

## 1 The Cazzo-of-N Construction (CoN)

- (1) Q: *É un aereo? ... É un aereo? ...*  
is it a aereo is it a airplane  
'Is it an airplane? ... Is it an airplane? ...'  
R: *Sí, é un cazzo di aereo!*  
yes it's a dick of airplane  
'Yes, it's a fucking airplane all right!'

- *Cazzo*, lit. 'dick', as the  $N_1$  of the CoN, adds *expressive* content, cf. Potts (2007)
- It expresses the speaker's attitude towards (a part of) the event
- It behaves like English *damn* or *fucking* wrt Potts' tests for expressive elements: *independence, nondisplaceability, perspective dependence, descriptive ineffability, immediacy* and *repeatability*
- It is linked to the  $N_2$  carrying the descriptive content by the prepositional element *di* 'of'

## 2 NON-MINIMAL AGREEMENT

- *Cazzo* is a masculine noun, obligatorily singular in the CoN
- Main feature: the determiner agrees with the  $N_2$  rather than with the  $N_1$  *cazzo*, cf. (2)
- In its literal meaning and in other constructions it is possible to agree with it

- (2) a. *quest-a cazz-o di rob-a*  
this-F.SG dick-M.SG of stuff-F.SG  
'This fucking stuff'  
b. *quest-e cazz-o di banan-e*  
this-F.PL dick-M.SG of banana-F.PL  
'These fucking bananas'  
c. *quest-i cazz-o di coltell-i*  
this-M.PL dick-M.SG of knife-M.PL  
'These fucking knives'

## 3 Internal Structure

- $D > N_1$ : D does not agree with  $N_1$
  - *di* 'of' forms a constituent with  $N_2$  to the exclusion of  $N_1$ : the prepositional linker *di* 'of' must be repeated under coordination in (3)
- (3) *Ste cazzo di mosche e \*(di) zanzare mi*  
these dick of flies and of mosquitoes me.DAT  
*hanno proprio rotto!*  
have.3PL really annoyed  
'These fucking flies and mosquitoes really got on my nerves!'
- Preliminary structure:  $D > N_1 > of, N_2$
- (4)  $[_{DP} D [cazzo [of [_{NP} aereo ] ] ] ]$

## 5 Deficiency of the $N_1$

### MODIFICATION:

- $N_1$  cannot be modified as a phrase, but it can be modified derivationally/as a head: (5) vs. (6)
- (5) *\*ste cazzo {brutto, grande, ...} di nuvole*  
these dick ugly big of clouds  
'(Intended) these really-fucking clouds.'
- (6) a. *ste {stra-, super-, mega-} cazzo di nuvole*  
these extra- super- mega- dick of clouds  
'These really-fucking clouds.'  
b. *ste cazz-acci-o di nuvole*  
these dick-PEJ-M.SG of clouds  
'(Intended) These really-fucking clouds.'

### COORDINATION:

- Coordination of two  $N_1$ s is not possible for the CoN
  - Other  $N_1$ s: *cavolo* 'cabbage', *cacchio* 'poop', *capperi* 'capers', *accidenti* 'curses', *minchia* 'dick', ...
- (7) *\*ste cazzo e/o cavolo di nuvole*  
these dick and/or cabbage of clouds

## 4 THEORETICAL CHALLENGE

- Minimalism as in Chomsky (1995, 2000, 2001): structure is built up by satisfying the need of Merge and Agree to check off features
  - Merge and Agree are subject to locality conditions
  - Null hypothesis: feature co-occurrences are the result of Agree
  - Concord between D and  $N_2$  in the CoN stands at odds with Minimality (closeness)
- (8) *Agree* (cf. Chomsky, 2000: 122–123)  
 $\alpha$  can agree with  $\beta$  iff:  
a.  $\alpha$  carries at least one unvalued and uninterpretable feature and  $\beta$  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.
- (9) *Closeness* (cf. Chomsky, 2000: 122)  
A 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  $G'$ .
- (10) *Agreement under Minimality*  
a.  $[_{DP} D[*\alpha:ab] [N_1[\alpha:ab]] [_{XP} X N_2[\alpha:cd]]]$  EXPECTED  
b.  $*[_{DP} D[*\alpha:cd] [N_1[\alpha:ab]] [_{XP} X N_2[\alpha:cd]]]$  CON

## 6 Contrast to Other Binominals

### AGREEMENT:

- *N-of-an-N* (NoN; cf. e.g. den Dikken 2006; Kayne 1994): D with  $N_1$  in number and gender;  $N_1$  with  $N_2$  in number
  - *Kind-of-N* (KoN; cf. e.g. Zamparelli 1998): D with  $N_1$
- (13) a. *que-i fior-i di ragazz-e*  
that-M.PL flowers-M.PL of girls-F.PL  
'(lit.) Those flowers of girls' NoN  
b. *que-l tip-o di banan-e*  
that-M.SG kind-M.SG of banana-F.PL  
'That kind of bananas' KoN

### MODIFICATION:

- Phrasal modification of the  $N_1$  in the NoN and KoN is possible
- (14) a. *quel [gioello prezioso] di ragazza*  
that jewel precious of girl  
'That precious jewel of a girl' NoN  
b. *quel [tipo strano] di macchina*  
that kind strange of car  
'That strange kind of car' KoN

### COORDINATION:

- $N_1$  of NoN and KoN can be coordinated with other  $N_1$ s
- (15) a. *quel fiore e gioello di ragazza*  
that flower and jewel of girl  
'That flower and jewel of a girl' NoN  
b. *quella specie o genere di macchina*  
that kind or kind of car  
'That kind or type of car' KoN

### CONTRASTIVE FOCUS:

- $N_1$  of NoN and KoN can be focussed in contrast with other  $N_1$ s
- (16) a. *É un FIOre di ragazza... (non un gioIELlo)*  
she's a flower of girl not a jewel  
'She's a FLOWER of girl (not a JEWEL)' NoN  
b. *É una SPEcie di pianta... (non un GENere)*  
it's a species of plant not a genre/kind  
'It's a SPEcies of plant (not a GENre)' KoN

### CONTRASTIVE FOCUS:

- *cazzo* cannot be focused in contrast to other nouns which can be used as  $N_1$  of the CoN
- (11) *\*la CAZzo di banana (non CAVolo)*  
the dick of banana not cabbage  
'(Intended) The FUcking banana (not the DAMN)'

### ITERATION:

- *cazzo* cannot be iterated
  - i.e. the  $N_2$  can be combined with an expressive  $N_1$  only once
- (12) *\*É una cazzo di {cavolo,cacchio,...} di banana.*  
it's a dick of cabbage,poop of banana  
'It's a fucking banana (alright)'

## Some Conclusions

- The  $N_1$  of the CoN, and the CoN as a whole, exhibits a systematically different behaviour from other binominal construction (and standard N+argument binominals, not shown here)
- *cazzo* can be taken to be in a position granting it a coherently different semantics
- This position must not be the specifier of some projection, else it would c-command the  $N_2$  and act as an intervener for Agree from D
- Assuming that instead *cazzo* is merged with a different category and that the complex is in the specifier of, e.g., a small clause yield the desired results
- *cazzo* is then part of a different category, and, crucially, does not intervene for Agree

## 7 Expressive Projection

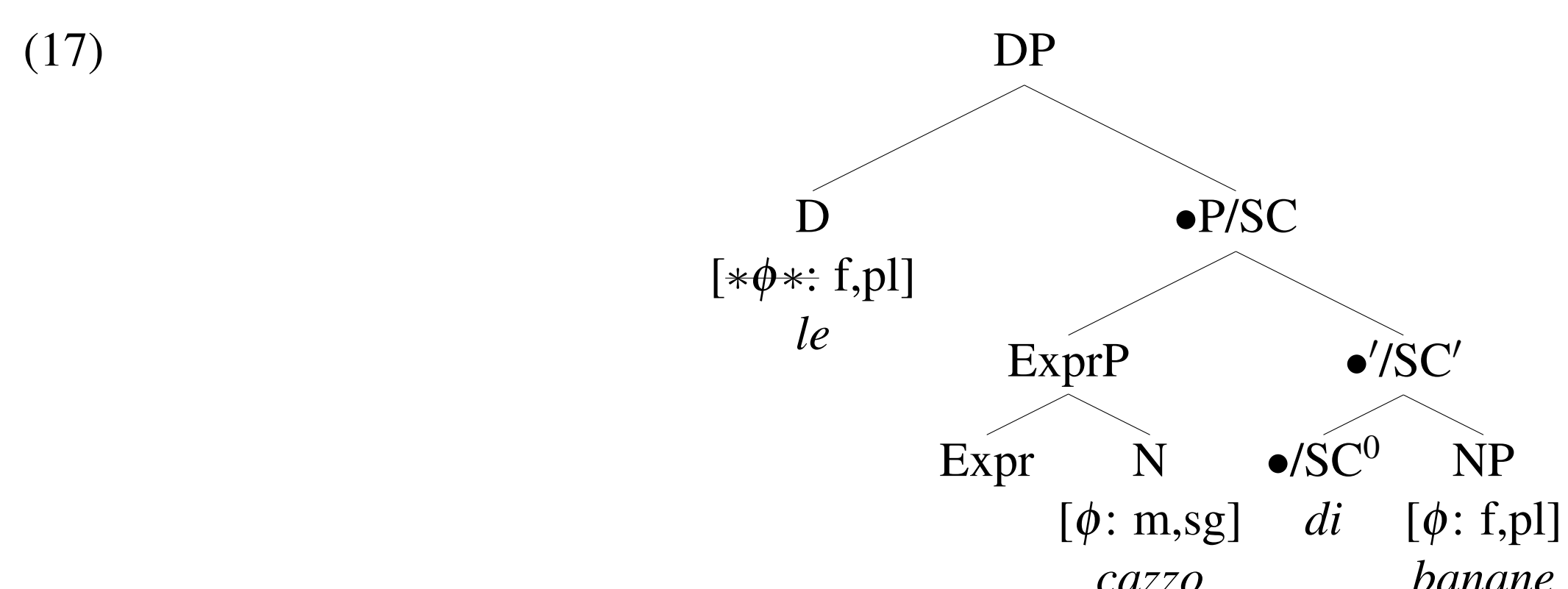
### ANALYSIS:

- There is a functional element, *Expr*, which embeds the  $N_1$  *cazzo*
- *cazzo* is then too deeply embedded to intervene, i.e. to asymmetrically c-command  $N_2$
- *Expr*, can be taken to change the semantic type of *cazzo* from a *descriptive type* to an *expressive type* (cf. Potts, 2007)
- The small clause formed between the  $N_2$ , carrying the descriptive content, and the *ExprP* with the  $N_1$ , carrying the expressive content, can be viewed as the syntactic instantiation of Pott's  $\bullet$ -function:

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

$\alpha$  is of type  $(\sigma, \varepsilon)$  and  $\beta$  is of type  $\sigma$ , where  $\sigma$  is a descriptive and  $\varepsilon$  an expressive semantic type

- I propose to carry down this function to being 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



## 8 Discussion and Conclusion

### CONSEQUENCES:

- The structure in (17) accounts for the fact that the  $N_1$  does not intervene in the Agree relation between D and  $N_2$
- And it yields the right constituency between D and  $N_1$ , prepositional *di* and  $N_2$ , and  $N_1$  and the complex *di-N<sub>2</sub>*

### OPEN QUESTIONS:

- The  $N_1$  does not intervene, but, in principle, it is still accessible for D
- How does D 'know' which N to agree with? There must be something else going on
- Also: How do the other properties of the  $N_1$  follow from (17)?

### SOLUTION AND CONCLUSIONS:

- *Expr* is a category that combines with roots, but crucially before syntax proper
- As a consequence, *cazzo* does not count as a noun for syntax and does not contain features which are added in syntax (or does not start its own nominal functional projection)
- NUMBER: *cazzo* is obligatorily singular because number is added to nouns in syntax
- AGREEMENT: *cazzo* does not have a case probe (or project its own KP, case phrase) so it lacks an unvalued probe and is not active for Agree relations (Activity Condition, Chomsky 2000)
- MODIFICATION: adjectives cannot modify *cazzo* because they adjoin to NPs or are part of the nominal projection. Derivational morphology must be added before syntax proper or before features are added (or the nominal projection is started; potentially at odds with models such as Distributed Morphology Halle and Marantz 1993)
- COORDINATION, CONTRASTIVE FOCUS: heads cannot be coordinated or contrastively focussed, the same must hold for *ExprP*



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