

Che cazzo di articolo di merda!

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Outline

Introduction

Some basic syntax

The data

Towards an analysis

Conclusions

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Some basic syntax

The data

Towards an analysis

Conclusions

Introduction

- ▶ Binominal construction
 - ▶ N1: Expressive N (ExprN) (**cazzo**, **merda**)
 - ▶ N2: Referential N (RefN)

(1) Che **cazzo** / **merda** di articolo!
what dick / shit of paper

Introduction

- ▶ Binominal construction
 - ▶ N1: Expressive N (ExprN) (**cazzo**, **merda**)
 - ▶ N2: Referential N (RefN)

(1) Che **cazzo** / **merda** di articolo!
what dick / shit of paper

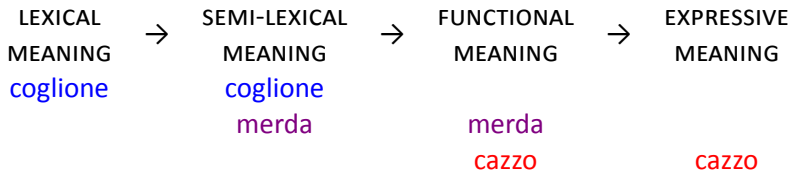
(2) Che articolo di **merda** / del **cazzo**!
what paper of shit / of.the dick

This talk

- ▶ We look at some data that are not predicted by existing analyses.
- ▶ The data involve a set of contrasts between various types of expressive nouns in Italian (**cazzo**, **merda**, **coglione**).
- ▶ These contrasts (in part) fit in the theory of semilexicality proposed by Cavarani-Pots (2020), but also suggest an extension of it (along the lines of Postma 1995).

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- ▶ These contrasts (in part) fit in the theory of semilexicality proposed by Cavirani-Pots (2020), but also suggest an extension of it (along the lines of Postma 1995).



This talk

	cazzo	merda	coglione
	COUNT	COUNT/MASS	COUNT
#	SG	SG	SG
		PL	PL
GENDER	M	F	M
			ANIMATE

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Introduction

Some basic syntax

The data

Towards an analysis

Conclusions

One predicative, and two expressive positions

- (3) a. Quell' articolo è una merda. PREDICATIVE POS.
that paper is a shit
'That paper is shit.'
- b. Che merda di articolo! EXPRESSIVE POS. 1
what shit of paper
'What a shit of a paper!'
- c. Che articolo di merda! EXPRESSIVE POS. 2
what paper of shit
'What a shit of a paper!'

Outline

Introduction

Some basic syntax

The data

Stacking

Mass/count

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Towards an analysis

Conclusions

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Introduction

Some basic syntax

The data

Stacking

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Number

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Towards an analysis

Conclusions

Stacking

- ▶ EP1: cazzo > merda > RefN
- ▶ EP2: RefN > merda > cazzo

Stacking - EP1 + EP1 and EP2 + EP2

(4) Che **cazzo** di **merda** di articolo!
what dick of shit of paper!

(5) *Che **merda** di **cazzo** di articolo!
what shit of dick of paper!

▶ ***merda** > **cazzo**

Stacking - EP1 + EP1 and EP2 + EP2

(4) Che **cazzo** di **merda** di articolo!
what dick of shit of paper!

(5) *Che **merda** di **cazzo** di articolo!
what shit of dick of paper!

▶ ***merda** > **cazzo**

(6) ?Che articolo di **merda** del **cazzo**!
what paper of shit of dick!

(7) *Che articolo del **cazzo** di **merda**!
what paper of dick of shit!

▶ ***cazzo** > **merda**

Outline

Introduction

Some basic syntax

The data

Stacking

Mass/count

Number

Gender

Towards an analysis

Conclusions

Mass/count

(8) Che articolo **del cazzo** / **di merda**!
What paper of.the dick / of shit

▶ **cazzo** is COUNT

▶ **merda** is MASS

Outline

Introduction

Some basic syntax

The data

Stacking

Mass/count

Number

Gender

Towards an analysis

Conclusions

#-agreement

- ▶ **cazzo**
 - ▶ never #-agrees with PL RefN and D, always SG
 - ▶ it lacks the feature PL
 - ▶ its SG feature is either absent or invisible
- ▶ **merda**
 - ▶ #-agrees with PL RefN and D
 - ▶ it can have a (visible) feature PL

#-agreement - EP1

- (9) a. Quei *cazzi di articoli!
Those dicks of papers
- b. Quei cazzo di articoli!
Those dick of papers
- c. ?Quel cazzo di articoli!
That dick of papers

#-agreement - EP1

- (9) a. Quei *cazzi di articoli!
Those dicks of papers
- b. Quei cazzo di articoli!
Those dick of papers
- c. ?Quel cazzo di articoli!
That dick of papers
- (10) a. Quelle merde di articoli!
Those shits of papers
- b. Quelle *merda di articoli!
Those shit of papers
- c. ?Quella merda di articoli!
That shit of papers

#-agreement - EP2

- (11) Quegli articoli *dei **cazzi** / *delle **merde**!
Those papers of.the dicks / of.the shits
- (12) Quegli articoli del **cazzo** / di **merda**!
Those papers of.the dick / of shit
- ▶ ExprNs can only occur in the SG
 - ▶ No #-agreement with RefN

Outline

Introduction

Some basic syntax

The data

Stacking

Mass/count

Number

Gender

Towards an analysis

Conclusions

Gender agreement

- ▶ **cazzo**
 - ▶ optionally transparent for GENDER agreement
 - ▶ D can either agree with **cazzo**, or with RefN (across **cazzo**)
 - ▶ GENDER feature can either be present or absent/invisible
- ▶ **merda**
 - ▶ visible for GENDER agreement
 - ▶ D cannot agree with RefN across **merda**
 - ▶ GENDER feature is present and active

Gender agreement - EP1

- (13) a. DET. ___ **cazzo** di lettera
that. ___ dick.M of letter.F
- b. DET. ___ **merda** di articolo
that. ___ shit.F of paper.M

Gender agreement - EP1

- (14) a. Quel **cazzo** di lettera
that.M dick.M of letter.F
- b. Quella **cazzo** di lettera
that.F dick.M of letter.F

Gender agreement - EP1

- (14) a. Quel **cazzo** di lettera
that.M dick.M of letter.F
- b. Quella **cazzo** di lettera
that.F dick.M of letter.F
- (15) a. Quella **merda** di articolo
that.F shit.F of paper.M
- b. *Quel **merda** di articolo
that.M shit.F of paper.M

Gender agreement - EP2

- (16) a. Quella lettera del **cazzo**
that.F letter.F of.the dick.M
- b. *Quel lettera del **cazzo**
that.M letter.F of.the dick.M
- (17) a. Quell' articolo di **merda**
this.M paper.M of shit.F
- b. *Quella articolo di **merda**
this.F paper.M of shit.F

- D can only agree with RefN (and not with ExprN)

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Introduction

Some basic syntax

The data

Towards an analysis

Conclusions

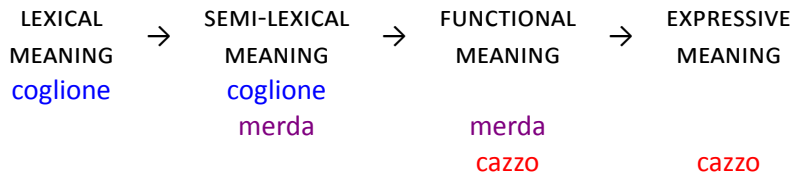
Towards an analysis

	cazzo	merda	coglione
	COUNT	COUNT/MASS	COUNT
#	SG	SG	SG
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Towards an analysis

Claim

Expressive nouns represent various stages of loss of meaning, where first lexical meaning is lost, then functional meaning, until only expressive meaning remains.

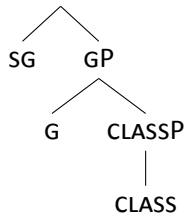


Towards an analysis

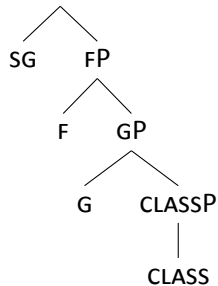
- ▶ The loss of meaning implies a progressive loss of functional structure above the root (Klockmann 2017; Cavirani-Pots 2020)
- ▶ Stage 1: [PL [# [G [N, CONCEPT]]]] ⇒ **coglion-e, -i**
- ▶ Stage 2: [PL [# [F [G [N]]]]] ⇒ **merd-a, -e**
- ▶ Stage 3: [# [G [N]]] ⇒ **cazzo** (visible for D AGREE)
- ▶ Stage 4: [N] ⇒ **cazzo** (invisible for D AGREE)

Towards an analysis

(18) SGP \Leftrightarrow -o

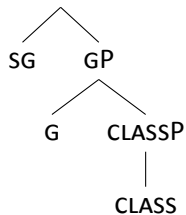


(19) SGP \Leftrightarrow -a

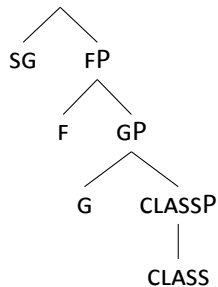


Towards an analysis

(18) SGP \Leftrightarrow -o



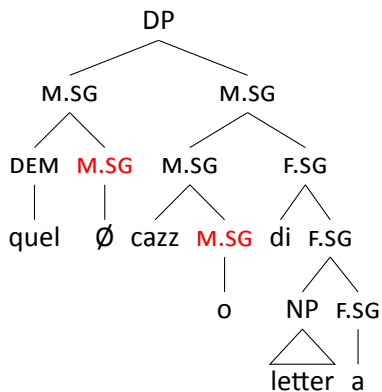
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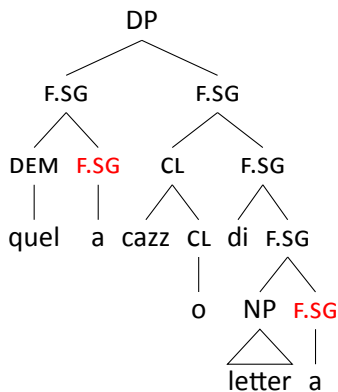
(20) *Superset Principle*
L can spell out subsets of its specification.

Towards an analysis

quel cazzo di lettera

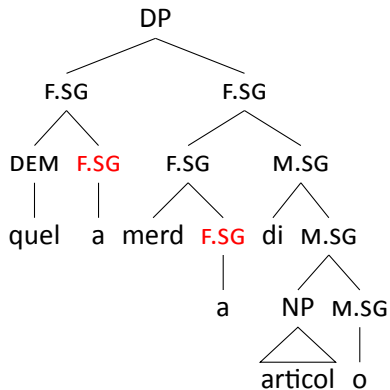


quella cazzo di lettera

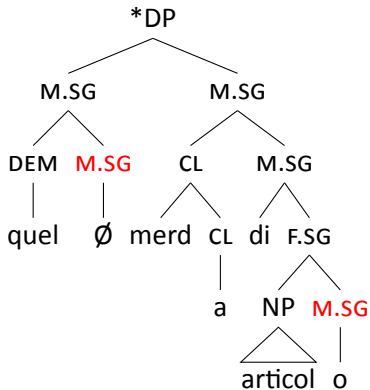


Towards an analysis

quella merda di articolo



*quel merda di articolo



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Introduction

Some basic syntax

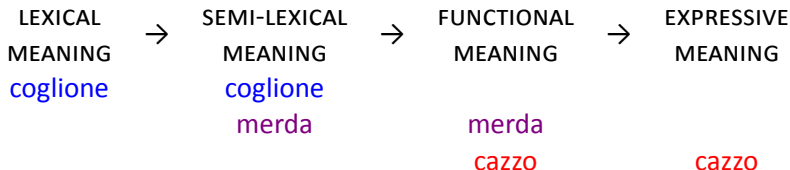
The data

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Conclusions

- ▶ We looked at some data that are problematic for existing analyses
 - ▶ stacking of ExprNs
 - ▶ ordering restrictions on stacked ExprNs
 - ▶ failure of **cazzo** to occur predicatively
- ▶ we proposed a sequence of stages of loss of meaning, where first lexical meaning is lost, then functional meaning, until only expressive meaning remains.



Thank you!

References

Cavirani-Pots, C. (2020). *Roots in Progress*. Ph. D. thesis, KU Leuven, Leuven.

Klockmann, H. (2017). *The Design of Semi-lexicality - Evidence from Case and Agreement in the Nominal Domain*. Utrecht: LOT.

Postma, G. (1995). *Zero Semantics*. Ph. D. thesis, University of Leiden.