
Two ways to be expressive: The case of the Italian *cazzo* and *merda*.

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1. Introduction. Italian has a number of expressive nouns, which can express the speaker's perspective (Potts 2007). This talk focuses on the morphosyntactic properties of Italian *cazzo* lit. 'dick' and *merda* lit. 'shit' in the N-of-an-N construction (1)-(2).

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| <p>(1) Che cazzo di articolo!
 <i>what dick of paper</i>
 'What a bad paper!'</p> | <p>(2) Che merda di articolo!
 <i>what shit of paper</i>
 'What a bad paper!'</p> |
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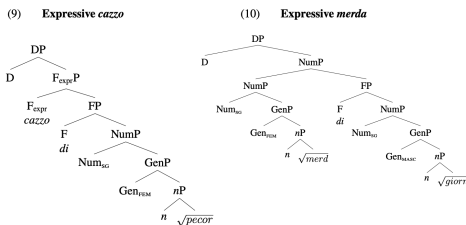
2. The data. Expressive *cazzo* can be invisible for gender agreement (3), and it has rigid number (4) (Doliana 2015, Giorgi and Poletto 2021).

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| <p>(3) Un-a cazz-o di serata-a
 <i>a.F.SG dick-m.sg of evening-f-sg</i>
 'A fucking evening'</p> | <p>(4) *Che cazz-i di pecoron-i!
 <i>what dick-M.PL of sheep-M-PL</i>
 Int.: 'What a fucking sheep!'</p> |
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In contrast, *merda* is never invisible for gender agreement (5), and it agrees in number with the lower N (6).

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| <p>(5) Un-a / *Un merd-a di giorn-o
 <i>a.F.SG / a.M.SG shit.F.SG of day.M.SG</i>
 'A fucking day'</p> | <p>(6) Che merd-e di pecor-e!
 <i>what shit.f.pl of sheep.F.PL</i>
 'What a fucking sheep!'</p> |
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3. The analysis. We claim that expressive *cazzo* has its features and original root content stripped away, so that only an abstract expressive content remains (see (9)). It is invisible to the D-probe, which will agree with the features of the lower noun. In contrast, expressive *merda* has its own gender and number projections, and is inserted into the functional sequence of another, lower root (Cavarani-Pots 2020) (see (10)). In this case, the D-probe will find the number and gender features of *merda*, and agree with it (5).



References: • Cavarani-Pots, C. (2020). *Roots in Progress*, PhD thesis, KU Leuven, Leuven.
 • Saab, A. (2022b). Introducing expressives through equations. Implications for the theory of nominal predication in Romance, in *Proceedings of SALT*, Vol. 32, pp. 356–383.