<sub>2</sub> is the closest goal for  $\phi$ -agreement. This then explains why *cazzo* does not intervene. Take the example *la cazzo di nuvola* ‘the fucking cloud’. An approximation of this hypothesis can be expressed by the structure with movement to the right in (41).



The empirical upshot of such an approach is that it makes the testable prediction that *di* and the N<sub>2</sub> do not form a constituent. This seems to be correct when looking at the movement test and the cleft test, but turns out to be incorrect when looking at coordination. Examples for a normal NP with thematic complement are given in (42), where all tests apply. (43-abc) show that *wh*-movement, clitic-movement and cleft of *di* plus N<sub>2</sub> are ungrammatical; (43-d) shows that the repetition of *di* is obligatory with coordination, parallel to the normal NP in (42-d).<sup>15</sup> Since one can only deduce constituency from the successful application of a constituency test, this shows that *di* and the N<sub>2</sub> form

<sup>15</sup>To be precise, there are also examples where *di* must not be repeated, cf. (i-a). These examples are not discussed in this paper as they can be analysed as involving low coordination of two N<sub>2</sub>s, not bearing on any of these analyses. To complete, at least in the context in (i), I get a clear difference in meaning (*Doliana* and *Aderucci* are surnames). While with low coordination in (i-a), the sentence implies that one expects the two people to arrive together, in (i-b) either one expects the contrary or simply no expectation at all.

- (i) a. Ma sti cazzo di Doliana e Aderucci vengono?  
but these CAZZO of Doliana and Aderucci come.3PL

a constituent, contrary to the prediction. Consequently, the hypothesis that there is extraposition of the  $N_2$  can be disconfirmed. The ungrammaticality of (43-abc) must originate elsewhere.

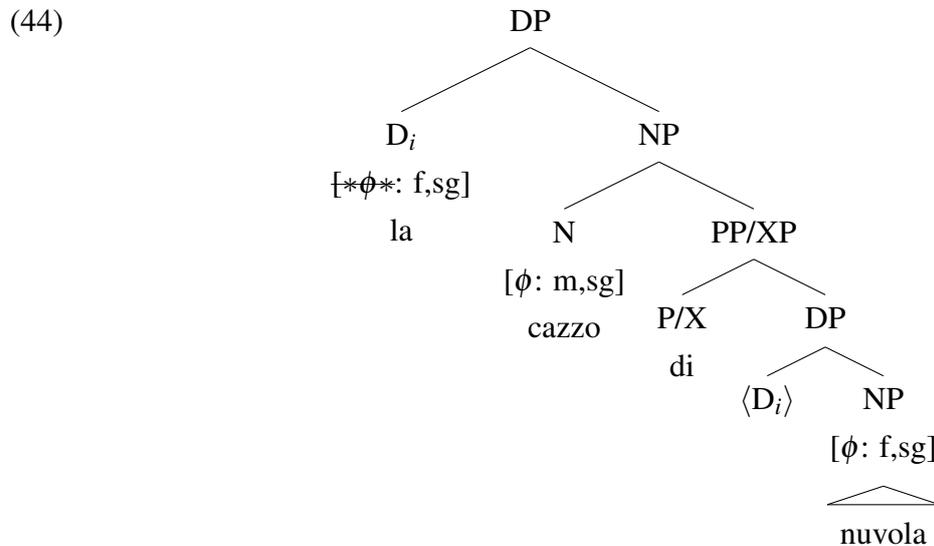
- (42) a. [Di che edificio]<sub>i</sub> non ha mai visto [la distruzione  $t_i$ ]?  
of which building not has never seen the destruction
- b. È della prigione che ha visto la distruzione.  
it's of.the prison that has seen the destruction
- c. Ne<sub>i</sub> ha mai vista la distruzione  $t_i$  (...della prigione)?  
PART.CL has ever seen the destruction of.the prison
- d. La distruzione della prigione e \*(del-)la fortezza  
the distruction of.the prison and of-the fortress
- (43) a. \*[Di che insetto]<sub>i</sub> non ha mai visto [un cazzo  $t_i$ ]?  
of which insect not has never seen a EXPR
- b. \*È di giaguaro che ha visto il cazzo (allo zoo)  
it's of jaguar that has seen the EXPR at.the zoo
- c. \*Ne<sub>i</sub>/L<sub>i</sub>' ha mai vista una cazzo  $t_i$  (... di farfalla)?  
PART.CL/ACC.CL has ever seen a EXPR of butterfly
- d. Ste cazzo di mosche e \*(di) zanzare mi hanno proprio  
these EXPR of flies and of mosquitoes me.DAT have.3PL really  
rotto!  
annoyed

#### 4.1.2 Reprojection of D

The second possibility of the locality hypothesis is that there is a local configuration for agreement between D and the  $N_2$  early in the derivation. Here, it could be hypothesised that D merges first with the  $N_2$  and that it later reprojects to head the whole construction. It would crucially agree with the  $N_2$  early in the derivation, satisfying Earliness (cf. Pesetsky, 1989), so that it does not matter if the final structure is one where *cazzo* is a closer goal than the  $N_2$ . Again as a first approximation, the structure in (44) can be given for our example *la cazzo di nuvola* 'the fucking cloud'. The  $N_2$  is merged with its D to form a DP. At this point, the two elements can agree. This DP is then merged with the preposition *di* to form the PP with which *cazzo* is merged. Finally, D reprojects to head the whole DP. I

- 
- b. Ma sti cazzo di Doliana e di Aderucci vengono?  
but these CAZZO of Doliana and of Aderucci come.3PL

remain silent on the category of *di* here. The final structure is given in (44).<sup>16</sup>



Leaving potential problems aside for now, it should be asked what the predictions are that this approach makes. The strongest prediction that also distinguishes this approach from others, is that the  $N_2$  must always be a DP, and that the D of that DP is the same as the D of the whole construction, i.e. featural identity is expected. This can be tested. For one, it is expected that other elements, higher in the extended nominal projection than N can occur between *di* and the  $N_2$ . Although the general unmarked order is to have all of these elements between the determiner and *cazzo*, such examples are indeed possible. In (45-a), found by google string search, an example of a subjective adjective occurring inside the  $N_2$  is given, in (45-b) one of an idiomatic adjective. The latter, in fact, must occur inside the  $N_2$  or the idiomatic reading is lost, as is indicated by the starred occurrence in front of *cazzo*.

- (45) a. Ero la sua cazzo di migliore amica e non ho capito  
 was.1SG the her EXPR of best friend and not have.1SG understood  
 nulla!  
 nothing  
 ‘I was her fucking best friend and hadn’t understood a thing.’

[<http://alturl.com/chbpi> 9th Aug 15]

<sup>16</sup> See Georgi and Müller (2010) for an explicit account of reprojection with a derivational feature-based model of syntax. The crucial difference to their proposal is that, while they assume N to reproject, here it must be D. Furthermore, the motivation for reprojection is the need to check an Agree-feature under c-command. The same trigger can hardly be assumed here if D has already agreed with the only element it agrees with before reprojecting. Finding a well-motivated formal trigger for reprojection is indeed the major problem here. As an alternative one might propose that reprojection goes from one D-head to another by head movement. First, a D-layer on top of the [cazzo of  $N_2$ ] constituent is generated and then it is filled or adjoined by the lower D. Such a proposal would, however, face the crucial difficulty that head movement obeys the Head Movement Constraint (Travis, 1984; Baker, 1988) so that the intervening head *di* cannot be skipped. Hence, to reach D it would have to carry *di* with it, deriving the wrong word order (D-*di*-cazzo- $N_2$ ).

- b. Ti manca il {\*buon} cazzo di {buon} senso, a te.  
 you.DAT lack the good EXPR of good sense to you  
 ‘You are lacking common sense.’

Numerals, just as adjective, can be found inside the  $N_2$  rather than in front of *cazzo*. This can be seen in (46-ab).

- (46) a. Rida=mmi i cazzo di due minuti della mia vita!!!  
 give.back.IMP.2SG=me the EXPR of two minutes of.the my life  
 ‘Give those fucking two minutes of my life back to me!’  
 [http://alturl.com/mm3iz 18th Jun 15]
- b. E togli=ti quelle cazzo di due dita dal culo.  
 and take.out.IMP.2SG=you.DAT those EXPR of two fingers from.the ass  
 ‘Take out your two fucking fingers out of your ass, will you.’  
 [http://alturl.com/jkcxxy 18th Jun 15]

As for quantifiers, google string searches for quantifiers occurring low only gave two hits for *qualche* ‘some’, and none for *tutta/tutte* ‘all-F.SG/all-F.PL’, *molta/molte* ‘many-F.SG/many-F.PL’ and *ogni* ‘every’. An example for *qualche* ‘some’ is given in (47).

- (47) Ma ti pare che se c’era una cazzo di qualche novità, QUELLA  
 but you.DAT seems that if there was a EXPR of some news those  
 novità, tu non lo venivi a sapere?  
 news you not it came to know  
 ‘Don’t you think that if there were some fucking news, you would have come to know about it, in particular about that one?’  
 [http://alturl.com/iifmh 18th Jun 15]

So far, the presence of adjectives, numerals and quantifiers inside the  $N_2$  is consistent with the reprojection hypothesis. It becomes more intricate when looking at determiners. Determiners can, in fact, occur in front of the  $N_2$ , though, out of context, I would judge such examples as very marked. Nonetheless, it can be observed that the two determiners have to have the same  $\phi$ -features. In addition, google string searches indicate that by far the most frequent instances of *cazzo-of-N* DPs with two determiners are those where the two determiners are identical. An example is given in (48), where the definite singular feminine article *la* is repeated with the  $N_2$ .

- (48) ??Devi linkare la cazzo della musica.  
 must.IMP.2SG link the EXPR of.the music  
 ‘You must link the fucking music.’ [http://alturl.com/tscsm 18th Jun 15]

This is not only consistent with the reprojection approach, but might even be evidence in its favour. The second determiner does not add further reference, but rather seems

to be a mere repetition of the first. This would be expected if the high determiner is a reprojection, a copy within the Copy Theory of movement, and the low copy is spelled out for independent reasons.<sup>17</sup> However, even if extremely rare, there are also occurrences of DPs with two non-identical determiners. These include examples with a high indefinite and a low demonstrative, a high demonstrative and a low indefinite, and a high demonstrative and a low definite. The first two should be discarded as they most likely involve mistakes or a different use of *cazzo*. Examples with a high indefinite and a low demonstrative all involve a negation in the clause so the intended sentence should have a masculine indefinite agreeing with *cazzo* used as an NPI, cf. (49). Hence, I mark it with a percentage sign to indicate that it is ungrammatical to me, but that I do not know whether other speakers produce this productively.<sup>18</sup>

- (49) %[...] da mocciosa impenitente che non sa ancora una cazzo della vita.  
 as.a brat unapologetic that not knows yet a CAZZO.of.the life  
 ‘...as an unapologetic brat that doesn’t know a damn about life yet.’

[<http://alturl.com/n62pr> 18.06.15]

Examples with a high demonstrative and a low indefinite resemble more the QBNP construction in their meaning. *Cazzo* is more likely intended to express a (negative) quality of its complement, rather than expressing general discontent or amazement related to the event containing its complement. It seems to me that examples such as (50-a) are intended to say something like (50-b).<sup>19</sup> I therefore mark it with % to indicate that it is ungrammatical to me, though there might be speakers who use *cazzo* like this productively.

- (50) a. %Ma la merda che ho fatto con questa cazzo di una pistola.  
 but the shit that have.1SG done with this.F CAZZO.M of a.F gun.F  
 ‘(lit.) The shit I have done with this fucking a pistol...’

[<http://alturl.com/qcrwz> 18th Jun 15]

- b. Ma la merda che ho fatto con quest-o schif-o di un-a  
 but the shit that have.1SG done with this-M disgust.NOUN-M of a-F

<sup>17</sup>In fact, no meaning at all seems to be added by the second determiner. My intuition is that the only difference is in salience. It is easier to pronounce the second determiner if the  $N_2$  is very salient, as for example, if it is modified by a relative clause referring to some recent event. So if (48) might be prefixed with two question marks, and a variant without a second determiner with none, I would judge (i) to be in the middle with one.

- (i) ?Devi linkare la cazzo della musica che ti ho mandato un attimo fa.  
 must.IMP.2SG link the EXPR of.the music that you.DAT have.1SG sent an instant ago  
 ‘You must link the fucking music that I have sent you a minute ago.’

<sup>18</sup>If this is a production mistake, it might be telling of the lexical entry of *cazzo* or else the several lexical entries of the different elements who all have the morpho-phonological form /cazzol/.

<sup>19</sup>Again, if this is a production mistake, it might be telling of the lexical properties of the *cazzo* used in the *cazzo-of-N* construction. It seems it is used as a general term denoting something negative. Still, it lets agreement through. This might indicate that a deficiency analysis is more accurate.

pistol-a.  
 gun-F  
 ‘The shit I have done with this disgusting gun. . .’

The problematic cases are examples where the high determiner is a demonstrative and the low one is a definite article, as (51-ab) for instance. As before, such examples are more marked than their determiner-less counterparts. Out of the examples I found through google string search, the ones with proper names as  $N_2$ s, as (51-ab), sound best to me.

- (51) a. ?minchia basta con sta cazzo della pellegrini  
 dick stop with this EXPR of.the Pellegrini  
 ‘Fuck, stop with this fucking Pellegrini already.’ [http://altur1.com/y5j6n  
 18th Jun 15]
- b. ?Ma si, facciamo sta cazzo della Grande Albania e invadiamo=li  
 but yes make.1PL this EXPR of.the Grand Albany and invade.1PL=them  
 tutti.  
 all  
 ‘Alright then, let’s make this ‘Grand Albany’ and let’s invade them all.’  
 [http://altur1.com/n5q32 18th Jun 15]

Such examples are problematic for the reprojection approach because the two determiners are not identical. Also, repeating the demonstrative low turns (51-b) ungrammatical ((51-a) would be out independently because the  $N_2$  is a proper name of a person and cannot appear with a demonstrative). A summary of the possible patterns with their number of hits in google string searches is given in (52).

(52) *Summary of D-cazzo-D google string search results*<sup>20</sup>

↓ high D / low D →	DEMONSTRATIVE	DEFINITE	INDEFINITE
DEMONSTRATIVE	*	13	3 <sup>a</sup>
DEFINITE	*	2130	*
INDEFINITE	1 <sup>b</sup>	17 <sup>b</sup>	4

<sup>a</sup>QBNP  
<sup>b</sup> $NPI_s$

In conclusion, unless one can explain away the examples with two different determiners, especially the ones with a high demonstrative and a low definite, the initial benefit of the reprojection approach, which predicts that whenever a second determiner is present in the

<sup>20</sup>The google string searches were carried out on 18th June 2015. They all had the form *det-1 cazzo di det-2*. All determiners were feminine to try to ensure through the agreement pattern that only *cazzo-of-N* constructions are found. The demonstratives used were *questa* ‘this’, *queste* ‘these’, *sta* ‘this’, *ste* ‘these’, *quella* ‘that’ and *quelle* ‘those’; the definite articles used were *la* ‘the.SG’ and *le* ‘the.PL’; the indefinite article used was *una* ‘a’.

$N_2$  it must be identical, is lost. Therefore, in order to avoid both the undergeneration of such examples with mixed determiners, but also the overgeneration of *cazzo-of-N* DPs with two identical demonstratives, additional assumptions are required.<sup>21</sup> Since this approach also faces technical problems related with how the re-projection of the D should be implemented, as e.g. the form of a formal trigger and the fact that the head *di* intervenes, it will be abandoned. The alternatives relying on an analysis where *cazzo* lacks gender or where its gender-features cannot be seen will be pursued in the following section.

## 4.2 The Deficiency Hypothesis

### 4.2.1 Featural Deficiency

Taking a deficiency approach, the simplest hypothesis that can explain why the determiner does not agree with *cazzo* is to assume that *cazzo* lacks  $\phi$ -features. In fact, some form of deficiency must be assumed for number independently since *cazzo* remains invariably singular throughout this construction. Technically, this can be achieved by assuming that *cazzo* does not have a number feature as part of the set of features that define that noun, or by assuming that *cazzo* does not project a NumP (for discussion of the NumP see Alexiadou et al., 2007: 229–235). In both cases, the lack would be interpreted by the interfaces as singular. The expressive’s deficiency of number contrasts once more with the QBNP construction, where the predicate noun co-varies in number with the subject noun. This is shown in (53-a). This is impossible in the *cazzo-of-N* equivalent in (53-b).

- (53) a. quest-e/\*-a            merd-e/\*-a            di student-i  
           these-F.PL/\*-F.SG shit-F.PL/\*-F.SG of students-M.PL  
           ‘These bastards of students.’
- b. quest-i/\*-o            cazz-o/\*-i            di student-i  
           these-M.PL/\*-M.SG EXPR-M.SG/\*-M.PL of students-M.PL  
           ‘These fucking students.’

The question is whether the assumption that *cazzo* also lacks gender, and that it therefore lacks  $\phi$ -features entirely, can be justified. It seems that there is some evidence from the domain of modification. The argument is the following. All Italian adjectives must agree in some  $\phi$ -features with the noun they modify, most of them in both gender and

<sup>21</sup>Note that two identical demonstratives are possible in other Italian binominals that have only one reference, as e.g. the attributive QBNP construction, cf. (i).

- (i) Quell’ incapace            di quel cuoco là            mi            ha fatto venire il mal di stomaco.  
     that   incapable.NOUN of that cook   there me.DAT has made come the ache of stomach  
     ‘That incapable cook there has given me stomach ache.’

number. Expressive *cazzo*, however, cannot be modified.<sup>22,23</sup> This is shown in (54). The impossibility to modify *cazzo* can be taken, then, as evidence in favour of the thesis that *cazzo* lacks  $\phi$ -features. To reinforce this, it is possible to modify *cazzo* with the elements *stra-*, *super-* and *mega-* which crucially do not agree, cf. (55-a).<sup>24</sup> The same is true for the derivationally modifying pejorative, which can be analysed as attaching to the root, cf. (55-b).

(54) \*ste cazzo {brutto, grande, maledetto, ... } di nuvole  
 these EXPR ugly big damned of clouds  
 ‘(Intended) these really-fucking clouds.’

(55) a. ste {stra-, super-, mega-} cazzo di nuvole  
 these extra- super- mega- EXPR of clouds  
 ‘These really-fucking clouds.’

b. ste cazz-acci-o di nuvole  
 these EXPR-PEJ-M.SG of clouds  
 ‘These really-fucking clouds.’

<sup>22</sup>There is one exception, where *cazzo* can be modified by a normal adjective, namely by the adjective *maledetto* ‘damned’, but only in combination with the pejorative *-accio* or the modifier *stra-* (see (55)). Also, there are other nouns which can occur in this construction instead of *cazzo*, but this exception only applies to *cazzo*. I will abstract away from this quirk here.

<sup>23</sup>The same is true for what can be termed the *N-of-the-cazzo* construction, an apparent inverse of the *cazzo-of-N*, often used as an alternative. An example is given in (i). The two main differences on the surface are that the word order is NP-of-*cazzo* rather than *cazzo-of-NP* and that there are two determiners, one agreeing with the NP and one agreeing with *cazzo*. Here, the  $\phi$ -features of *cazzo* are clearly accessible since the determiner agrees with it. Modification, however, is nonetheless impossible. This seems to suggest that taking the impossibility of modification as evidence for the impossibility of  $\phi$ -agreement is on the wrong track. However, it can be argued that the two *cazzo* are not the same element. In fact, the *N-of-the-cazzo* construction does not exhibit all of the properties of expressives. For instance, it is not repeatable in the same way. Each repetition of *cazzo* in (ii) denotes negatively the NP modified by it rather than simply adding to the general discontent with the targeted. This is the reason why a unifying approach for the two constructions is not being pursued in this paper.

(i) [Quest-a nuvol-a de-l cazzo-o] ci para il sole.  
 this-F.SG cloud-F.SG of-the.M.SG EXPR-M.SG us.DAT blocks the sun  
 ‘This fucking cloud is blocking the sun.’

(ii) #Cazzo, ho lasciato le mie chiavi del cazzo nella mia macchina del cazzo.  
 CAZZO have.1SG left the my keys of.the CAZZO in.the my car of.the CAZZO

<sup>24</sup>Loan-word adjectives such as *gosu* or *imba* ‘very strong’ used by computer gamers also do not show agreement, i.e. they do not inflect overtly (e.g. *una cosa imba* ‘one very strong thing’ vs. *due cose imba* ‘two very strong things’). Regardless, such elements cannot modify *cazzo*, cf. (i). It must be argued here that these adjectives do agree in syntax but that there is either no material or a rule preventing to spell out the agreement in morphology.

(i) \*sta cazzo imba/gosu di bug  
 this.F.SG EXPR.M.SG very.strong.(M.SG) of bug.F.SG  
 ‘This really-fucking bug (in the game)’





numerals modifying the N<sub>2</sub> when they occur in pre-*cazzo* position, rendering the sentence impossible to parse, cf. (60). Taking these data at face value, I conclude that the  $\phi$ -features of *cazzo* and its likes are present in syntax throughout the derivation and legible at the interfaces, so I will abandon this approach and look for an alternative.

- (60) \*Ma se ne andranno quell-e due {capper-i, accident-i} di  
 but SELF LOC go.FUT.3PL that-F.PL two EXPR-M.PL EXPR-M.PL of  
 nuvol-e?  
 cloud-F.PL  
 ‘Will they go away those two fucking clouds, I wonder?’

#### 4.2.2 Structural Deficiency

Although it might be on the wrong track that *cazzo* is deficient in its feature specification, it still seems that *cazzo* is deficient in some relevant sense. The alternative route is to assume that it is structurally deficient. While it was tacitly assumed above that the structure containing *cazzo* and its  $\phi$ -features formed a phrase so that it could in principle be modified as such by normal adjectives, here it will be assumed as a starting hypothesis that it is smaller. This kind of approach is not new to the literature. For instance, Cardinaletti and Starke (1999) have used this approach to analyse the contrast between clitics, weak and strong pronouns in Romance and Germanic languages. Specifically, they analysed clitics as lacking the D-layer, i.e. a structure projecting just  $\phi$ . Taking this approach, one can make sense of the modification data in (54) and (55-b), repeated here as (61) and (62), in a different way. The contrast can be explained as due to the fact that *cazzo* is smaller than the category that the normal adjectives in (61) attach to, while the pejorative in (62) is derivational morphology and attaches to the root (early in the derivation or in the lexicon).<sup>28,29</sup>

- (61) \*ste cazzo {brutto, grande, maledetto, ...} di nuvole  
 these EXPR ugly big damned of clouds  
 ‘(Intended) these really-fucking clouds.’
- (62) ste cazz-acci-o di nuvole  
 these EXPR-PEJ-M.SG of clouds

<sup>28</sup>Evidence in favour of such an analysis comes from the fact that this type of modification is also possible in V-N-compounds as in (i). For the other modifiers *stra-*, *super-*, *mega-* and *gran-*, a somewhat different analysis will be hinted at at the end of this section.

(i) lui è proprio un {rompi-bottigli-e, rompi-bottigli-ett-e, rompi-bottigli-on-e}  
 he is really a break-bottle-F.PL break-bottle-DIM-F.PL break-bottle-AUG-F.PL  
 ‘He really is a breaker of (normal, small, large) bottles.’

<sup>29</sup>For discussion of the head vs. phrase distinction of the N<sub>1</sub> of pseudopartitives in the context of modification see Alexiadou et al. (2007: 418,434–435); see also Vos (1999: chapter 6).

‘These really-fucking clouds.’

A contrast in their possibility to be modified is also mentioned by Cardinaletti and Starke (1999) for clitics and weak pronouns. While it is possible for the strong pronoun *lei* and the NP/DP *Maria* in (63-b) to be modified by an adverbial, this is not possible for the weak pronoun *essa* in (63-a).

- (63) a. \*Anche/ solo *essa* è bella.  
also only 3.SG.F.WEAK is pretty
- b. Anche/ solo {*lei*, *Maria*} è bella.  
also only 3.SG.F.STRONG *Maria* is pretty

Cardinaletti and Starke (1999) also list other tests. For instance, while it is possible to coordinate DPs, NPs and strong pronouns, it is impossible to coordinate clitics or weak pronouns.

- (64) a. \**Lei* ed *essa* sono belle.  
3.SG.F.STRONG and 3.SG.F.WEAK are pretty
- b. *Lei<sub>i</sub>* e {*lei<sub>j</sub>*, *Maria*} sono belle.  
3.SG.F.STRONG and 3.SG.F.STRONG *Maria* are pretty

The same holds for *cazzo*. Like *minchia*, there are a number of nouns that can occur in the place of *cazzo* in this construction, e.g. the masculine singular *cavolo* lit. ‘cabbage’. However, the expressives cannot be coordinated, cf. (65).<sup>30</sup> This behaviour contrasts once more with regular binominals as in (66-a) and the QBNP construction as in (66-b). I judge the latter as a bit marked, but nonetheless grammatical.

- (65) \**ste cazzo e* {*minchia, cavolo, ...*} *di nuvole*  
these EXPR and EXPR EXPR of clouds  
‘(Intended) These fucking and damned clouds.’
- (66) a. *Lui è un apprezzatore e amante di arte astratta*  
he is a appreciator and lover of art abstract  
‘He is someone who appreciates and is keen on abstract art.’
- b. ?*Lei è proprio un fiore e gioiello di ragazza*  
she is really a flower and jewel of girl  
‘She really is a flower and a jewel of a girl.’

Another parallel is that, just like weak pronouns and clitics contrasting with strong pro-

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<sup>30</sup>On a purely semantic note, if Potts (2007) is right that the semantic type of expressives is a pure output type, depending on how coordination is done, expressives might not be coordinated because it would presume them to be an input to the coordination function. I leave this matter open.

nouns, *cazzo* cannot be contrastively focussed, while this is again possible for regular binominals and the QBNP construction, cf. (67) vs. (68-ab) (the latter must be read in a context where one is contrasting metaphorical differences between being a flower-ish vs. a jewel-ish girl, for instance kind and indulging vs. radiant and exciting).

(67) \*ste CAZZO di nuvole mi hanno proprio rotto (... le cavolo di  
 these EXPR of clouds me.DAT have really annoyed the EXPR of  
 nuvole no)  
 clouds not

(68) a. Lui è un APPREZZATORE di arte astratta (... non un amante)  
 he is an appreciator of art abstract not a lover  
 b. Lei è un FIORE di ragazza (... non un gioiello)  
 she is a flower of girl not a jewel

These contrasts suggest that *cazzo* in the *cazzo-of-N* construction indeed is structurally deficient. I can see three ways in which this can explain why the determiner cannot agree with it. The first is to analyse *cazzo*'s structural deficiency as the lack of the structural layer associated with  $\phi$ -features. This road, however, leads to the problems outlined in the previous section. The second possibility is to say that *cazzo* lacks the category feature [N] and that therefore D cannot see its  $\phi$ -features because it can only probe for  $\phi$ -features on Ns. Conceptually, this is already an inelegant assumption. Empirically, too, it is wrong. The modifier *gran*, with the meaning of 'grand/high' as in English 'high priest' or 'grand master', can only occur with nouns. Compare the contrast between (69-a), where both *super-* and *gran* can occur with the noun *capo* 'boss', and (69-b), where only *super-* can occur with the adjective *bello* 'handsome'.<sup>31</sup>

(69) a. È stato eletto gran/ super- capo.  
 is been elected grand super boss  
 'He was elected grand/super chief/boss.'

<sup>31</sup>As indicated by the translation, it should be noted that this *gran* is not the normal adjective *gran* corresponding to *grande* 'big/large', frequently used in its contracted form in pre-nominal position with the meaning of either 'big/large' or also 'amazing/cool/etc.'. This can be shown by the contrast in (i). In (i-a) the sentence is acceptable regardless of the addition of the adjectives 'small' and 'disappointing'. In (i-b), however, their addition causes the sentence to be unacceptable. I take this to indicate that in (i-a) *gran* does not have a meaning that causes an inconsistent meaning together with the 'small' and 'disappointing'. The distinction is important because *cazzo* cannot be modified by normal adjectives.

(i) a. Il gran capo del villaggio è piccolo e deludente.  
 the grand chief of.the village is small and disappointing  
 b. #Ha comprato una gran macchina piccola e deludente.  
 has bought a large/amazing car small and disappointing

- b. Viene reputato \*gran/ super- bello.  
 is considered \*grand super handsome  
 ‘He is considered very handsome.’

The third possibility is to leave the details of the form of *cazzo*’s deficiency aside for a moment and assume that some form of it is true. One can then assume that because *cazzo* is structurally deficient, it has to incorporate and that, since it incorporates, it becomes invisible for later steps of the derivation, in particular the probing for  $\phi$ -features by D. This would then also explain why the other modifiers in (55-a), repeated here as (70), are grammatical in contrast to normal adjectival modification, taken that these elements themselves incorporate into *cazzo* permitting it to move as a head. I am going to propose an analysis along the lines of this third possibility in the following section.

- (70) ste {stra-, super-, mega-, gran-} cazzo di nuvole  
 these extra- super- mega- grand- EXPR of clouds  
 ‘These really-fucking clouds.’

## 5 Analyses

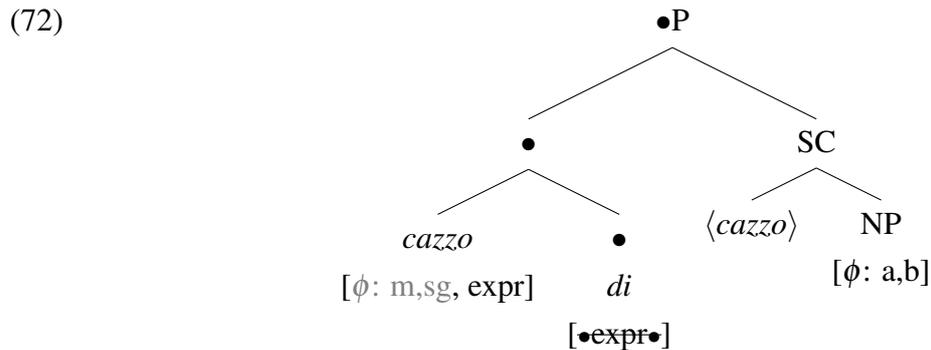
### 5.1 Incorporation Analysis

The core idea of the analysis will be that *cazzo* – and the related nouns alternatively occurring in its position – are structurally defective in the sense that they are not full phrases. As a consequence, when *cazzo* moves to *di*, it actually incorporates into it, rather than moving to its specifier. This makes the prediction that *cazzo* is accessible for computation before incorporation, while it is inaccessible for further computation after it. This gives rise to the opaque agreement pattern. I will further assume that *cazzo* and the  $N_2$  are merged symmetrically in a bare small clause (SC) in a structure as in (71) (for proposals of this sort see Moro 1997, 2000, 2009 for copular constructions, and Ott 2011 for split topic constructions). The order of the two elements is irrelevant as they form a set. Also, though it was not possible to determine the precise label of *cazzo* so far, to be concrete I am going to assume that it is just an N. Following the general assumption in Chomsky (1995) or Adger (2003, 2010), though *cazzo* is a head, and the other object a phrase, *cazzo* does not project as it does not select for anything.

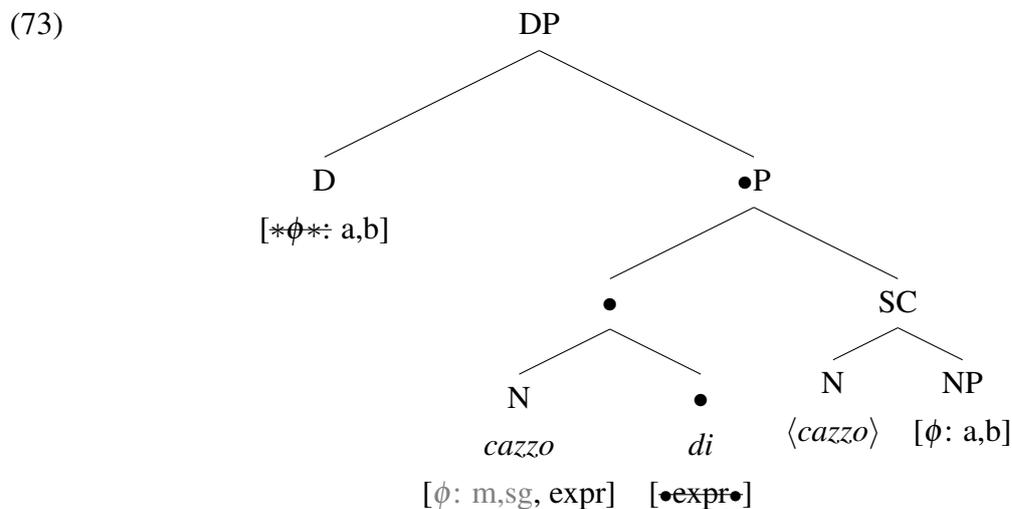
- (71)
- $$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{SC} \\
 \diagdown \quad \diagup \\
 \text{N} \quad \text{NP} \\
 \text{cazzo}
 \end{array}$$

Next, the functional head *di* is merged. I will assume this head to be the  $\bullet$ -function intro-

duced by Potts (2007) as the linker (‘expressive glue’) between expressive elements and descriptive elements. I will further assume that this head triggers movement of *cazzo*, which, again to be concrete, I will assume is triggered by an [ $\bullet$ expr $\bullet$ ] feature. On a par, expressive nouns will be assumed to carry the respective [expr] feature. Because *cazzo* is smaller than a full nominal phrase, it head-moves and merges directly with *di*. This is shown in (72). The gray colour indicates the opacity of the features.



Finally, when the determiner is merged and probes down the structure, the only  $\phi$ -features that are visible are the ones on the  $N_2$ . *Cazzo* and its  $\phi$ -features are invisible because it is incorporated. Hence D agrees with the  $N_2$ , cf. (73).



## 5.2 Discussion

The structure in (73) then captures the agreement pattern of the construction straightforwardly without having to resort to the assumption that *cazzo* lacks  $\phi$ -features. Other defining properties of this construction follow from this approach as well. For instance, the pejorative *-acci-* can modify *cazzo* because it attaches to the root. The same can then be said for the modifiers *stra-*, *super-*, *mega-* and *gran-*. *Gran-*, for instance, shows a different distribution than its homophonous adjective *gran* ‘large/amazing’. Take word

order. *Gran* with the meaning of ‘large/amazing’ must precede *bel* ‘handsome’, but *gran* ‘grand’ must immediately precede the noun to yield the meaning ‘grand’, cf. (74).

- (74) a. il nostro gran bel capo  
 the our GRAN handsome chief  
 ‘Our amazing and handsome chief’ but #‘Our handsome high-chief’
- b. il nostro bel gran- capo  
 the our handsome GRAN- boss  
 ‘our handsome high-chief’

*Stra-*, *super-* and *mega-*, on the other hand, also appear immediately before the element they modify, for nouns (with the right gradable semantics) as well as for adjectives, cf. (75). For concreteness, I assume these elements to spell out Degree heads which can incorporate with the element they modify.<sup>32</sup>

- (75) È uno {stra-}piccolo {stra-}bel {super-}figo {mega-}interessante.  
 is a AUG-small AUG-handsome AUG-hottie AUG-interesting  
 ‘He’s a (super) short/small (super) handsome (super) interesting (mega) hottie.’

Regular adjectives contrast with the above mentioned ones because they modify nominal phrases. Since *cazzo* is not a phrase, it cannot be modified by these elements.<sup>33</sup> In the same way, having a complex phrase occur as the  $N_1$  of the construction is impossible.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup>They cannot reside in the specifier of a cartography-style Degree head (cf. Cinque, 2010) as they can be used cumulatively, i.e. they do not stand in complementary distribution, as in e.g. *la stra-mega-super-gran cazzo di nuvola* ‘the really-really-fucking cloud’, unless this is achieved by Pair-Merge (cf. Ott, 2011; Chomsky, 2013). Here, they will be analysed as multiple instances merged together to create one Degree head before this one is merged with the expressive.

<sup>33</sup>As mentioned in footnote 22 there is an exception where the adjective *maledetto* ‘cursed’ can be used, but only with *cazzo* itself and only when it is additionally modified by *stra-* or the pejorative *-acci-*. As far as I can see, this approach cannot account for this quirk.

<sup>34</sup>The only examples that I can come up with that seem on the verge of grammaticality are the ones in (i).

- (i) a. ??\*ma ste dio cane di chiavi non me le ridai?!  
 but this.F.PL god.M.SG dog.M.SG of key.F.PL not me.DAT them give.back  
 ‘Hey, are you not going to give them back to me those oh-my-fucking-god of keys?’
- b. ??\*ma ste va=tte=lo a piglia’ nel culo di chiavi non me le ridai?!  
 but these go.IMP=you.DAT=it to take in.the ass of keys not me.DAT them give.back  
 ‘(Lit.) Hey, are you not going to give them back to me those go-take-it-up-your-ass of keys?!’

I still judge them as highly marginal, especially because they are clearly ungrammatical in most other contexts where the whole DP is embedded, compare e.g. (i-a) vs. (ii).

- (ii) \*Si cazzo! È un-a dio cane di banan-a!  
 yes fuck is a-F.SG god.M.SG dog.M.SG of banana-F.SG  
 ‘Fuck! Yes, it’s a fucking banana (alright)!’

A broader study is required here. If these or similar examples turn out to be acceptable for a group of speakers, this analysis would be overturned (at least for those speakers). Also, it might be a production effect due to increased difficulty of parsing the discontinuous agreement when larger material intervenes. This would have to be tested with appropriate psycholinguistic methods.

Finally, the impossibility to coordinate or contrastively focus the expressive alone also follows from the fact that it is too small. Nominal heads that incorporate into productive V-N compounds in Italian can neither be coordinated or contrastively focussed. This is shown in (76-ab) respectively.<sup>35</sup>

- (76) a. \*un ruba-penne-e-matite  
 a steal-pens-and-pencils  
 ‘Someone who steals pens and pencils’  
 b. \*un ruba-PENne (non maTIte)  
 a steal-PENS not PENCils  
 ‘Some who steals PEN (instead of pencils)’

However, this analysis also faces some problems. For one, it must be determined what kind of syntactic element a  $\bullet$ P is. In order to do so, one can look at the syntactic distribution of *cazzo-of-N* constituent without the determiner. Bare NPs occur as predicates of copular clauses, or as mass-denoting nominals. A *cazzo-of-NP*, however, cannot occur in this position unless preceded by a partitive, cf. (77-ab) vs. (77-cd).

- (77) a. Ha mangiato (delle) banane per colazione.  
 has eaten PART bananas for breakfast  
 b. Ha fatto colazione con mela e banana.  
 has done breakfast with apple and banana  
 c. Ha mangiato \*(delle) cazzo di banane per colazione.  
 has eaten PART EXPR of bananas for breakfast  
 d. \*Ha fatto colazione con cazzo di mela e banana.  
 has done breakfast with EXPR of apple and banana

Both singular and plural bare nouns can occur as the predicate of copular clauses in Italian, cf. (78-ab). The same is not possible with a bare *cazzo-of-NP*, shown in (78-cd).

- (78) a. È uomo o donna?  
 is man or woman  
 b. Sono medici, loro.  
 are doctors they  
 c. \*È cazzo di medico, lui.  
 is EXPR of doctor he

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<sup>35</sup>The noun can be contrastively focussed in a V-N compound, but only if the verb is repeated in the brackets. This indicates that only the V-N compound as a whole can be contrastively focussed.

- d. \*Sono cazzo di medici, loro.  
are   EXPR of doctors they

What is possible, however, is to have a bare *cazzo-of-NP* as the predicate of an exclamative copular clause, both in singular, as in (18) repeated here as (79-a), and in plural, as in (79-b).

- (79) a. [Cazzo di cretino] che non sei   altro!  
          EXPR of idiot   that not be.2SG other  
          ‘What a fucking idiot you are!’  
      b. [Cazzo di cretini] che non siete   altro!  
          EXPR of idiot   that not be.3PL other  
          ‘What fucking idiots you are!’

I conclude that either the  $\bullet$ P has the same syntactic label as its complement, an NP, or that a D (or Num if the indefinite article is the realisation of Num) is always generated, occasionally silent, so that the question does not rise. I will leave this matter open for debate as in both cases the ungrammaticality of (77) and (78) is not explained.

Another potential problem is actually the one which has lead me to discard the extraposition analysis in section 4.1.1. In (43-d), repeated as (80), *di* has to be repeated, indicating that *di* and the  $N_2$  form a constituent.

- (80) Ste   cazzo di mosche e   \*(di) zanzare   mi   hanno   proprio rotto!  
      these EXPR of flies   and   of mosquitoes me.DAT have.3PL really   annoyed

Since in the proposed structure in (73) *cazzo* head-moves to *di*, the two heads form a unit. The  $N_2$  should then not be able to form a constituent with *di* to the exclusion of *cazzo*. A mitigation of these facts can be drawn from the distribution of intonational pauses in the *cazzo-of-N* complex. As illustrated in (81), where (#) signals an optional intonational pause. The only place where it is not possible to pause is between *cazzo* and *di*. This would follow if the two items form a morpho-phonological unit, in the same way as it is impossible to pause between a clitic and the auxiliary verb, cf. (82).<sup>36</sup>

- (81) la (#) cazzo (\*#) di (#) nuvola  
      the   EXPR   of   cloud  
  
(82) Oggi (#) t'/ti (\*#) ho        (#) visto.  
      today   you   have.1SG   seen

<sup>36</sup>If one insists that in fact a pause is possible in that position, there is still one crucial distinction to the other positions. *Cazzo* or the clitic must be repeated upon completion of the sentence, this is not necessary elsewhere.

Also, the incorporation structure in (83) might give an indication for why there are mixed results for the constituency tests. While the coordination in (43-d) indicated that *di* and the  $N_2$  form a constituent, the movement tests can be taken to indicate the contrary. If *cazzo* incorporates into *di*, it follows that there is no constituent [*di*  $N_2$ ] that could be moved. Additional mitigation of the coordination test can be drawn from the contrast in (83). Repetition of *cazzo* is not allowed, but filling the position with another expressive is possible. This might indicate that the only constituents that can be coordinated are the  $N_2$ , on its own, and [*expr di*  $N_2$ ], suggesting that in the latter case ellipsis or some other form of deletion is at work.

- (83) a. \**ste cazzo di zanzare e cazzo di mosche*  
           these EXPR of mosquitoes and EXPR of flies
- b. *ste cazzo di zanzare e cavolo di mosche*  
           these EXPR of mosquitoes and EXPR of flies

To conclude, there are of course technical ways to solve this problem. To name one, it is possible to adopt a multidominance approach (see e.g. Goodall, 1987; Moltmann, 1992; Gärtner, 2002; Citko, 2005) and to assume that the overt *cazzo* in the first conjunct and the implied one in the second are linked to one syntactic object. If the two  $\bullet$ Ps are built in parallel workspaces, incorporation could then proceed as a sort of coordination-internal across-the-board movement. I will leave these matters open. Rather, I will propose an alternative analysis which focusses more on the constituency than on the agreement pattern.

### 5.3 Expressive Small Clause Analysis

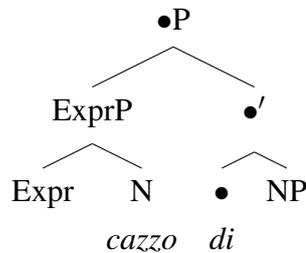
In this section, I would like to propose an alternative analysis based on den Dikken (2006)'s analysis of attributive QBNPs (see section 3.2). I assume that *di* is the spell-out of the relator function between expressive *cazzo* and the  $N_2$ . I further propose that in this case the relator function is the functional head  $\bullet$ , which was proposed to be the binding element between expressive and descriptive content by Potts (2007). As in the attributive QBNP, where the predicate is in the specifier of RP, I analyse *cazzo* as being merged in the specifier of  $\bullet$ P. This is justified by the fact that, if one wants to curry down the  $\bullet$ -function into binary steps, it can be argued to be a function which first takes an expression with descriptive content  $\alpha$  and then relates it to one with expressive content  $\beta$ , returning  $\alpha$  with altered context of interpretation.<sup>37</sup> Crucially, I assume that only expressive categories can

<sup>37</sup>The function is originally given by Potts (2007: 187) as (i), where “in short, we interpret the logical expression  $\beta$  in its original form, but with respect to a modified context”, with concession that its composition must be worked out (Potts, 2007: 189) ( $\sigma$  is a descriptive and  $\varepsilon$  an expressive type).

(i) Where  $\alpha$  is of type  $\langle \sigma, \varepsilon \rangle$  and  $\beta$  is of type  $\sigma$ ,

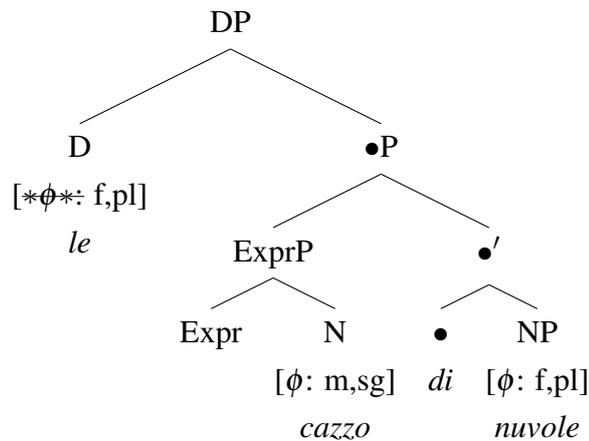
be merged in the specifier of  $\bullet P$  and that such expressive nouns are built by merger of the functional category  $\text{ExprP}(\text{essive})$  nominal roots of an adequate meaning. The functional category is further justified by the fact that expressives are analysed by Potts (2007) as an expression of type  $\langle \sigma, \varepsilon \rangle$ , which I attribute to the  $\text{ExprP}$  projection. The resulting structure is given in (84).

(84)



The next step is merger of D which wants to discharge its probe. At this point, we see that the last set of assumptions was crucial. In fact, as can be seen in the structure in (84), *cazzo* is too deeply embedded to c-command  $N_2$ . Following the standard definition of closeness based on asymmetric c-command (section 2.2), *cazzo* is not closer to D than  $N_2$  so that D can agree with  $N_2$ . The final structure is given in (85).

(85)



## 5.4 Discussion

As was the intention, the analysis in terms of an expressive small clause offers the main advantage to have a structure with the right constituency of the  $N_2$  with *di* to the exclusion of *cazzo*. Furthermore, the movement facts, too, follow from the structure in (85), cf. (43). On the one hand, following standard assumptions, the constituent [*di*  $N_2$ ] cannot be moved because it is an  $X'$ -constituent. This is shown in (86-b) for topicalisation. On the other hand, the fact that the  $N_2$  alone cannot be extracted, as shown in (86-c), follows from the impossibility to strand heads in Italian (e.g. *\*Scuola è dove è andato a* ‘School is where

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$$[[\alpha]^c \bullet [\beta]^c = [[\beta]]^c [[\alpha]^c ([\beta]^c)^c]$$

he went to’).

- (86) a. La mia cazzo di chiave di casa ho perso!  
the my Expr of key of house have.1SG lost  
‘My fucking house key (is what) I have lost.’
- b. \*Di chiave di casa ho perso la mia cazzo!  
of key of house have.1SG lost the my Expr
- c. \*Chiave di casa ho perso la mia cazzo di!  
key of house have.1SG lost the my Expr of

In the same way as in the incorporation analysis in section 5.1, the facts about modification, coordination and contrastive focus of *cazzo* follow from the fact that I analysed the expressive as being formed by Expr and, crucially, the nominal root (see section 5.2).

Turning to the agreement properties of the construction, the pattern follows from the assumptions about expressives. They were assumed to be formed by merger with the functional head Expr. This was required under the assumption that, crucially, only ExprPs can be merged in Spec,●P. This had the consequence that the noun is too deeply embedded to c-command  $N_2$  so that the noun in the ExprP does not act as an intervener. D can probe past it.

The attentive reader should have noticed, however, that ‘can probe past *cazzo*’ does not imply ‘will/must probe past *cazzo*’. The analysis outline above can explain why the agreement pattern can surface in the first place, it has not shown why it systematically has to surface that way, yet. Two possibilities come to mind. For one, it could be possible to re-define the definition of closeness in terms of the number of non-minimal projections between the probe and its goal(s). A definition is given in (87), where maximal and minimal refer to the bare-phrase structural status of syntactic objects as in Chomsky (1995).<sup>38</sup>

- (87)  $\alpha$  is closer to  $\beta$  than  $\gamma$  iff:
- $\beta$  c-commands  $\alpha$ , and
  - the cardinality of non-minimal projections between  $\alpha$  and the category immediately dominating  $\beta$  is smaller than the cardinality of non-minimal projections between  $\gamma$  and the category immediately dominating  $\beta$ .

With the definition in (87),  $N_2$  would be closer to D than *cazzo* because there are two non-minimal projections between *cazzo* and DP (viz. ●P and ExprP), while there is only one between  $N_2$  and DP (viz. ●P) because ●’ is both a maximal and a minimal projection (it has not discharged its sub-categorisation feature for Expr). However, I view such

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<sup>38</sup>Note that counting the number of maximal projections would not do the trick because ●’ is both minimal and maximal.

a definition as problematic because of the general understanding that ‘syntax does not count’ (cf. e.g. Chomsky, 1972), but also because while minimal and maximal categories are objects/categories which are plausibly identifiable by a search algorithm, the category *non-minimal* is not a primitive because it is not equal to its contrary (maximal). I find it implausible then to assume that there is a search algorithm in syntax which counts the number of absences of the category ‘minimal’ on syntactic objects.

Alternatively, it can be assumed that D somehow ‘knows’ that its intended goal is  $N_2$ . There are many possibilities of how this can be understood. Let me explore just one here. The idea is that the  $\bullet$ -function, along with its specifier, can be interleaved at certain points of the extended nominal projection, but that this does not change the fact that D and  $N_2$  belong together. How can this be formalised? Let us assume that there is a bond that exists between the lexical head and all the elements of its extended projection and that this is formally available. For one, let us assume that, whether they are called Extended Projections (Grimshaw, 1991), Hierarchies of Projections (Adger, 2003, 2010) or Functional Sequence (Starke, 2001), such a sequence exists as an object. In addition, just as lexical items are indexed as they are selected from the Numeration to enter the syntactic derivation (cf. Chomsky, 1995), let us further assume that functional sequences that enter the derivation are also indexed and that this index is carried by every element belonging to this sequence (for something along these lines, see Adger, 2010). Now, assuming that the  $\bullet$ -projection (and the ExprP it selects for) do not belong to this functional sequence, D and  $N_2$  (but not D and *cazzo*) will share an index. At this point, this information can either be exploited as a default setting, i.e. as a preference to agree with the co-indexed item in case there are two equi-distant goals to choose from. Or it can be attempted to built it directly into the definition of Agree, as e.g. in (88). To conclude, the second option seems to be somewhat vacuous if (88-e.) is understood as excluding *cazzo* as a potential goal from the beginning. Unfortunately, I must leave this issue unresolved here.

(88) *Agree* (extended definition)

$\alpha$  can agree with  $\beta$  iff:

- a.  $\alpha$  carries at least one unvalued and uninterpretable feature and  $\beta$  carries a matching interpretable and valued feature.
- b.  $\alpha$  c-commands  $\beta$
- c.  $\beta$  is the closest goal to  $\alpha$
- d.  $\beta$  bears an unvalued uninterpretable feature.
- e.  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  have the same functional-sequence index.

## 5.5 Comparison

In this section, I have proposed two analyses of the *cazzo-of-N* construction and its agreement pattern. In both analyses, the  $N_1$  was analysed as being structurally small, a head, or a root. This explained many of its structural properties, e.g. the fact that it is impossible to coordinate it with nouns of the same class, or the fact that it cannot be modified as a phrase while it can be modified by elements which (are compatible with an analysis where they) modify derivationally. As for the agreement pattern, in the first analysis, the  $N_1$  was assumed to start the derivation in a symmetric small clause together with the  $N_2$  and to subsequently head-move and incorporate into *di*. As a consequence of head movement and hence syntactic incorporation into *di*, the  $N_1$  becomes invisible for later computation so that it does not intervene when D is merged and probes for  $\phi$ -features. However, since  $N_1$  incorporates,  $N_2$  should no longer be able to form a constituent with *di* to the exclusion of  $N_1$ , contrary to fact. In the second analysis, an asymmetric small-clause structure is assumed, in particular a structure where the  $N_2$  is merged as the complement, and the  $N_1$  as the specifier of a small clause head was proposed. The expressive noun was proposed to be analysed as a nominal root merged with a dedicated functional head Expr(essive) to form an ExprP, the category which was proposed to be selected by the small clause head as its second argument. As a consequence, the  $N_1$  is too deeply embedded to c-command the  $N_2$  and does not qualify as the closest goal anymore. However, neither does the  $N_2$  as it also does not asymmetrically c-command  $N_1$ . Rather, the two Ns are equi-distant from D in terms of c-command.

In conclusion, the incorporation analysis has a clear and straightforward way of deriving the agreement pattern while it suffers from potential problems concerning the constituency of *di* plus  $N_1$  vs. *di* plus  $N_2$ . The structure argued for in the expressive small clause approach, on the other hand, has the right constituency, but it can be argued to have a less solid explanation for the obligatoriness of the agreement with  $N_2$ . Both analyses have empirical problems, though it is difficult to determine which problems are worse. More tests that can differentiate between them are required at this point.

## 6 Conclusions

In this paper, a novel binominal construction from Italian was introduced, the *cazzo-of-N* construction, where nouns of the expressive type occur as its  $N_1$ . An example of this construction is repeated in (89).

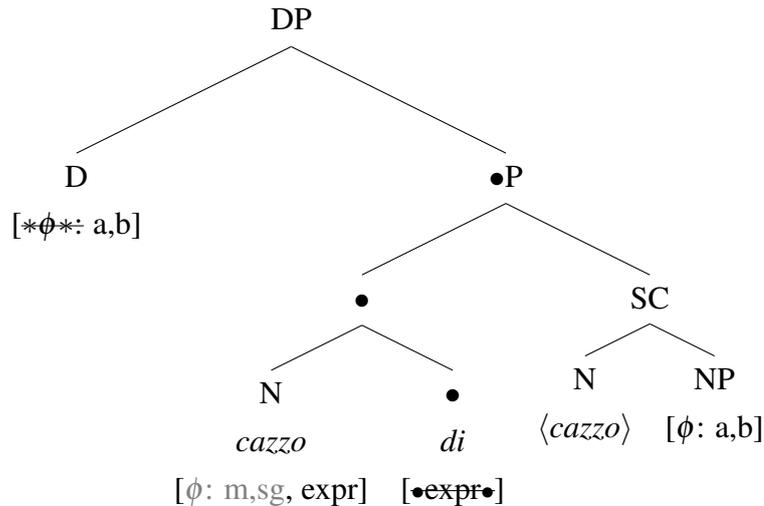
- (89) Prometti=mi di non usar=le mai più [quest-e cazz-o di  
 promise.IMP=me C not use=it.F.PL never more this-F.PL EXPR-M.SG of  
 forbici ]!  
 scissors.F.PL  
 ‘Promise me never to use these fucking scissors again!’

The *cazzo-of-N* construction was shown to differ both in its morpho-syntactic as well as in its basic semantic properties from other well-studied binominal constructions. Particular emphasis was given to the contrast with the Qualitative Binominal NP and the Pseudopartitive construction. The main concern of this paper was the construction’s agreement pattern which was shown to be problematic for an Agree-based approach to  $\phi$ -feature co-variation between determiners and nouns. In fact, the basic observable structure of the construction was shown to be the one (90), where, given that minimality is defined in terms of closest c-command, and closeness is defined in terms of asymmetric c-command between the goals, the *cazzo-of-N* construction instantiates an agreement pattern which is in violation of minimality: D agrees with  $N_2$  rather than with the closer  $N_1$ .

- (90) [DP D<sub>[\* $\phi$ \*,a,b]</sub> [[ N<sub>1</sub><sub>[ $\phi$ :b,c]</sub>] [XP of N<sub>2</sub><sub>[ $\phi$ :a,b]</sub>]]]

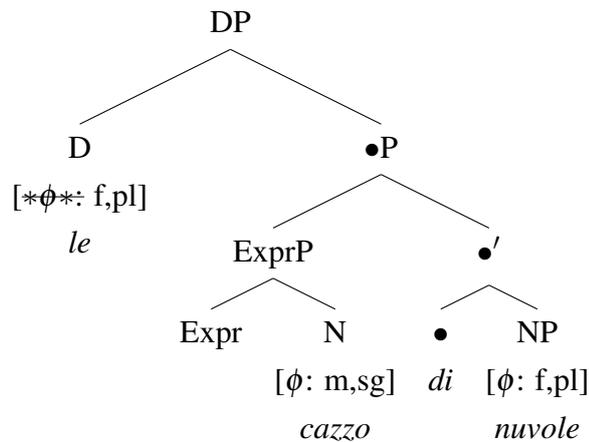
Incorporating many other properties of the construction, in particular properties of the expressive  $N_1$ , and formulating a number of hypotheses on the way, two analyses were proposed. In both analyses, the  $N_1$  was analysed as being structurally small, a head, or a root. This explained many of its structural properties, e.g. the fact that it is impossible to coordinate it, or the fact that it cannot be modified as a phrase while it can be modified by elements which (are compatible with an analysis where they) modify the noun derivationally. In the first analysis, this head was assumed to start the derivation in a symmetric small clause, together with the  $N_2$ . When the functional projection realised by *di* ‘of’ is merged, the  $N_1$ , being just a head, was analysed to head-move and incorporate into the head *di*. This was assumed to be triggered by a merge-triggering feature on *di*, selectively attracting the  $N_1$  with an apposite [expr(essive)]-feature. As a consequence of head movement and hence syntactic incorporation into *di*, the  $N_1$  becomes invisible for later computation so that it does not intervene when D is merged and probes for  $\phi$ -features. I repeat the final structure in (91).

(91)



In the second analysis, aimed at correcting a potential problem that the first analysis had with the constituency of *di* and  $N_2$ , building on work by den Dikken (2006) on the attributive QBNP construction, an asymmetric small-clause approach was taken. In particular, a structure where the  $N_2$  is merged as the complement, and the  $N_1$  as the specifier of the small clause head was proposed. The motivation for this configuration was argued for on semantic grounds, namely by making a proposal of how to curry down/schönfinkel the  $\bullet$ -function introduced by Potts (2007) as the ‘expressive glue’, i.e. the function which connects expressions of the expressive type with expressions of the descriptive type. This  $\bullet$ -function was proposed to be realised by *di* and to sub-categorise for expressions of the expressive type, the  $N_1$ , to merge in its specifier. Building again on Potts (2007), the expressive noun was proposed to be analysed as a nominal root merged with a dedicated functional head Expr(essive) to form an ExprP, the category which was proposed to be selected by the  $\bullet$ -head as its second argument. I repeat the final structure in (92).

(92)



Given that in (92) the  $N_1$  is first merged with Expr, it is too deeply embedded to c-command the  $N_2$ . Hence, the  $N_1$  is no longer the closer goal. Since, however, neither

the  $N_2$  is the closest goal to D, but rather the two Ns are equi-distant in terms of c-command, two solutions to this problem were offered, one based on counting the number of non-minimal projections between the goal and the node immediately dominating the head with the probe, the other based on co-indexation of elements belonging to the same functional sequence so that, given that ExprP is not part of the same functional sequence as  $N_2$  and D, when equi-distant,  $N_2$  is chosen over  $N_1$  in ExprP as the goal of Agree.

In conclusion of the analysis section, the two analyses were compared. On the one hand, the incorporation analysis has a clear and straightforward way of deriving the agreement pattern, it suffers from potential problems concerning the constituency of *di* plus  $N_1$  vs. *di* plus  $N_2$ . The expressive small clause analysis, on the other hand, can easily overcome the problem of constituency, but can be argued to have a less rooted explanation for the systematicity of the construction's agreement pattern.

To conclude, the choice between one or the other analysis, or even a third, awaits further research. The *cazzo-of-N* construction has left many open questions, of which this paper has tried to address as many as possible, with further challenging properties hinted at in the final section, and probably even more yet to be discovered.

## Appendix

### A Other Properties of Interest of *Cazzo-of-N*

In this section, a number of properties of the *cazzo-of-N* construction which have not received attention in this paper will be discussed. I will limit myself to a purely descriptive level here, pointing occasionally to interesting theoretical problems that might be worth the attention of future research.

#### A.1 Co-Occurrence with Other Binominal Constructions

##### A.1.1 Kind-of-N

*Cazzo* can be combined with binominals where the  $N_1$  is a kind-denoting noun.<sup>39</sup> It can, however, only occur externally, i.e. adding expressive content either to the kind-nominal or to the binominal as a whole, cf. (93). Examples where *cazzo* occurs between the two nouns are ungrammatical, cf. (93).

- (93) a. È una cazzo di specie di animale.  
it's a    EXPR of species of animal
- b. La cazzo di specie dei Dodo si è già estinta  
the EXPR of species of.the Dodo self is already extinct  
'The fucking species of the Dodo is already extinct.'
- c. Sta usando un cazzo di tipo di telefono piuttosto strano  
is using a EXPR of kind of telephone quite weird  
'He's using really quite the strange kind of telephone.'
- (94) a. \*È una specie di cazzo di animale.  
is a    species of EXPR of animal
- b. \*La specie dei cazzo di Dodo si è già estinta.  
the species of.the EXPR of Dodo self is already extinct
- c. \*Sta usando un tipo di (un) cazzo di telefono piuttosto strano.  
is using a kind of    EXPR of telephone quite weird

##### A.1.2 QBNP

QBNPs can also be combined with *cazzo*, but just as with the *kind-of-N* construction, this is only possible when *cazzo* occurs in front of the  $N_1$ . The determiner of the QBNP in front of the  $N_1$  cannot appear when *cazzo* co-occurs. Agreement is with the  $N_1$ .

<sup>39</sup>For work on *kind-nominal* see e.g. Zamparelli (1995, 1998).

- (95) a. Quell' idiota di dottore (Attributive)  
 that idiot of doctor
- b. Quel cazzo di idiota di dottore  
 that EXPR of idiot of doctor  
 'That fucking idiot of a doctor'
- c. \*Quell' idiota di (un) cazzo di dottore  
 that idiot of a EXPR of doctor
- d. Quell' idiota del dottore (Comparative)  
 that idiot of.the doctor
- e. Quel cazzo di idiota del dottore  
 that EXPR of idiot of.the doctor
- f. \*Quell' idiota del cazzo di dottore  
 that idiot of.the EXPR of doctor

### A.1.3 Pseudopartitives

The interaction between the *cazzo-of-N* and the pseudopartitive construction is slightly more interesting. In fact, the grammaticality of examples where *cazzo* occurs between the pseudopartitive and its N<sub>2</sub> differ depending on the specific pseudopartitive. With the semi-functional *bottiglia* 'bottle' in (96-a), which can itself be modified, low *cazzo* is impossible. With more functional N<sub>1</sub>s, in the sense that they cannot be modified themselves, low *cazzo* is possible, though such examples are slightly marked, cf. (96-bcd).

- (96) a. \*Ha comprato una bottiglia di cazzo di vino.  
 has bought a bottle of EXPR of wine
- b. ?Ha {un sacco, una marea} di cazzo di cose da fare.  
 has a bag a tide of EXPR of things to do
- c. ??Ha un mare di cazzo di cose da fare.  
 has a sea of EXPR of things to do

High occurrence of *cazzo* is generally possible for N<sub>1</sub>s such as *bottiglia*, both in the container reading in (97-a), where the verb selects the bottle semantically, and in the quantity reading in (97-b), where the verb selects the wine semantically.

- (97) a. Ha comprato un-a cazz-o di bottigli-a di vin-o.  
 has bought a-F.SG EXPR-M.SG of bottle-F.SG of wine-M.SG
- b. Ha bevuto un-a cazz-o di bottigli-a di vin-o francese.  
 has drunk a-F.SG EXPR-M.SG of bottle-F.SG of wine-M.SG French.M.SG

For the more functional ones, high occurrence of *cazzo* requires to refer to the figurative meaning of the N<sub>1</sub>s. For example, in (98-a) having *cazzo* occur before *mare* ‘sea’ forces a very figurative reading based on the lexical meaning of the N<sub>1</sub>. This can be seen by the contrast between (98-a) and (98-b) based on the fact that, on the figurative level, it is plausible to be flooded by a sea of people, but not by an explosion of people.

- (98) a. ?Siamo stati inondati da un cazzo di mare di gente.  
 be.1PL been flooded by a.M.SG EXPR of sea.M.SG of people.F.SG
- b. \*Siamo stati inondati da un cazzo di botto di gente.  
 be.1PL been flooded by a.M.SG EXPR of explosion.M.SG of people.F.SG

In the same vein, a high occurrence of *cazzo* with *mare* ‘tide’ is possible with a figurative-lexical reading of the N<sub>1</sub>. This reading is blocked when the verbal agreement goes with the N<sub>2</sub>. This is shown in (99-ab). High occurrences of *cazzo* with *sacco* ‘bag’ are generally impossible and in fact no figurative-lexical reading of it is allowed in this construction, cf. (100).

- (99) a. ?Ci ha inondato un-a (cazzo di) mare-a di person-e.  
 us has flooded a-F.SG EXPR of tide-F.SG of person-F.PL
- b. \*Ci hanno inondato un-a (cazzo di) mare-a di person-e.  
 us have.3PL flooded a-F.SG EXPR of tide-F.SG of person-F.PL
- (100) \*È venut-a/-o un cazzo di sacc-o di gente.  
 is come-F.SG/-M.SG a.M.SG EXPR of bag-M.SG of people.F.SG

## A.2 *Cazzo* and Adjectives

As was discussed at length in this paper, adjectives cannot modify expressive *cazzo*. They must modify the N<sub>2</sub>. Interestingly, when they do, they can occur both in pre-*cazzo* and pre-N<sub>2</sub> position. Unfortunately, the scope of this paper does not allow me to go through all the different classes of adjectives in detail. Consequently, I will limit myself to pointing to representative examples. Overall, I include this section because the possibility for adjectives to appear on both sides of *cazzo* creates at first sight problems for a cartographic conception of adjectival modification where different classes of adjectives are merged in the specifier of designated heads of a fixed functional projection (cf. Cinque, 2010).

### A.2.1 Non-Restrictive Adjectives

Non-restrictive adjectives, i.e. adjectives which denote a quality that is inherently or knowingly part of the denotation of the noun they modify can occur pre-nominally in Ital-

ian.<sup>40</sup> Hence, the meaning of (101-a) is unambiguously non-restrictive (Cinque, 2003). In the same example, the non-restrictive adjective cannot, however, also occur in front of expressive *cazzo*, cf. (101-b). This is only possible if the adjective is given a focussed intonation, though it is then interpreted as a restrictive adjective, contrastively focussing with the lessons of Ferri which are not boring, cf. (101-c).

- (101) a. Le noiose lezioni di Ferri se le ricordano tutti.  
 the boring classes of Ferri REFL them remember everybody  
 (unambiguous)
- ‘Everybody remembers F’s classes, all of which were boring’ (non-restrictive)  
 #‘Everybody remembers just F’s classes which were boring’ (restrictive)
- b. Le (\*noiose) cazzo di noiose lezioni di Ferri se le ricordano tutti. (non-restrictive)
- c. Le noIOse cazzo di (\*noIOse) lezioni di Ferri se le ricordano tutti. (restrictive, with contrastive focus)

### A.2.2 Subjective Adjectives

Subjective adjectives, which apply only to a certain level of the modified noun’s denotation (cf. Kamp and Partee, 1995), can also occur pre-nominally. Within the *cazzo-of-N* construction, they can appear in both positions. There is no obvious difference in meaning depending on the word order.

- (102) a. un vecchio amico d’infanzia  
 a old friend of childhood
- b. non indovinerai mai chi ho incontrato ieri: quel {vecchio} cazzo di  
 you will never guess who I met yesterday: that old CAZZO of  
 {vecchio} amico d’infanzia di Gianni  
 old friend of childhood of Gianni  
 ‘You will never guess who I met yesterday: my old childhood friend Gianni.’

### A.2.3 Idiomatic Adjectives

The idiomatic adjective in (103) (Cinque, 2003) must occur post-*cazzo*, else it loses its idiomatic interpretation.

- (103) a. ti manca il buon senso  
 you lack the good sense

<sup>40</sup>The literature on different classes of adjectives is vast. For an overview, see e.g. Panayidou (2013: section 2.2.3).

‘you lack common sense’

- b. ti manca il {#buon} cazzo di {buon} senso  
you lack the good CAZZO of good sense

#### A.2.4 Individual/Stage Level Adjectives

Individual/stage level adjectives as in (104-ab) (Cinque, 2003), when in pre-nominal position, have an unambiguously individual-level meaning in Italian. In combination with *cazzo*, they can appear in both positions wrt *cazzo*, also maintaining a strict individual-level reading, cf. (104-c). This differs to the non-restrictive adjective above, which could not occur in pre-*cazzo* position. Similarly to the non-restrictive adjective, however, they can have the other reading when contrastively focussed, obligatorily occurring high, cf. (104-d).

- (104) Le invisibili stelle di Andromeda sono molto distanti. (unambiguous)
- a. ‘A’s stars, which are generally invisible, are very far’ (individual-level)
- b. #‘A’s stars, generally visible, which happen to be invisible now, are very far’ (stage-level)
- c. Le {<sup>?</sup>invisibili} cazzo di {invisibili} stelle di Andromeda sono molto  
the invisible Expr of invisible stars of Andromeda are very  
distanti.  
distant (individual-level)
- d. Le {inviSibili} cazzo di {\*inviSibili} stelle di Andromeda sono molto  
the invisible Expr of invisible stars of Andromeda are very  
distanti.  
distant (stage-level)

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