

*Abstract – English*

The aim of this dissertation is to provide a satisfactory description and an adequate syntactic analysis of several phenomena pertaining to evaluative morphology in Italian. The issues discussed include the basic semantic properties of evaluative morphemes, their distribution across and within lexical categories, their functional status and their interaction with other relevant morphosyntactic features.

The hypothesis that the different aspects of the meaning of evaluative morphology – despite their apparent variety and inconsistency – can actually be reduced to very general semantic notions is connected to the intuition that at least some the abstract structuring principles of reference are the same across categories.

From a syntactic point of view, the identification of parallel functional schemes in the extended projections of lexical categories leads us to confirm once again that syntactic structures, in spite of their internal complexity, can be accounted for by means of structural maps.

### *Abstract – Italiano*

L'obiettivo di questa tesi è di fornire una descrizione esaustiva e un'adeguata analisi sintattica per numerosi fenomeni che pertengono alla morfologia valutativa della lingua italiana. I temi discussi includono le proprietà semantiche fondamentali dei morfemi valutativi, la loro distribuzione a livello inter-categoriale e intra-categoriale, il loro statuto funzionale e la loro interazione con altri tratti morfosintattici rilevanti.

L'ipotesi che i diversi aspetti del significato della morfologia valutativa - nonostante l'apparente variabilità e incoerenza - possano essere in realtà ridotti a nozioni semantiche generali è connessa all'idea che almeno un certo numero di principi astratti del riferimento siano comuni alle diverse categorie lessicali.

Da un punto di vista sintattico, il riconoscimento di schemi funzionali paralleli all'interno delle proiezioni estese delle categorie lessicali ci porta ancora una volta a ribadire che le strutture sintattiche, nonostante la loro complessità interna, possano essere spiegate attraverso mappe strutturali.

## **Acknowledgements**

The writing of this dissertation has been a complex task, which would have been even more difficult, if not impossible, without the collaboration and the support of many people.

I would like to thank all the people in Padova with whom I spent more than the last three years: Linda Badan, Maria Chiara Berizzi, Davide Bertocci, Stefano Canalis, Paolo Chinellato, Federica Cognola, Nicoletta Dal Lago, Federico Damonte, Jacopo Garzonio, Federico Ghegin, Alessio Muro, Andrea Padovan, Nicoletta Penello, Diego Pescarini, Sabrina Rasom, Marinela Sotiri, Carla Traverso, Elena Triantafyllis, Diana Vedovato.

Comments and advice from Paola Benincà, Alberto Mioni, Laura Vanelli have helped to improve my work.

I am grateful to Cecilia Poletto for the comments and the insightful pieces of advice, but most of all for her encouragement and her patience.

I thank my parents, Nicola and Cristina for their support. Marta, without you this dissertation would not exist: this is why I dedicate it to you.



# Contents

*Abstract – English*

*Abstract – Italiano*

*Acknowledgements*

<b>Chapter 1: Italian Evaluative Morphology: setting the scene</b>	3
<b>1.1 Morphology and syntax: the generative perspectives</b>	3
<b>1.2 The Cartographic Program</b>	5
1.2.1 <i>Introduction</i>	5
1.2.2 <i>Splitting the IP</i>	7
1.2.3 <i>Splitting the CP</i>	10
1.2.4 <i>Splitting the DP</i>	13
1.2.5 <i>Partial conclusions</i>	14
<b>1.3 Italian Evaluative Morphology</b>	15
1.3.1 <i>Italian Evaluative Morphology: the typological analysis</i>	16
1.3.2 <i>Italian Evaluative Morphology: the lexicalist analysis</i>	17
1.3.3 <i>Italian Evaluative morphology: the cartographic view</i>	21
<b>Chapter 2: Evaluative Morphology and Noun Phrases</b>	25
<b>2.1 Introduction</b>	25
<b>2.2 The Augmentative Morpheme</b>	26
2.2.1 <i>The purely augmentative type</i>	26
2.2.2 <i>The intensificational type</i>	26
2.2.3 <i>The denominal quality oriented evaluative type</i>	27
2.2.4 <i>The deverbal agentive type</i>	28

<b>2.3</b>	<b>The Diminutive Morpheme</b>	29
2.3.1	<i>The purely diminutive type</i>	29
2.3.2	<i>The approximative type</i>	30
2.3.3	<i>The denominal agentive type</i>	31
2.3.4	<i>The deverbal agentive/instrumental type</i>	32
2.3.5	<i>Nationality/origin adjectives</i>	32
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Diminutive morphemes and the <i>mass-count</i> distinction</b>	33
2.4.1	<i>Borer (2005) and De Belder (2008)</i>	33
2.4.2	<i>Back to Italian evaluative morphemes</i>	36
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Scalarity as a core property</b>	39
 <b>Chapter 3: Evaluative Morphology and Adjectives</b>		43
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	43
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Adjectival evaluative modification: distribution</b>	43
3.2.1	<i>Evaluative morphemes</i>	43
3.2.2	<i>The adjectives</i>	44
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Syntactic properties</b>	45
3.3.1	<i>Adjectival evaluative morphology and word order</i>	46
3.3.2	<i>Adjectival evaluative morphology and degree operators</i>	50
 <b>Chapter 4: Evaluative Morphology and Verb Phrases</b>		53
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	53
<b>4.2</b>	<b>The data</b>	53
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Evaluative morphemes as functional heads</b>	55
 <b>Conclusions</b>		58
 <b>References</b>		59









## Chapter 1

### Italian Evaluative Morphology: setting the scene

#### 1.1 Morphology and syntax: the generative perspectives

The study of the interaction between the morphological component of grammar and syntactic structures has been one of the crucial point of discussion since the very beginning of the generative enterprise. Over the last 50 years, we have witnessed what can be called a schism between two different, competing approaches to morphology and its connection with syntax. The basic osservation is that, given a specific syntactic position, only objects that carry matching morphosyntactic features will be allowed: how this fact is interpreted is the core of the problem. From one lexicalist point of view (Di Sciullo & Williams (1987), Anderson (1992)), this is the only point of interaction between morphology and syntax: the internal structure of words is invisible to the syntactic component, as the specific formation and composition of their features are a task performed by rules and principles of morphology. On the other side, the basic tenet of the syntactic approach to morphology is that syntax can not only see inside the internal structures of words, but also manipulate their atomic units, assuming that every morpheme has its own syntactic representation. Therefore, the relation between morphology and syntax is rather direct.

If we want to take a look at the historical development of these two lines of reasoning, we have to go back to the late 50's, precisely to Chomsky (1957). In *Syntactic structures* we are presented with the first syntactic analysis of word formation, whereby tense markers enter into the syntactic derivation separate from the verb. To make this point clear, the underlying structure of a sentence like (1a) would be (1b):

(1) a. Tommy broke his leg.

b. Tommy PAST+break his leg

Even though the precise details about how the verb merges with the tense marker have been characterized in several ways, the basic idea was that the transformational processes which build complex nominal structures correspond to the rules that derive superficial structures from underlying structures.

One of the first application of the syntactic approach to morphology within the Principles and Parameters theory was developed in Chomsky (1981), where verbal inflectional morphology is still analyzed as an independent syntactic object, but it is taken to be merged to the verb at the superficial structure by lowering the affix. This process can take place inside the syntactic component (in which case, it is a syntactic rule) or post-syntactically, in the PF component (in which case, it is a morphological rule): in any case, since it is a process that applies on the edge of the interface between morphology and syntax, morphology and syntax must be directly related.

Another relevant and very influential elaboration of the syntactic view is given by Pollock's seminal paper (Pollock (1989)) on the differences between English and French verb movement, which – as observed by Cinque and Rizzi (2008) – led to the idea that “a single I position did not provide enough space to account for the different positions which can be occupied by different morphological forms of the verb in French” (Cinque and Rizzi (2008:43)). If we now relate this intuition to the present discussion, it looks clear that Pollock's proposal represented a step forward to the hypothesis that syntax and morphology are strictly interconnected, assuming that verb movement is a process that builds morphological structure in an incremental fashion.

While the syntactic approach started to show its descriptive and explanatory force in the context of inflectional morphology, many scholars questioned the possibility for this type of analysis to adequately describe and explain derivational morphology. The original formulation of what has later be known as the Lexicalist Hypothesis is introduced in Chomsky (1970): the idea was that at least some of the

processes which had been considered pertaining to the transformational component were to be analyzed as morphological rules. As a consequence, a strong division was made between derivational morphology, performed by a specific morphological component before the insertion of the word into the syntactic structure, and inflectional morphology, performed by truly syntactic processes.

Over the past thirty years, more radical and stronger versions of the lexicalist hypothesis were developed, claiming that even inflectional morphology – as part of the internal structure of words – is derived by the morphological component. A strong lexicalist position is still part of contemporary syntactic theory: the original idea proposed in Chomsky (1993, 1995) is that words enter the syntactic structure already formed, as the only task performed by syntax is to check their morphosyntactic features.

On the other side, however, the syntactic approach to morphology demonstrated rather convincingly that even derivational morphology could be understood as a consequence of syntactic operations. A cornerstone for this view is represented by the analysis of noun incorporation and of verbal derivational categories presented in Baker (1988). More recently, a stronger conception emerged according to which every morphological element has to be interpreted as a syntactic element: what this means is that a good syntactic theory is also a good morphological theory.

## **1.2 The Cartographic Program**

### *1.2.1 Introduction*

As I mentioned in the previous section, one of the most influential work within the syntactic approach to morphology is represented by Pollock (1989). Since this work is often taken to be responsible for the birth of a new research project, namely the Cartographic Program, it might be useful to trace back both the historical context it derived from and the basic hypotheses it put forth.

The theoretically relevant framework Pollock moved from is Chomsky's *Barriers* (Chomsky (1986b)) model for X-bar theory. In this work, Chomsky suggests that the X-bar algorithm should apply not only to lexical categories, but also to non-lexical categories:

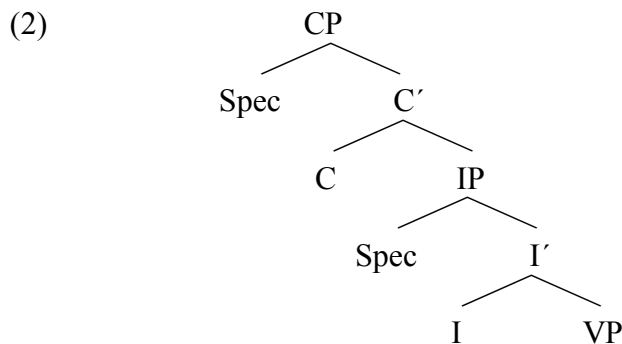
**X-bar algorithm**

$X'' \rightarrow \text{Spec } X'$

$X' \rightarrow X^0 Z''$

As Chomsky observes (Chomsky (1986b:3), “Does this system extend to the nonlexical categories as well? Evidently, the optimal hypothesis is that it does. Let us assume this to be correct. Then the clausal categories conventionally labelled S and S' might be I' and C'', respectively, where I = Infl and C = complementizer.”.

As a consequence, the basic structural representation takes the following form:



Accordingly, the idea is that the structural representation of a sentence is based on three distinct structural layers; each layer is instantiated by a single X-bar projection:

- (a) The lexical layer VP, headed by the verb, is the layer where thematic roles are assigned;

- (b) The inflectional layer IP, headed by I, is the layer where aspectual and temporal specifications are defined and where the relation between the verb and its arguments is encoded by case and agreement;
- (c) The complementizer layer CP, headed by C, is the layer which hosts operators, interrogative pronouns and focalized elements.

This model conceptually endorses the idea that sentences are actually extended projections of V, i.e. verbal projections equipped by projections headed by (functional heads) I and C.

If it is true that this basic architectural shape of the sentence has remained virtually unchanged over the last twenty years, it is also true that – starting from the end of the 80's – the inventory of functional projections both above and below the verbal projection has been reconsidered and enriched in fundamental ways, not only challenging the descriptive tools of linguistic theory, but also affecting the theory in its explanatory adequacy.

### *1.2.2 Splitting the IP*

The starting point for Pollock's analysis is given by the empirical observation of some asymmetries between English and French according to the syntax of negation (3), of interrogatives (4), of adverbs (5) and of floating quantifiers (6):

- (3) a. \*John likes not Mary.  
b. Jean (n') aime pas Marie.
- (4) a. \*Likes he Mary?  
b. Aime-t-il Marie?
- (5) a. \*John kisses often Mary.  
b. Jean embrasse souvent Marie.  
c. John often kisses Marie.  
d. \*Jean souvent embrasse Marie.

- (6) a. \*My friends love all Marie.  
 b. Mes amis aiment tous Marie.  
 c. My friends all love Marie.  
 d. \*Mes amis tous aiment Marie.

Pollock updates Emonds' (1978) and Jackendoff's (1972) analyses of French and English auxiliary systems: while in French there is an obligatory V-to-I movement, English shows this restriction only with auxiliary verbs *have/be*. Moreover, assuming that the structure in (7) represents the D-structure for both English and French, the descriptive machinery has the ability to capture the phenomena listed in the previous examples:

(7) [IP NP I ([Neg *not/pas*]) [VP (Adv) V ...]]

According to these hypotheses, (3a) is ruled out because the verb should be able to move to I in order to occupy the pre-negational position, but this is impossible given the restrictions on English verb movement. The same can be said for (4a), if we consider the so-called Aux-NP inversion as an I-to-C movement: since lexical verbs in English cannot move to I, it derives that they cannot move from I to C. On the other side, the examples from French clearly show how the obligatory V-to-I movement applies.

Leaving aside further descriptive generalizations, the basic idea of Pollock's work is that the superficial differences between English and French have to be interpreted as a consequence of some more abstract syntactic properties, namely the final positions occupied by the verb. In particular, Pollock states that the structure given in (2) is descriptively inadequate, since there are at least two landing sites for verb movement within the IP, as shown by the following data:

- (8) a. Souvent manger du chocolat c'est mauvais pour la peau.  
 b. Manger souvent du chocolat c'est mauvais pour la peau.  
 c. Ne pas manger de chocolat c'est mauvais pour la peau.

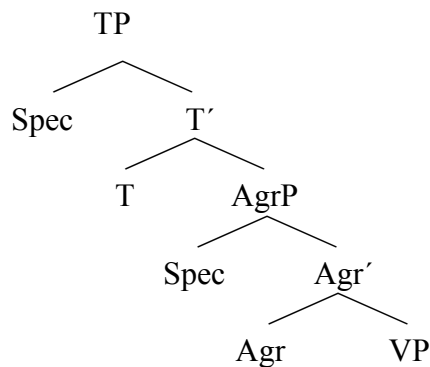
d. \*Ne manger pas de chocolat c'est mauvais pour la peau.

In (8a) the infinite verb *manger* follows the adverb *souvent* and is adjacent to the complement *du chocolat*, suggesting that the verb occupies the original position (i.e., it does not move). In (8b), the infinite verb precedes the adverb, so it must have been moved to a higher functional head. However, it seems that, for non-finite verbs, movement to the left of the negative marker *pas* is impossible. The fact that such a position is available for other kinds of derivation is shown in the following example:

e. N'être pas invité à la fête, c'est triste.

These facts lead Pollock to identify a complex structure, derived by splitting the I projection into two independent functional projections: a higher projection, characterized by tense features, and a lower projection, endowed with agreement features.

(9)



In more recent years, a large amount of work has been produced in order to study the functional structure of the verb. From a methodological point of view, this fact could be possible assuming that, apart from word order considerations, evidence for functional structure is provided by the inventory of functional head morphemes. Moreover, Cinque (1999:v) suggests that “in addition to the order of free functional morphemes (“particles” and auxiliaries) and of bound functional



morphemes (affixes), there is a third important source of evidence for determining the hierarchy of functional projections – namely, the order and the nature of the different classes of AdvPs in the clause.” The basic idea is that a rather direct Spec/head relation can be drawn between the different classes of AdvPs and the different functional heads of the clause. Accordingly, the different functional projections inside the IP can be identified even when we don’t have overt head morphology. The data collected by Cinque, based on virtually all of the world’s major language groups, show that this is indeed the case and lead us to a much finer analysis of the verbal functional sequence. The hierarchy can be represented by the following scheme:

Mood<sub>Speech Act</sub> > Mood<sub>Evaluative</sub> > Mood<sub>Evidential</sub> > Mood<sub>Epistemic</sub> > T (Past) > T (Future) > Mood<sub>Irrealis</sub> > Mod<sub>Alethic Necess</sub> > Mod<sub>Alethic Possib</sub> > Mod<sub>Volition</sub> > Mod<sub>Obligation</sub> > Mod<sub>Ability/Permission</sub> > Asp<sub>Habitual</sub> > Asp<sub>Repetitive (I)</sub> > Asp<sub>Frequentative (I)</sub> > Asp<sub>Celerative (I)</sub> > T (Anterior) > Asp<sub>Terminative</sub> > Asp<sub>Continuative</sub> > Asp<sub>Perfect</sub> > Asp<sub>Retrospective</sub> > Asp<sub>Proximative</sub> > Asp<sub>Durative</sub> > Asp<sub>Progressive</sub> > Asp<sub>Prospective</sub> > Asp<sub>CompletiveSg</sub> > Asp<sub>CompletivePl</sub> > Voice > Asp<sub>Celerative (II)</sub> > Asp<sub>Repetitive (II)</sub> > Asp<sub>Frequentative (II)</sub> > Asp<sub>Completive (II)</sub>

### 1.2.3 Splitting the CP

The decomposition of the IP area and the emergence of the richness of its functional properties had a huge impact on both the descriptive tools of linguistic theory and the theoretical assumptions of generative grammar. From the latter point of view, the problem can be summarized in the following way: can we consider the syntactic structural representation as a *continuum* space of functional projection? Can the CP area be interpreted as an extension of the IP layer? What syntactic properties separate the CP layer from the IP layer?

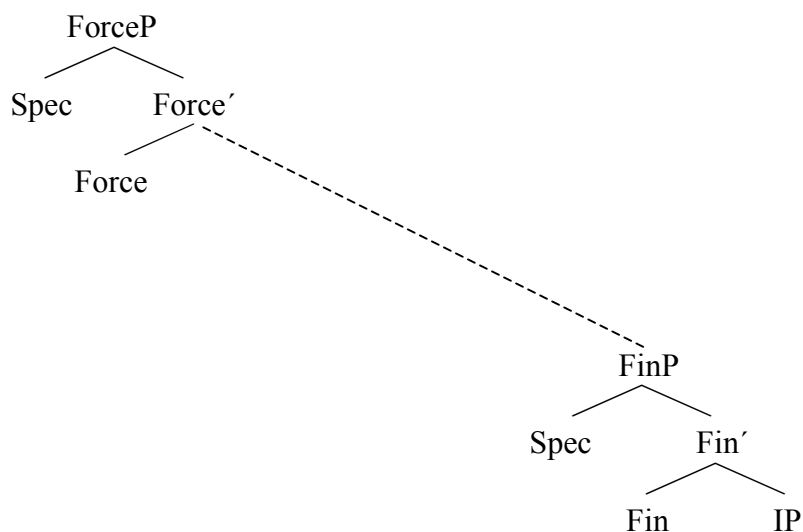
In order to answer to these questions, it seems rather clear that the first thing to do is to characterize in a distinct, peculiar way the complementizer system within the syntactic structure. About this particular point, Rizzi (1997:283) writes: “We can

think of the complementizer system as an interface between a propositional content (expressed by the IP) and the superordinate structure (a higher clause or, possibly, the articulation of discourse, if we consider a root clause). As such, we expect the C system to express at least two kinds of information, one facing the outside and the other facing the inside.”

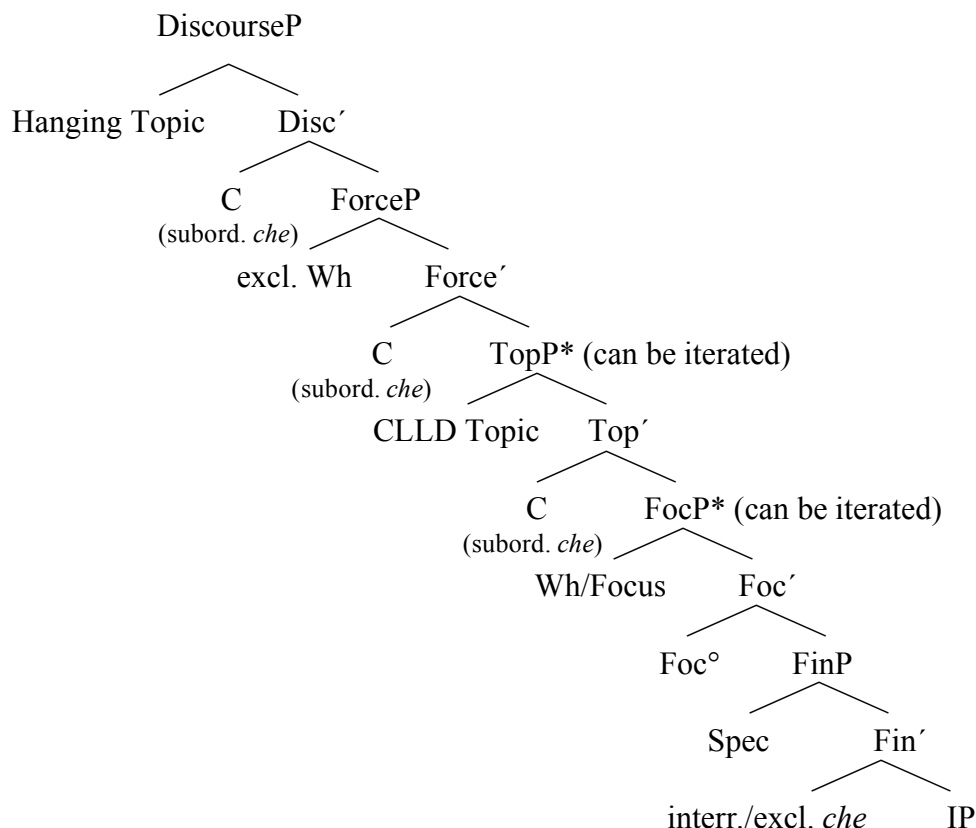
As far as the external properties are concerned, complementizers typically make explicit whether the clause is interrogative, declarative, exclamative or relative. Given this property, it seems convincing to assume that their nature is determined by a higher selector, which Rizzi (1997) calls Force. Force can be expressed by functional morphology hosted by its head or by the presence of a specific operator hosted in its specifier.

As far as the internal properties are concerned, traditionally it has been noted that the choice of a specific complementizer can be related to the verbal properties of the clause, assuming an agreement relation between C and I. In particular, the idea is that C reflects a specific property of the IP layer, namely its being finite or infinite. This fact is represented in syntax by the presence of a Finiteness Phrase, which constitutes the interface between the CP area and the IP area.

If what we said is true, then we can draw a preliminary structure for the CP layer:



A detailed analysis of the intermediate area between ForceP and FinP is given in Benincà (2000), on the basis of Italian data:



At this point, we can try to give an answer to the questions expressed at the beginning of this section. First of all, the “inflectional” properties of the CP layer do not involve verbal morphology, since they are expressed by free functional morphemes (*che, que, dass, that, ...*); moreover, it is true that the CP layer expresses selectional restrictions entailed by both the external and internal properties of the clause, but is also true that the CP system has specific, peculiar functions which are completely independent from the outer systems.

#### 1.2.4 *Splitting the DP*

In the preface of his monograph *Adverbs and Functional Heads. A Cross-Linguistic Perspective*, Cinque says (Cinque (1999:vi): “This work began in 1992, prompted by the desire to better understand the functional projections hosting APs in the DP. The relative poverty of functional morphology on nouns offered little insight into the question, so the natural move was to see whether sentences provided a clearer picture of the projections hosting adverbs, the sentential counterpart of adjectives”.

In the last ten years, however, many steps have been made in order to have a more adequate and precise description of the functional structure of noun phrases. If we try to sum up the development of this research area, we can say that much of the work has been dedicated to analyze three different subfields of the nominal environment:

- (a) the lowest space (see, for instance, Brugè (2002)), where the Demonstrative Phrases are generated, and which is set below the functional projections hosting attributive Adjectival Phrases and immediately above the NP;
- (b) the intermediate space (see, for instance, Scott (2002)), where we can identify the functional hierarchy of the attributive Adjectival Phrases within the DP internal space;
- (c) the highest space (see, for instance, Giusti (2005)), namely the left periphery of the noun phrase, where adjectival A-bar movement takes place, triggered by the interpretive features [Topic], [Focus].

As we can see, this tripartition is reminiscent of what has been said before about the general representation of the clause, and in fact many scholars have pursued the idea of a structural parallelism between the CP and the DP. The CP layer would then correspond to the highest space, the IP layer to the intermediate space and the VP to the lowest space. It should be noted, however, that the hypothesis of this cross-categorical isomorphism is somehow weakened by the fact that inside the DP:

- the left periphery is defective (e.g. there is no such a thing as a Hanging Topic);
- incorporated functional morphology is rarely displayed;
- the internal modification system is organized in a very specific and peculiar way.

From what we said, it should be noted that the hypothesis of cross-categorial isomorphism has to be reinterpreted in a different way. What I argue is that what is relevant in this line of reasoning is not the application of a structural scheme to different syntactic categories, but instead the identification of the syntactic features which can be applied to different syntactic contexts.

#### *1.2.5 Partial conclusions*

Leaving aside the specific details of the analyses, it is clear at this point that the Cartographic Program makes important statements about the nature of syntactic representation. The basic themes of this line of research can be summarized in the following points:

- Syntactic structures are complex objects with a highly articulated internal domain: the attempt of the Cartographic Program is to draw structural maps of natural language syntax that could define in a precise way what this complexity is made of;
- The complexity and richness of syntactic structures is counterbalanced by the fact that Universal Grammar does not allow variation for the number, type and relative order of functional projections;
- From a purely syntactic point of view, interlinguistic variation can be explained assuming only two fundamental parameters:
  - (a) type/degree of movements admitted;
  - (b) overt vs. covert realization of heads and specifiers.
- Functional morphemes are represented in syntax by functional projections, while lexical morphemes are represented in syntax by lexical projections.

### 1.3 Italian Evaluative Morphology

As observed by Grandi (2008), evaluative morphology (instantiated by augmentative, diminutive, pejorative and endearing morphemes) has been analyzed from a huge domain of research lines: relevant scientific literature spans from purely descriptive surveys (Merlini Barbaresi (2004), Weber (1963), Hasselrot (1962), Lázaro Mora (1999), Portolés (1999)), to phonologically oriented analyses (Bauer 1996), to morphopragmatics (Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994), to diachronical perspectives (Butler (1971), Gaide (1988)), to typological studies (Bauer (1997)), to semantics (Jurafsky (1996)). Within the tradition of generative grammar, however, a little interest has been developed in the problems concerning our topic. On the morphophonological side, one can recall recent work within the Optimality Theory framework (see, for instance, van de Weijer (2002) for an analysis of the Dutch diminutive); on the syntactic side, if we exclude the belated reply to Perlmutter (1988) by Bobaljik (2003) about Yiddish and Itelmen (Chukotko-Kamchatkan) diminutives, it is easy to see that most of the attention has been paid to the analysis of German and Dutch diminutives (Wiltschko (2006), De Belder (2008)).

Italian evaluative morphology has been traditionally described as a semantic device that modifies the meaning of a lexical item in two ways: (a) by means of augmentative (prototypically, *-one*) and diminutive (prototypically, *-ino*) suffixes, precisising its size (big/small); (b) by means of endearing (prototypically, *-etto*) and pejorative (prototypically, *-accio*) suffixes, precisising its value (positive/negative)<sup>1</sup>. In order to avoid terminological ambiguities, I will refer to (a) as *quantity oriented evaluative morphemes*, to (b) as *quality oriented evaluative morphemes*, although – as I will show in the following chapters – there is not a clear-cut distinction.

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<sup>1</sup> As noted by Cinque (2006) (following previous work by Lepschy (1989)), even though the set of Italian evaluative morphemes is quite rich, *-ino*, *-one*, *-etto*, *-accio* are by far the most common and frequent.

If we take a look to what has been said about Italian evaluative morphology within the generative tradition, we can find a couple of analyses which will represent the starting point for our work.

### 1.3.1 Italian Evaluative Morphology: the typological analysis

A starting point to the study of the linguistic category EVALUATION can be determined by the identification of the properties which characterize a unitary class of phenomena. In this sense, the most precise definition of EVALUATION is given in Grandi (2002). According to his definition, an evaluative construction must satisfy the following properties:

a. semantics

a linguistic construction can be defined evaluative if it has the function of assigning to a concept X a value which is different from its ‘standard’ value within the scale of its proper semantic property, with no relation to any reference parameter outside the very same concept;

b. morphosyntax

an evaluative construction must imply:

b’. the explicit expression of the standard by means of a linguistic item which has lexical independence:

b’’. the presence of an evaluative marker, such as an affix, an adjectival modifier, the iteration of the input word.

According to these criteria, the following constructions can be defined as evaluative:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| (10)a. <u>evaluative construction</u> : | <i>gattino</i>                     |
| b. <u>standard</u> :                    | meaning of the word <i>gatto</i>   |
| c. <u>evaluative marker</u> :           | <i>-ino</i>                        |
| d. <u>meaning</u> :                     | ‘little cat’                       |
| (11)a. <u>evaluative construction</u> : | <i>maxi-schermo</i>                |
| b. <u>standard</u> :                    | meaning of the word <i>schermo</i> |
| c. <u>evaluative marker</u> :           | <i>maxi-</i>                       |

d. meaning: 'big screen'

On the other side, the following constructions cannot be interpreted as evaluative constructions, since they do not satisfy the morphosyntactic criterion:

(12) imbianchino

mangione

tunisino

This kind of analysis, however, seems to be a little problematic. First of all, it must be noted that the morphosyntactic criterion basically says that an evaluative construction implies the presence of an evaluative marker. Although Grandi tries to define in a more precise way what an evaluative morpheme is, it is clear that the definition is circular. More crucially, however, it seems to me much more interesting to verify how the very same morphemes can apply in different grammatical contexts rather than exclude those contexts on the basis of an arbitrary definition. The approach I will adopt will try to make sense of all these contexts in a consistent way simply by reducing the different behaviour of the so-called evaluative construction to more general semantic properties.

### 1.3.2 Italian Evaluative Morphology: the lexicalist analysis

In his seminal work on Italian morphology, Scalise (1994) suggests that Italian evaluative morphemes should be analyzed as a specific kind of suffixes, different from both inflectional and derivational suffixes, according to the following properties:

A. Evaluative suffixes can apply to different lexical categories and do not change the category of the lexical item (*contra* Unitary Base Hypothesis):

- (13) a. [libro]<sub>N</sub> → [librone]<sub>N</sub>  
book book-AUG.  
'book' 'big book'
- b. [piccolo]<sub>Adj</sub> → [piccolino]<sub>Adj</sub>





- d. \*libracceria (< libraccio (*book*-PEJ. = ‘horrible book’) < libro (‘book’))  
‘horrible-bookshop’ (a shop where horrible books are sold)

Taking these observations as a starting point, we must nevertheless point out that the generalizations expressed in (A), (B), (C) do not contain the machinery necessary to adequately describe and explain other properties of evaluative suffixes. Let me tackle the problems separately:

- Point A: it is true that evaluative suffixes can apply to different categories, but it is not true that any evaluative suffix can freely apply to any lexical category: for instance, there is no deverbal verb derived by the augmentative suffix *-one*. On the other hand, it is not true that all evaluative suffixes do not change the category of the lexical item, since we can have deverbal nouns (such as *mangione* (< *mangiare*) or *imbianchino* (< *imbiancare*)) and deadjectival nouns (such as *riccone* (< *ricco*) or *poveraccio* (< *povero*)).
- Point B: it is not always the case that evaluative suffixes do not change the syntactic properties and the subcategorisation frames of the lexical item, as shown in the following examples:

- (17) a. [posta]<sub>N</sub> → [postino]<sub>N</sub>  
          [-human]                    [+human]  
          *mail*                    *mail*-DIM.  
          ‘mail’                    ‘mailman’
- b. [fifa]<sub>N</sub> → [fifone]<sub>N</sub>  
          [-human]                    [+human]  
          *fright*                    *fright*-AUG.  
          ‘fright’                    ‘sissy’
- c. [barba]<sub>N</sub> → [barbone]<sub>N</sub>  
          [-human]                    [+human]  
          *beard*                    *beard*-AUG.  
          ‘beard’                    ‘tramp’
- d. [tamburo]<sub>N</sub> → [tamburino]<sub>N</sub>  
          [-human]                    [+human]  
          *drum*                    *drum*-DIM.  
          ‘drum’                    ‘drummer’

As we can see, a typical property of evaluative morphemes is the possibility (in some special kinds of derivation) to manipulate the semantic features of the base, in particular the [ $\pm$  human] feature.

- Point C: evaluative suffixes can apply more than once to the same lexical item, but the relative order of the suffixes is not free. Consider the following examples:

- (18)
- |    |             |   |                  |   |                       |
|----|-------------|---|------------------|---|-----------------------|
| a. | <i>casa</i> | → | <i>casetta</i>   | → | <i>casettina</i>      |
|    | <i>home</i> |   | <i>home-END.</i> |   | <i>home-END.-DIM.</i> |
|    | ‘home’      |   | ‘wee home’       |   | ‘little wee home’     |
|    |             |   |                  |   |                       |
| b. | <i>casa</i> | → | <i>casina</i>    | → | * <i>casinetta</i>    |
|    | <i>home</i> |   | <i>home-END.</i> |   | <i>home-END.-DIM.</i> |
|    | ‘home’      |   | ‘little home’    |   | ‘wee little home’     |
|    |             |   |                  |   |                       |
| c. | <i>tipo</i> | → | <i>tipaccio</i>  | → | <i>tipaccione</i>     |
|    | <i>guy</i>  |   | <i>guy-PEJ.</i>  |   | <i>guy-PEJ.-AUG.</i>  |
|    | ‘guy’       |   | ‘bad guy’        |   | ‘big bad guy’         |
|    |             |   |                  |   |                       |
| d. | <i>tipo</i> | → | <i>tipone</i>    | → | * <i>tiponaccio</i>   |
|    | <i>guy</i>  |   | <i>guy-AUG.</i>  |   | <i>guy-AUG.-PEJ.</i>  |
|    | ‘guy’       |   | ‘big guy’        |   | ‘bad big guy’         |

These data seem to suggest that there is an asymmetry between augmentative and diminutive morphemes on the one hand and pejorative and endearing morphemes on the other hand.

Another problem point C must front derives from the fact that evaluative morphemes do not exhibit pure recursive properties: forms in which the same morpheme(s) is/are reduplicated are clearly ungrammatical<sup>2</sup>: \**tiponone*, \**tipaccionaccio*, \**casinina*, \**casettinetta*.

Putting all these problems together, we can argue that the lexicalist analysis put forth by Scalise lacks both descriptive and explanatory adequacy, since it does not foresee the distribution and the possible effects of ungrammaticality of evaluative morphemes.

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<sup>2</sup> Unless, of course, in cases of grammaticalization, as in *gironcione*, *palloncione*, *paninino*.

### 1.3.3 Italian Evaluative morphology: the cartographic view

In some recent work, Cinque (2006) suggested that in every language the semantic notions of LITTLE vs. BIG and GOOD vs. BAD are encoded by means of precise grammatical devices. According to the specific language, these modifications (*diminutive/augmentative*; *endearing/pejorative*) can involve phonology (via consonantal, vocalic or tonal alternations), morphology (by using suffixes, prefixes, infixes, circumfixes, gender or class change, reduplication), or the functional lexicon (by adding evaluative particles, functional adjectives). The universality of this phenomenon leads Cinque to the idea that evaluative modification has to be connected to the presence of dedicated functional structures inside the extended projection of the noun phrase, namely the DP. Building on previous work on adjectival ordering (Cinque (1994), Scott (2002)), Cinque takes as a starting point the following hierarchy of projections inside the DP:

- (19) [DP [Subj.CommentP [SizeP ([LenghtP [HeightP [SpeedP [WidthP [WeightP [TemperatureP [AgeP) [ShapeP [ColourP [Nationality/OriginP [MaterialP [NP ...

Consider now the following data:

(20) *Nankina (Papuan)*

- a. Wam d<sup>^</sup>v<sup>^</sup>k **sek** de ya-sat  
 talk short DIM one say-INT.1s  
 ‘I will tell a short story’
- b. K<sup>^</sup>nd<sup>^</sup>p kuoŋ damini **wiet** de jikŋ <sup>^</sup>-w<sup>^</sup>n  
 wood stick large AUG one heavydo-DS.3s  
 ‘The huge piece of wood was heavy...’

Since the diminutive *sek* and the augmentative *wiet* particles occur in between the numeral adjective and the size adjective, it seems correct to argue that they occupy the head position of the projection which hosts the adjective as its specifier.

This idea seems to be confirmed by further cross-linguistic evidence:

(21) *German*

- |    |            |                 |                      |
|----|------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| a. | Katze      | Kätzlein        | Kätzleinchen         |
|    | <i>cat</i> | <i>cat-END.</i> | <i>cat-END.-DIM.</i> |
| b. | Katze      | Kätzchen        | *Kätzchenlein        |
|    | <i>cat</i> | <i>cat-DIM.</i> | <i>cat-DIM.-END</i>  |

As observed by Voeykova (1998:101), in Russian

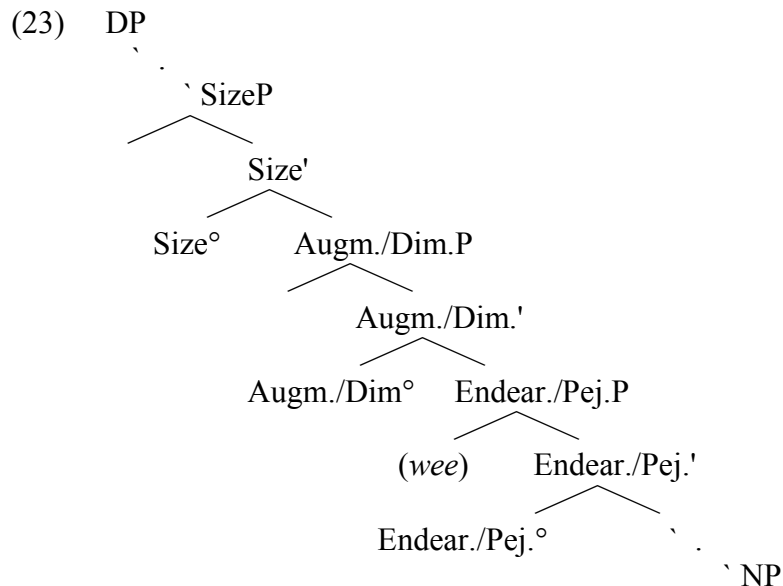
“The double diminutive are formed by adding two diminutive suffixes to the simplex, for instance *mal’chishechka* ‘boy-DIM’, formed with -ECH and -K from *mal’chik* (compare the simple diminutive *mal’chishka* which usually has the connotation of disrespect). Usually if there are two ‘degrees’ of diminutivization, the second diminutive (DIM-DIM) takes the semantic meaning of smallness, whereas the first (-DIM) one, the most common, is used only for expressive nuances”

This insight leads Cinque to consider the first morpheme as the instantiation of the Endearing/Pejorative Projection, the second one as the instantiation of the Diminutive/Augmentative Projection.

The Italian data provide further evidence:

- |        |        |           |         |             |              |
|--------|--------|-----------|---------|-------------|--------------|
| (22)a. | nonno  | nonnetto  | nonnino | nonnettino  | *nonninetto  |
| b.     | faccia | faccetta  | faccina | faccettina  | *faccinetta  |
| c.     | cane   | cagnaccio | cagnone | cagnaccione | *cagnonaccio |
| d.     | film   | filmaccio | filmone | filmaccione | *filmonaccio |

In the spirit of the cartographic hypothesis, Cinque proposes the following underlying structure as the source for evaluative modification:



The analysis proposed by Cinque appears to be much more interesting than the one put forth by Scalise: first of all, it derives in an elegant manner the cross-linguistical distribution of evaluative morphemes within the nominal context; secondly, it makes strong predictions about the relative order of the augmentative and diminutive morphemes on the one side and the endearing and pejorative suffixes on the other side; finally, it absorbs – and therefore, eliminates – the need for a special subcomponent of grammar<sup>3</sup>.

However, what I feel is somehow lacking in the application of this analysis for the Italian facts is the following:

- first of all, it does not consider the fact that we are able to find evaluative morphology in other places of grammar, namely in the adjectival, verbal and adverbial contexts: as we will see, these grammatical interactions are far from being easily treatable;
- second, it does not provide an explanation for some interpretive inconsistencies which – as we will see – can be connected to grammaticalized semantic alternations and to the *mass-count* distinction;

<sup>3</sup> As I am assuming the idea that morphology is part of the syntactic component, it is clear that my idea of the notion of ‘derivation’ is syntactic.

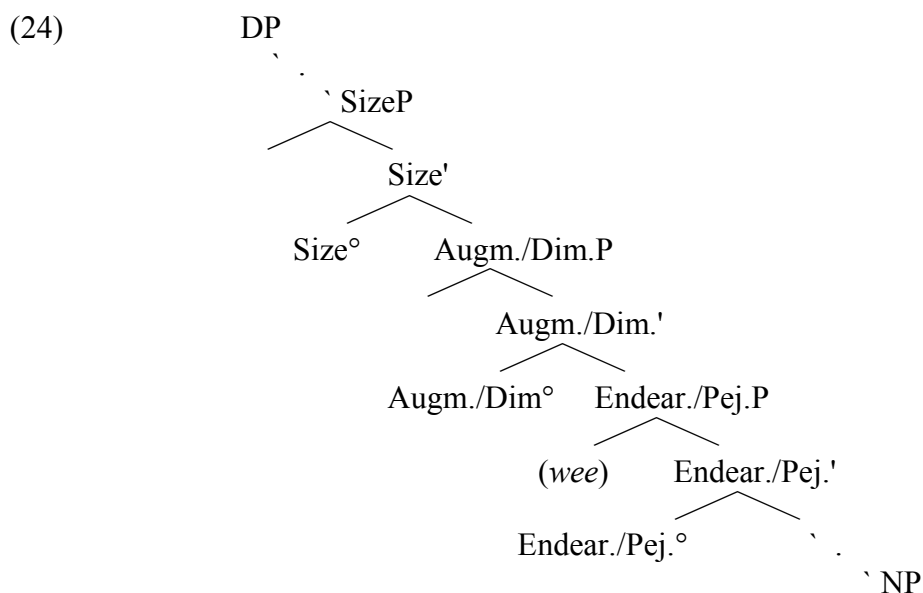
- third, it does not give us a real semantic account for the properties of these kind of modification.

## Chapter 2

### Evaluative Morphology and Noun Phrases

#### 2.1 Introduction

At the end of the previous chapter we argued that the Cinque's account of the derivation of nominal evaluative modification could in principle face some descriptive problems. The aim of this chapter is to try and provide a satisfactory description and an adequate analysis of the phenomena and the properties pertaining to evaluative morphology in the nominal environment, keeping in mind the following structure as a starting point.



The discussion will especially focus on the augmentative and diminutive morphology, simply because it is this kind of modification that gives rise to the most intriguing morphosyntactic and semantic alternations. As we will see,



however, what we earlier called *quality oriented modification* is part of the discussion.

## 2.2 The Augmentative Morpheme

In this section, I will try to provide a sort of taxonomy of the phenomena concerning the augmentative morpheme, taking as parameters of variation and identification both morphosyntactic and semantic features.

### 2.2.1 The purely augmentative type<sup>4</sup>

The simplest case is represented by what we can call “the purely augmentative type”: from a semantic point of view, the lexical item is upgraded only in its dimensional (or figuratively dimensional) structure. From a morphosyntactic point of view, the gender of the noun remains the same:

- Morphological description: [[[X]<sub>N</sub> + [on]] + [gender morpheme]]<sub>N</sub>

(25) a.	macchina	→	macchinona
	<i>car</i> -FEM.GEND.		<i>car</i> -AUG.-FEM.GEND.
	‘car’		‘big car’
b.	dormita	→	dormitona
	<i>sleep</i> -FEM.GEND.		<i>sleep</i> -AUG.-FEM.GEND.
	‘sleep’		‘big (long) sleep’
c.	cuscino	→	cuscinone
	<i>pillow</i> -MASC.GEND.		<i>pillow</i> -AUG.-MASC.GEND.
	‘pillow’		‘big pillow’

### 2.2.2 The intensificational type<sup>5</sup>

A more complex case is provided by the “intensificational type”: here the meaning of the derived noun is not straightforwardly ‘BIG X’, as in the previous case, since

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<sup>4</sup> For a more exhaustive list, see Table 1 at the end of the chapter.

<sup>5</sup> For a more exhaustive list, see Table 2 at the end of the chapter.

it does not affect the purely dimensional properties of the noun. The semantic variation rather seems to affect and heighten a prototypical property/quality of the noun, and this fact is grammatically encoded by means of the masculine gender. Nouns with feminine gender, in fact, turn necessarily into masculine; it is clear, however, that once we have a semantic characterization of the process, we can extend the description to masculine nouns too. In these cases the disambiguation can only be context-driven:

- Morphological description:  $[[X]_{N(\text{feminine/masculine gender})} + [\text{one}]]_{N(\text{masculine gender})}$

(26) a.	macchina	→	macchinone	
	<i>car</i> -FEM.GEND.		<i>car</i> -AUG.-MASC.GEND.	
	‘car’		‘fast/powerful car’ (# ‘big car’)	
b.	maglia	→	maglione	
	<i>vest</i> -FEM.GEND.		<i>vest</i> -AUG.-MASC.GEND.	
	‘vest’		‘sweater’ (# ‘big vest’)	
c.	carta	→	cartone	
	<i>paper</i> -FEM.GEND.		<i>paper</i> -AUG.-MASC.GEND.	
	‘paper’		‘cardboard’ (# ‘big vest’)	
d.	libro	→	librone	
	<i>book</i> -MASC.GEND.		<i>book</i> -AUG.-MASC.GEND.	
	‘book’		‘big book’; ‘important book’	

### 2.2.3 *The denominal quality oriented evaluative type*<sup>6</sup>

This kind of derivation is particularly interesting, since it takes [-human] nouns and turns them into [+human]. The relation between the base and the derived noun can be semantically described as a kind of predication which characterizes the derived noun by means of the base noun.

- Morphological description:  $[[X]_{N(-\text{human})} + [\text{one}]]_{N(+\text{human})}$

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<sup>6</sup> For a more exhaustive list, see Table 3 at the end of the chapter.

- (27) a. *barba* → *barbone*  
*beard* *beard-AUG.*  
‘beard’ ‘tramp’
- b. *testa* → *testone*  
*head* *head-AUG.*  
‘head’ ‘stubborn fellow’
- c. *fifa* → *fifone*  
*fear* *fear-AUG.*  
‘fear’ ‘coward’

#### 2.2.4 *The deverbal agentive type*<sup>7</sup>

Even though in this case the evaluative morpheme applies to a verbal root, the semantic similarities between this case and the previous one can make us think that they are somehow syntactically related. From a descriptive point of view, what we see is that from a verbal root we derive (as before) a [+human] noun, which is characterized by the fact that makes the action described by the verb frequently.

- Morphological description:  $[[X]_V + [\text{one}]]_{N(+\text{human})}$

- (28) a. *criticare* → *criticone*  
*criticize* *criticize-AUG.*  
‘to criticize’ ‘fault-finder’
- b. *frignare* → *frignone*  
*whine* *whine-AUG.*  
‘to whine’ ‘whiner’
- c. *ubriacarsi* → *ubriacone*  
*get drunk* *get drunk-AUG.*  
‘to get drunk’ ‘drunkard’

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<sup>7</sup> For a more exhaustive list, see Table 4 at the end of the chapter.

- Meaning: ‘a person who Xs too much/too often’ (pejorative)
- Some notes:
  - ✓ unaccusative and psychological verbs are excluded;
  - ✓ productivity is limited to verbs belonging to the first conjugation (with stems ending in *-a-*);
  - ✓ no complement is allowed (*\*mangione di pasta vs. mangiatore di pasta*);

### 2.3. The Diminutive Morpheme

In this section, I will try to provide a taxonomy parallel to the one I have given in order to account for the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of the diminutive suffix.

#### 2.3.1 The purely diminutive type

Again, the purely diminutive type represent the simplest case. From a semantic point of view, the meaning is compositionally straightforward: the lexical item is downgraded only in its dimensional (or figuratively dimensional) structure. From a morphosyntactic point of view, the gender of the noun remains the same:

- Morphological description: [[[X]<sub>N</sub> + [in]] + [gender morpheme]]<sub>N</sub>

- (29) a. *cucchiaio* → *cucchiaino*  
           *spoon*           *spoon-DIM.*  
           ‘spoon’        ‘little spoon’
- b. *gatto* → *gattino*  
           *cat*           *cat-DIM.*  
           ‘cat’         ‘little cat’

c. *scatola* → *scatolina*  
*box*            *box-DIM.*  
‘box’            ‘small box’

### 2.3.2 *The approximative type*

From a morphosyntactic point of view, this case is specular to the intensificational type found with the augmentative morpheme. However, we are not dealing with a real de-intensification, but (following an intuition by Kayne (Kayne (2005))) rather with an approximation.

- Morphological description:  $[[X]_{N(\text{feminine/masculine gender})} + [\text{ino}]]_{N(\text{masculine gender})}$

(30) a. *viola*            →        *violino*  
*viola-FEM.GEND.*    *viola-DIM.-MASC.GEND.*  
‘viola’                ‘violin’

b. *ruota*            →        *ruotino*  
*wheel-FEM.GEND.*    *wheel-DIM.-MASC.GEND.*  
‘wheel’                ‘spare wheel’

c. *spada*            →        *spadino*  
*sword-FEM.GEND.*    *sword-DIM.-MASC.GEND.*  
‘sword’                ‘court-sword’

- The derived noun is not a ‘SMALL X’; rather, it seems to be minimally similar to X.
- Interestingly, this kind of derivation gives rise to part-whole semantic relation: *penna-pennino* (‘pen’-‘nib’), *scala-scalino* (‘stairs’-‘step’).

Following Kayne (2005), I will assume that this kind of derivation is semantically similar to the one responsible for the modification of numerical bases:

- (31) a. dieci → decina  
           ‘ten’           ‘about ten’  
       b. cinquanta → cinquantina  
           ‘fifty’           ‘about fifty’  
       c. settanta → settantina  
           ‘seventy’           ‘about seventy’  
       d. cento → centinaio  
           ‘one hundred’ ‘about one hundred’

### 2.3.3 The denominal agentive type

This kind of derivation is morphosyntactically parallel to the denominal quality oriented evaluative type, since it takes [-human] nouns and turns them into [+human]. The predicate between the base and the derived noun, however, is not quantified, but rather seems purely relational.

- Morphological description:  $[[X]_{N(-human)} + [ino]]_{N(\neq human)}$

- (32) a. posta → postino  
           *mail*           *mail-DIM.*  
           ‘mail’           ‘postman’  
       b. tabacco → tabacchino  
           *tobacco*       *tobacco-DIM.*  
           ‘tobacco’   ‘tobacconist’  
       c. tamburo → tamburino  
           *drum*           *drum-DIM.*  
           ‘drum’           ‘drummer’  
       d. bagno → bagnino  
           *bath*           *bath-DIM.*  
           ‘bath’           ‘bathing attendant’

#### 2.3.4 The deverbal agentive/instrumental type

- Morphological description:  $[[X]_V + [ino]]_{N(\pm human)}$

(33) a. *imbiancare* → *imbianchino*

*whiten*            *whiten-DIM.*

‘to whiten’      ‘whitewasher’

b. *spazzare* → *spazzino*

*sweep*            *sweep-DIM.*

‘to sweep’      ‘road-sweeper’

c. *temperare* → *temperino*

*sharpen*        *sharpen-DIM.*

‘to sharpen’    ‘penknife’

d. *frullare* → *frullino*

*whisk*            *whisk-DIM.*

‘to whisk’      ‘whisk’

- This derived noun can be compositionally analyzed in the following way: it is the person/object whose prototypical function is to do X.

#### 2.3.5 Nationality/origin adjectives

The suffix *-ino* can derive nationality/origin adjectives from city/region/nation nouns:

(34) a. *Perugia* → *perugino*

‘Perugia’    ‘native of/inhabitant of Perugia’

b. *Trieste* → *triestino*

‘Trieste’    ‘native of/inhabitant of Trieste’

d. *Marocco* → *marocchino*

‘Morocco’   ‘Moroccan’

- e. Tunisia → tunisino  
‘Tunisia’ ‘Tunisian’

Moreover, in Old Italian it was used to form patronymic family names:

- (35) a. Filippo → Filippini
- b. Paolo → Paolini
- c. Bartolo → Bartolini

## 2.4 Diminutive morphemes and the *mass-count* distinction

### 2.4.1 Borer (2005) and De Belder (2008)

In a recent work, Borer suggests that, in order to explain why *count* names can be forced to have a *mass* reading in special contexts, the *mass-count* distinction is not lexically determined, but derives from syntax:

- (36) a. Grandma has three dogs
- b. There is dog all over the wall

On the other side, it is possible for *mass* nouns to be interpreted as *count* nouns:

- (37) a. We produce linen
- b. This is a good linen

The idea proposed by Borer is that all names are *mass* by default and that the *count* interpretation derives from the insertion of a Div(iding) head above the NP. In English, this head can be phonetically realized by the indefinite article in singular count readings or as plural marking in plural count readings; the absence of the Div<sup>o</sup> leads to the default *mass* reading

- (38) There is a chicken in the garden.
- (39) There are chickens in the garden.
- (40) There is chicken on my plate.



Building on this basic idea, De Belder (2008) proposes a syntactic analysis of some interesting alternations beyond the *mass-count* distinction. The starting point of the discussion is illustrated by the following examples:

- (41) a. I studied **two chocolates**: a low fat variety and a normal one.  
 b. \*I studied **two small chocolates**: a low fat variety and a normal one.
- (42) a. Grandma gave me **two chocolates**: one for me and one for my sister.  
 b. Grandma gave me **two small chocolates**: one for me and one for my sister.

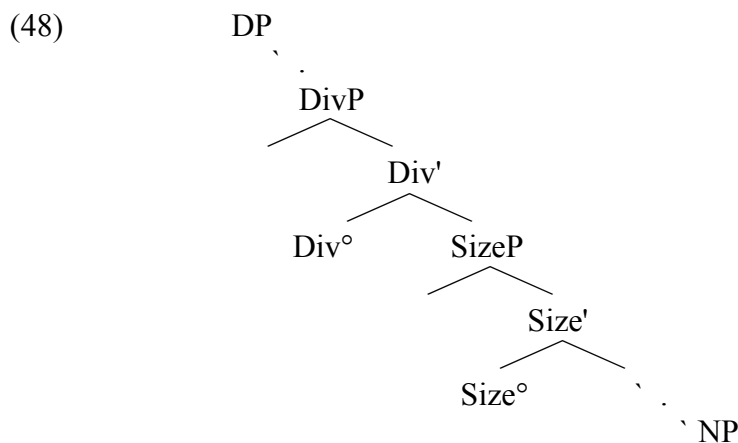
The difference between (a) and (b) derives from the fact that the former imply a *kind* reading, while the latter imply a *unit* reading. De Belder argues that while units are typically countable and measurable objects, kinds are countable but not measurable: this explains the ungrammaticality of (41b). As far as the English data are concerned, the insertion of the Div<sup>o</sup> does not disambiguate the *kind-unit* alternation; on the other side, in Dutch the presence of the Div<sup>o</sup> imply the *kind* reading:

- (43) Ik proefde chocolade.  
 I tasted chocolate  
 ‘I tasted chocolate.’
- (44) Ik proefde een chocolade.  
 I tasted a chocolate  
 ‘I tasted a certain kind of chocolate.’  
 # ‘I tasted a piece of chocolate.’
- (45) Ik proefde chocolades  
 I tasted chocolate-PL  
 ‘I tasted different kinds of chocolate.’  
 # ‘I tasted pieces of chocolate.’

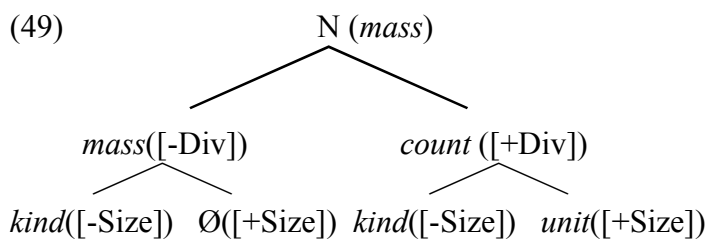
Crucially, the only way to get a *unit* reading in these contexts is to insert the diminutive morpheme:

- (46) Ik proefde een chocola-tje.  
 I tasted a chocolate-DIM  
 ‘I tasted a piece of chocolate.’  
 # ‘I tasted a certain kind of chocolate.’
- (47) Ik proefde chocola-tje-s.  
 I tasted chocolate-DIM-PL  
 ‘I tasted pieces of chocolate.’  
 # ‘I tasted different kinds of chocolate.’

These data seem to suggest that syntax is responsible not only for the *mass-count* distinction, but also for the *kind-unit* distinction. According to De Belder, the *kind-unit* distinction derives from the presence of a Size Projection, whose head is lexicalized by the diminutive morpheme. Accordingly, the following structure is proposed:



As far as the general interpretation scheme is concerned, here is the relevant combination of features:



It is interesting to note the impossibility of the combination of features [-Div, +Size]: from a conceptual point of view, this implies that every measurable object is necessarily an individual object; from a syntactic point of view, it derives two empirical facts:

(i) Size morphemes cannot be applied to *mass* nouns:

(50) \*Ons bedrijf produceert chocolatie

Our company produces chocolate-DIM

(ii) Nouns with the feature [+Size] must have plural forms.

#### 2.4.2 Back to Italian evaluative morphemes

If we try to apply De Belder's analysis to Italian, the following observations can be made:

- the possibility to turn *count* nouns into *mass* nouns and, conversely, *mass* nouns into *count* nouns is admitted; however, it seems much simpler for a *mass* noun to turn into *count* than for *count* nouns to turn into *mass* nouns:
  - (51) a. La nonna ha comprato due pomodori.
  - b. Hai pomodoro su tutta la camicia.
  - (52) a. Mi sono procurato una bella cicatrice
  - b. \*Ho cicatrice su tutto il corpo
  - (53) a. Mi sono letto un bel libro
  - b. \*Ho libro su tutta la scrivania
  - (54) a. Qui si produce miele.
  - b. I due mieli sono caratterizzati da un alto valore della somma fruttosio+glucosio.
  - (55) a. Sono tutto ricoperto di sabbia
  - b. Il fenomeno si verifica per le sabbie di densità inferiore alla norma.
  - (56) a. Mi sono tuffato in acqua
  - b. Ho ordinato un'acqua frizzante.
- As far as the *kind-unit* distinction is concerned, the situation seems to be a little more complicated. On the one side, we have some *mass* nouns which can

take both the *kind* and *unit* reading, on the other side we have *mass* nouns which can be interpreted only in the *kind* reading:

- (57) a. Ho bevuto una birra prodotta in Belgio. (ok *kind*)  
b. Ho bevuto una birra al pub. (ok *unit*)  
c. In Belgio si producono birre. (ok *kind*)  
d. Ieri ho bevuto (delle) birre al pub. (ok *unit*)
- (58) a. Ho assaggiato un miele che viene dalla Cina. (ok *kind*)  
b. Ho versato un miele sulla fetta. (#unit).  
c. In Sicilia si producono mieli assai buoni. (ok *kind*)  
d. Ho versato mieli sulle fette (#unit).

- Interestingly, this observation correlates with the possibility for an evaluative morpheme to be adjoined by a *mass* noun. It seems that only *mass* nouns which can take both readings can also be modified by an evaluative morpheme, while those which can have only the *kind* reading cannot. Moreover, the presence of the evaluative morphemes forces the *unit* reading.

- (59) a. ??Ho bevuto un whiskino delle Highlands e uno delle Lowlands  
b. Ho bevuto un whiskino al pub.  
c. \*In Sicilia si producono mielini assai buoni.  
d. \*Ho versato mielini sulle fette.

- If we look at the behaviour of prototypical *count* nouns, on the other side, we can say that the presence of the evaluative morpheme is problematic when we try to force a *mass* reading:

- (60) a. Oggi ho mangiato maiale  
b. \*Oggi ho mangiato maialino
- (61) a. Non si deve sporcare il muro di matita.  
b. \*Non si deve sporcare il muro di matitina

At this point we can draw the following generalizations:

- (i) *Mass* nouns can be split into two major classes: the ones which can have both *kind* and *unit* meaning and the ones which can only have *kind* meaning;
- (ii) *Mass* nouns that can only have *kind* meaning are not compatible with

evaluative morphology;

- (iii) *Mass* nouns that can have both meanings are compatible with evaluative morphology; however, when they are combined with evaluative morphemes, the *unit* meaning is forced.
- (iv) When we turn prototypical *count* nouns into *mass* nouns, their modification with evaluative morphemes is blocked.

In order to give an explanation to these fact, I will make the following assumptions:

- The process whereby *count* nouns turn into *mass* nouns is possible only if those *count* nouns can be split into sub-domains and sub-structures which are *materially equivalent*. This means that, conceptually, we abstract from their physical shape and concentrate on their substance. From this point of view, what the sentence *There is chicken in my plate* means ‘there is the matter chickens are made of’. The process introduces a special type of scalar relation (part-whole) which is then incompatible with the scalar measure modification imposed by evaluative morphology.
- *Mass* nouns turn into *count* nouns in two ways: they can be *instantiated* (i.e. *identified*) or they can be *measured*. The process of identification (which gives rise to the *kind* interpretation) seems to be a general prerogative of *mass* nouns, and can be characterized the way De Belder does. As far as the measurement is concerned, il will argue that this process takes place only when the *mass* noun is related to a prototypical *measure unit*. For example, a prototypical measure unit for ‘beer’ could be a glass, a prototypical measure unit for ‘water’ could be a bottle, a prototypical measure unit for ‘gold’ could be a medal. The relevant fact to be noted is that evaluative modification in this case seems to apply not to the *mass* noun *per se*, but instead on the silent prototypical unit the noun is associated with. A *birrina* is not a ‘small beer’, but a ‘small glass of beer’

## 2.5 Scalarity as a core property

From what we have seen above, the distributional and morphological properties of Italian Evaluative Morphology seem quite complex and variable. This kind of complexity and variability can be interpreted though as an instantiation of semantic properties which in turn make reference to the general notions of *scalarity* and *measurability*. The basic idea is the following: just as we have nouns which can be measured according to their physical or their metaphorically derived properties, equally we have nouns which can be measured by measuring the predicate they are associated to. To make this point clear, consider the case of the deverbal agentive type. In the case of *mangione*, *frignone*, *frullino*, *imbianchino*, the relevant modification pertains to the aspectual side of the verb, not to the dimensional properties of the noun: this kind of derivation must then be interpreted as a measurement of the event, hence the frequentative feature.

**Table 1: The purely augmentative type**

armadione	chiacchieratona	giornatona	omone	sacchettone
bicchierone	cucchiaione	lenzuolone	padellona	salitona
bisteccona	cuscinone	lettone	partitona	seratona
bottigliona	discesona	librone	pendaglione	spadone
bustona	docciona	macchinona	piantona	stradona
cagnone	dormitona	mangiatona	piedone	tastierona
camiciona	esamone	manigliona	posterone	vacanzona
capitolone	filmone	manona	quadernone	vasone
cappellone	fogliona	matitona	ragnone	vassoione
cartellone	frecciona	montagnona	rapinona	vestitone
casona	frittatona	nasone	regalone	zainone
cassettone	gattone	numerone	righellone	zuppierona

**Table 2: The intensificational type**

(S)gabbione	Chitarrone	Letterone	Patacone	Spesone
Aquilone	Cialdone	Loggione	Paurone	Spinone
Bandierone	Cicalone	Lucciolone	Pentolone	Spintone
Baraccone	Ciglione	Lucione	Piramidone	Spumone
Barcone	Cordone	Macchinone	Piumone	Squadrone
Bestemmione	Cornicione	Maglione	Polpettone	Stanzone
Bestione	Cupolone	Marmittone	Polverone	Steccone
Birrone	Curvone	Matitone	Portone	Stradone
Bisteccone	Discesone	Medaglione	Provolone	Striscione
Boccone	Doccione	Melone	Puntone	Tatticone
Borsone	Faccione	Minestrone	Rissone	Tendone
Bottiglione	Festone	Mischione	Rosone	Tenebrose
Calzone	Fifone	Mollettone	Sabbione	Testone
Cannone	Figurone	Montagnone	Saettone	Trappolone
Caprone	Finestrone	Moscone	Salone	Trescone
Cartone	Forchettone	Mutandone	Salsiccione	Trombone
Casermone	Forcone	Pallone	Sberlone	Valigione
Casone	Freccione	Pancione	Sbornione	Vallone
Cassone	Giaccone	Pancone	Scarpone	Veglione
Catenone	Giostrone	Parruccone	Scatolone	Vocione
Cerone	Labbrone	Partitone	Scopone	Zampone
Chiesone	Lasagnone	Pastone	Spadone	Zuppierone

**Table 3 : The denominal quality oriented evaluative type**

baccellone	caprone	grassone	patatone	terrone
bagaglione	cavallone	grugnone	pecione	testone
bagascione	cervellone	guazzabuglione	pecorone	tincone
barbone	chiassone	ingegnone	perticone	trippone
basettone	ciccione	lumacone	pisellone	trombone
beccaccione	coccolone	mammone	polentone	vitellone
berrettone	culattone	mascellone	porcaccione	vocione
birbone	culone	mestolone	porcellone	volpone

boccalone	fannullone	micione	ricciolone	zaccherone
bozzone	farabolone	minchione	scarpone	zoccolone
bracalone	farfallone	musone	scorzone	zuccone
brindellone	fifone	nasone	secchione	
buontempone	forchettone	nebbione	soppiattone	
caccolone	fregnone	nottolone	spallone	
caciarone	frescone	orecchione	spocchione	
cannone	frittellone	pacchione	stangone	
capellone	frottolone	pancione	straccione	
capoccione	giuggiolone	parruccone	strizzone	
capone	gnoccolone	pasticcione	talpone	
cappellone	gocciolone	pataccone	tatticone	

**Table 4: The deverbal agentive type**

abbacone	burlone	faticone	piaccicone	spaccone
abbaione	buscherone	fracassone	piagnone	spendaccione
abborraccione	cacone	frignone	piagnucolone	sprecone
accattone	castrone	giocherellone	piluccone	strapazzone
acciabattone	chiacchierone	girandolone	piscione	strillone
acciarpone	ciabattone	girellone	pomicione	strimpellone
almanaccone	ciampicone	guardone	praticone	strippone
armeggione	ciancicone	imbroglione	puzzone	stronfione
arraffone	ciancione	impiccione	ronzone	succhione
arruffone	cianfruglione	ingarbuglione	sbornione	sussurrone
baione	ciangottone	intrigone	sbrodolone	tabaccone
battona	ciarlone	intruglione	sbruffone	tartaglione
beone	cicalone	lagnone	scarmiglione	trafficone
bercione	ciondolone	leccone	scialacquone	trincone
bisbiglione	civettone	litigone	scialone	truffone
bisboccione	copione	maneggione	sciamannone	ubriacone
blaterone	crapulone	mangione	sciupone	urlone
borbottone	criticone	mugolone	scroccone	
brodolone	dimenticone	pacione	sgobbone	
brontolone	dormiglione	pappone	smanaccione	
buggerone	faccendone	pencolone	soffione	





## **Chapter 3**

### **Evaluative Morphology and Adjectives**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to provide an analysis for the morphosyntactic properties and the interpretive import of evaluative morphology in a very productive yet scarcely studied context, namely the adjectival environment. If, as we assumed, evaluative morphology instantiate different functional projections inside the extended DP, therefore feeding nominal modification, then a question arises on whether and how different lexical categories (in this case, the noun and the adjective) can combine with the same set of syntactic features. Moreover, the properties of adjectival evaluative modification provide us with an insight into the semantic value of functional projections in the DP area: again, the notions of measurability and scalarity will play a crucial role.

In the first part of the chapter (section 2.1) I will describe the general properties of adjectival evaluative modification, showing why they are relevant both to the internal syntax of Adjectival Phrases and to the syntax of DPs; in the second part of the chapter (section 2.2), I will try to give a syntactic analysis those properties; in the third part (sections 2.3), the discussion will be focused on the relationship (i.e. analogies and differences) between nominal evaluative modification and adjectival evaluative modification.

#### **3.2 Adjectival evaluative modification: distribution**

##### *3.2.1 Evaluative morphemes*

Let us first focus on the distributional properties of adjectival evaluative modification from a theoretically neutral and purely descriptive perspective. It seems that we can tackle this problem from two angles: first, we should be able to identify and isolate inside the set of all evaluative morphemes those which are regularly and consistently productive from those which are rare and historically residual, putting aside those which are completely unattested and grammatically impossible. From this point of view, it seems rather clear that the evaluative morpheme involved in the regular pattern is *-ino*, the ones involved in the residual pattern are fundamentally *-etto* (*lunghetto*), *-accio* (*grassaccio*), *-iccio* (*molliccio*), *-occio* (*belloccio*), *-acchio* (*verdaccio*), *-otto* (*anzianotto*), *-ogno* (*amarogno(lo)*), while on the other hand, adjectival modification with the suffix *-one* is totally excluded.

### 3.2.2 *The adjectives*

Assuming another approach, we separate the adjectives which can be modified by an evaluative morpheme from those which can not, therefore we concentrate on the general semantic properties of adjectives. Consider the contrast between (62) and (63):

- (62) a. Gianna ha comprato una giacca strettina.  
 b. Filippo è un ragazzo di carattere delicatino.  
 c. Ho visto un film leggerino, per nulla pretenzioso.
- (63) a. \*Galileo Galilei è mortino.  
 b. \*Alla gara sono arrivato quartino.  
 c. \*Mi piace di più il tavolo triangolarino.

The difference between (62) and (63) can be only interpreted on the basis of the different semantic properties of the adjectives, since – as we said – there is no distributional restriction on the suffix *-ino*. In other words, if we do not rely on the intrinsic, inherent properties of the adjectives, we can not explain why the sentences in (63) are ungrammatical. Following this line of reason, it seems that the relevant opposition is between *gradable* and *non-gradable* adjectives. As

Kennedy (1999) points out, this distinction can be characterized from the semantic point of view in the following way: “gradable adjectives can be considered as predicative expressions whose domains can be partially ordered according to some property that permits gradings” (Kennedy (1999): xiii). On the other side, non-gradable adjectives do not permit degree variation in their orderings. The fundamental idea is that the asymmetry between (62) and (63), i. e. the ungrammaticality of (63), can be explained if we assume that adjectival evaluative modification is sensitive to the properties of the orderings on the domain of an adjective: in particular, if an adjective is associated with a gradable domain, then its modification is available; if instead the adjective is not associated with a gradable domain, then its modification leads to ungrammatical structures.

A problem still remains about what precisely is the semantic import of evaluative morphemes that is compatible with gradable adjective but incompatible with non-gradable adjectives. To answer the question, I will argue once again that evaluative morphology has the property of introducing the notion of scalarity into the predicate it is associated with. Since, from a semantic point of view, scalarity is intrinsically connected to gradability, it derives that from a morphosyntactic point of view scalarity-induced features must be able to be checked. Accordingly, I argue that adjectival evaluative morphology modifies an adjective  $\varphi$  by associating it to the *lowest possible degree*: specifically, a sentence of the form  $x$  is  $\varphi$ -DIM is taken to mean  $x$  is at least as  $\varphi$  as  $d$ , where  $d$  is a degree on a scale associated with  $\varphi$  that identifies not the default value of  $\varphi$ -ness, but its minimum.

### 3.3 Syntactic properties

In this section, I am going to present some crucial syntactic properties of Italian evaluative morphology, namely its behaviour in respect to the relative order between adjectives and nouns, to the presence of measure phrases, to the possibility of *wh*- constructions.

### 3.3.1 *Adjectival evaluative morphology and word order*

As Cinque (1994) points out, in Italian there is a large group of adjectives (e.g. subjective comment adjectives) that can appear both pre-nominally and post-nominally:

- (64)a. Marta è una strana ragazza.  
b. Marta è una ragazza strana.  
c. Andrea è un famoso pittore.  
d. Andrea è un pittore famoso.

However, once such an adjective has been modified by an evaluative morpheme, it must necessarily occupy the post-nominal position:

- (65)a. \*Marta è una stranina ragazza.  
b. Marta è una ragazza stranina.

This descriptive generalization seems to be valid for other cases of adjectival modification:

- (66)a. \*Matteo è un molto furbo ragazzo  
b. Matteo è un ragazzo molto furbo

The same kind of results arise when we introduce a modifying measure phrase:

- (67)a. Un ragazzo alto 180 cm.  
b. \*Un ragazzo altino 180 cm.  
(68)a. Un ragazzo piuttosto alto.  
b. \*Un ragazzo piuttosto alto 180 cm.

On the other hand, there is a strong asymmetry with respect to the behaviour of superlatives, which can occur in pre-nominal position and cannot combine with adverbial degree modifiers

- (69)a. Matteo è un (bellissimo) ragazzo (bellissimo)  
b. Matteo è un ((\*piuttosto) bellissimo) ragazzo ((\*piuttosto) bellissimo)  
c. Matteo è un (\*piuttosto bellino) ragazzo (piuttosto bellino)

With this generalizations in mind, let us consider what has been recently proposed about the syntactic and semantic properties of adjectives in Germanic and Romance languages.

In a recent paper, Cinque (2005) addresses some of the problems he dealt with in his previous analysis (Cinque (1994)) of the relative order between adjectives and nouns. The fundamental hypothesis he questions is the following: DP-internal word order difference between Germanic and Romance derives from the different movement properties of Germanic and Romance nouns.

This idea faces a number of problems which makes his analysis untenable. The most serious one is illustrated by the following examples:

- (70)a. La sola **possibile** invasione dell'Albania.
- b. La sola invasione **possibile** dell'Albania.
- c. \*?La sola invasione **possibile italiana** dell'Albania.

The Italian data show a strange restriction on the number of adjectives we are able to find post-nominally. The problem was noted in Cinque (1994), but remained unsolved.

Consider now the following examples:

- (71) a. The visible stars include Aldebaran and Sirius.
- b. The (only) stars visible are Aldebaran and Sirius.
- (72) a. Le invisibili stelle di Andromeda sono molto distanti.
- b. Le stelle invisibili di Andromeda sono molto distanti.
- (73) a. All of his unsuitable acts were condemned.
- b. Every word unsuitable was condemned.
- (74) a. Le noiose lezioni di ferri se le ricordano tutti.
- b. Le lezioni noiose di Ferri se le ricordano tutti.
- (75) a. Mary interviewed every possible candidate.
- b. Mary interviewed every candidate possible.
- (76) a. Maria ha intervistato ogni possibile candidato.
- b. Maria ha intervistato ogni candidato possibile.

- (77) a. Olga is a beautiful dancer.  
 b. Olga is a dancer more beautiful than her instructor.
- (78) a. Un buon attaccante non farebbe mai una cosa del genere.  
 b. Un attaccante buono non farebbe mai una cosa del genere.

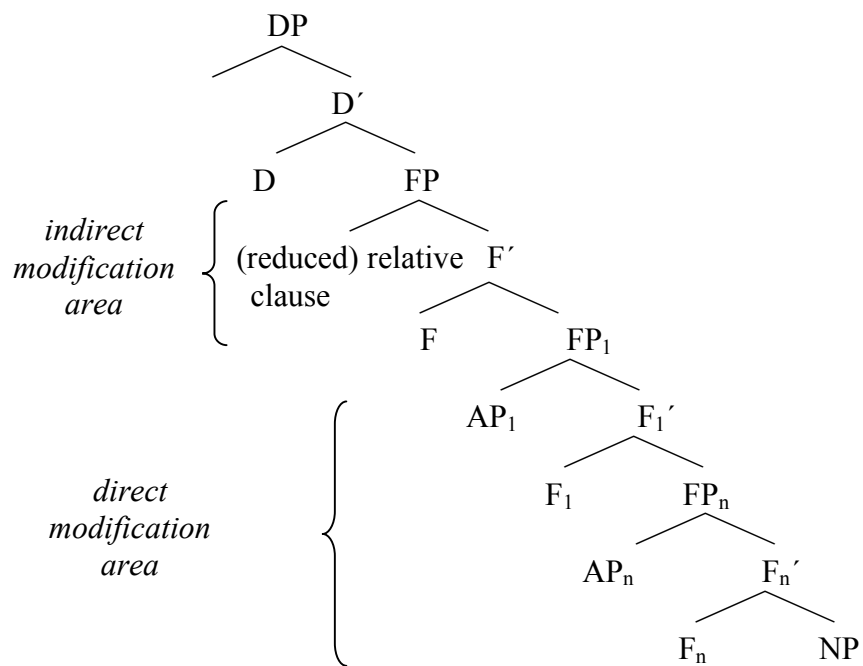
These data want to point out some crucial interpretive alternation between English and Italian according to the position of the adjective (pre-nominal *vs.* post-nominal). Consider the Italian data: what we see is that when the adjective is in the pre-nominal position, it can only be interpreted as individual-level, non-restrictive, modal, non-intersective; on the other hand, post-nominal English adjectives have necessarily the opposite reading. As far as the Italian post-nominal position is concerned, we can say that the rightmost position has the interpretive properties of English post-nominal adjectives, and so behave English pre-nominal adjectives in their leftmost position. According to Cinque, stage-level, restrictive, implicit relative and intersective interpretations are the result of a special kind of nominal modification, which derives from a reduced relative clause. On the other hand, individual-level, non-restrictive, modal, non-intersective interpretations have to be ascribed to a simple direct modification. To make these generalizations clear, we can look at the following schemes:

English (Germanic languages)			
stage-level restrictive implicit relative intersective	individual- level non-restrictive modal non-intersective	N	stage-level restrictive implicit relative intersective
<i>reduced relative clause AP (indirect modification)</i>	<i>direct modification AP</i>		<i>reduced relative clause AP (indirect modification)</i>

Italian (Romance languages)			
individual- level non-restrictive modal non-intersective	N	individual- level non- restrictive modal non-intersective	stage-level restrictive implicit relative intersective
<i>direct modification AP</i>		<i>direct modification AP</i>	<i>reduced relative clause AP (indirect modification)</i>

The underlying structure of adjectival modification would then look like this:

(79)



Let us now turn back to our topic, namely adjectival evaluative modification. From what we have seen, the only position available for the modified adjective is the post-nominal position. If we combine this fact with Cinque's analysis, we are forced to say that modified adjective can be originated only by a reduced relative clause. Let us verify this conclusion on the basis of the interpretive properties outlined in the previous section. Consider the following data:



(80)a.

Giovanni è un	grandissimo	giocatore	grandissimo
Giovanni è un	(*grandino)	giocatore	grandino

b.

Le	noiosissime	lezioni di Ferri	noiosissime	sono online
Le	(*noiosette)	lezioni di Ferri	noiosette	sono online

These examples seem to confirm our hypothesis, since the only possible readings are, respectively, intersective and implicit relative.

If this is correct, then we are tempted to assume that adjectives which derive from reduced relative clauses can have a bigger functional area at their disposal. This idea would in turn explain why we can find adverbial degree modifiers only in post-nominal contexts. It is precisely in the functional area given by the relative clause that adjective can move and adjoin to evaluative morphemes or simply be modified by degree adverbials.

### 3.3.2 *Adjectival evaluative morphology and degree operators*

Another interesting property of adjectival evaluative modification arises when we try to combine modified adjective with degree operators. Consider the following examples:

(81) a. Quanto alto è Giovanni?

b. \*Quanto altino è Giovanni?

(82) a. Vorrei sapere quanto bello è diventato.

b. \*Vorrei sapere quanto bellino è diventato

(83) a. Che fredda, questa stanza!

(*extreme degree interpretation AVAILABLE*)

b. Che freddina, questa stanza!

(*extreme degree interpretation UNAVAILABLE*)

- (84) a. Non riesco a credere a quanto sciocco è questo film!  
*(extreme degree interpretation AVAILABLE)*
- a. Non riesco a credere a quanto sciocchino è questo film!  
*(extreme degree interpretation UNAVAILABLE)*

The ungrammaticality of *wh*- degree question can be explained assuming the following ideas:

- For a *wh*- degree question to be grammatical, the adjective must be gradable:
- (85) a. Quanto lungo è il fiume Tevere?  
 b. \*Quanto spento è questo computer?
- *Wh*- degree questions entail an operator-variable structure inside the adjectival phrase;
  - The presence of the adjectival evaluative modifier acts as an intervenor for the operator-variable relation, which is blocked by relativized minimality.

As far as the interaction with exclamative clauses is concerned, we can adopt Zanuttini and Portner's idea (Zanuttini and Portner (2003:7)): "Exclamatives introduce a conventional scalar implicature to the effect that the proposition they denote lies at the extreme end of some contextually given scale. Thus, "How very cute he is!" indicates that his degree of cuteness is greater than the alternatives under consideration" The idea is that exclamatives widen the domain of quantification for the *wh*- operator. Given that the meaning of exclamatives wavers between 'a sense of surprise' and 'extreme degree' and that the 'extreme degree' meaning is unavailable because of the internal semantic properties of the adjectival evaluative modifier, the only possible reading is the former. This can be derived syntactically by proposing – similarly to what we said about degree questions – that adjectival diminutive constructions entail a covert operator placed in left periphery of the DP phase, which already binds the degree variable within AP, thus blocking by minimality binding by the degree question operator. As a

consequence, the exclamative clause is possible only in its non-quantificational reading.

## Chapter 4

### Evaluative Morphology and Verb Phrases

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will try to investigate the relation between Italian evaluative morphology and verb phrases. As we will see, the main hypothesis is that evaluative morphemes – as expected by what we said in the previous chapters – modify the scalar properties of the predicate, which means that they can subdue, boost and iterate the action expressed by the verb.

#### 4.2 The data

From a purely descriptive point of view, Italian deverbal verbs are traditionally described as verbs derived from verbal bases by means of suffixation. In order to make this point clear, we can consider the following examples<sup>8</sup>:

- (86) a. saltare → saltellare  
‘to jump’            ‘to hop’  
b. mangiare → mangiucchiare  
‘to eat’            ‘to nibble’

As we have seen in the case of nominal and adjectival modification, since the process does not change the lexical category it applies to, its status is ambiguous between morphological derivation and morphological inflection, but since we are assuming a syntactic approach to morphology, this issue will not concern us.

If we take a look at the suffixes involved in this type of derivation, the picture we can draw is the following<sup>9</sup> (the number indicates the occurrences):

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<sup>8</sup> See Table 5 for the complete list of deverbal verbs.

(87) *acchi-are* (35), *-icchi-are* (28), *-ol-are* (19), *-eggi-are*, *-ucchi-are* (15), *-azz-are* (13), *-er-ellare*, *-ett-are*, *-ic-are* (6), *-ecchi-are*, *-uzz-are* (3), *-acci-are*, *-iccic-are*, *-ign-are*, *-izz-are* (2), *-arell-are*, *-ell-are*, *-icchin-are*, *-icci-are*, *-iggin-are*, *-in-are*, *-occhi-are*, *-onzol-are*, *-ott-are*, *ottol-are*, *-ucol-are*, *-ugli-are*, *-uzzic-are* (1)

As we can see, the shape of these suffixes is strikingly similar to the one of those involved in nominal modification. This fact, once again, suggests the cross-categorical pervasivity of evaluative modification. Apart this general consideration, the following generalizations should be noted:

- Deverbal verbs always belong to the first conjugation class, which is the only productive class in Italian;
- Deverbal verbs rarely display transitivity/intransitivity alternations (but see, for instance, *rubare* vs. *rubacchiare*).
- As for the *Aktionsart* of the verb, a huge shift must be noted from *accomplishment* verbs to *activity* verbs, as we can see from the following examples:

(88) a. #Ho mangiato i biscotti, ma devo ancora finire di mangiarli

b. Ho mangi**ucchiato** i biscotti, ma devo ancora finire di mangiarli.

(89) a. #Ho letto il libro, ma devo ancora finire di leggerlo.

b. Ho leggi**ucchiato** il libro, ma devo ancora finire di leggerlo

As far as the semantic shift is concerned, Bertinetto suggests that Italian deverbal verbs display a high degree of semantic compositionality, which can be connected to four main features:

- a. diminution/attenuation: the action is characterized by reduced intensity, no real effort, poor results. This is the case of verbs such as *leggiucchiare*, *vivacchiare*, *studiacchiare*;

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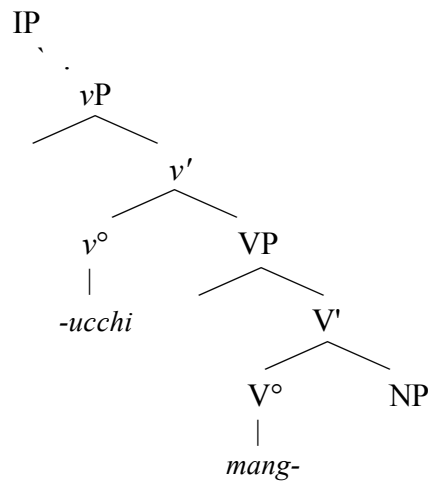
<sup>9</sup> The data discussed here were first collected by Bertinetto (2002).

- b. pejorative characterization: the action is immoderate and excessive, and often leads to bad results. In this case we have verbs such as *bucacchiare* and *sbevazzare*;
- c. intensification/indetermination: the action is characterized by higher intensity but is often spacially undetermined. Examples in this case are given by *svolazzare*, *spiegazzare*;
- d. iteration: the action is repeated, but its timeline is irregular and unforeseeable. This is the case of *scribacchiare* and *saltellare*.

What I would like to propose is that all these subcases of evaluative modification are in fact a consequence of the combination of internal semantic properties of the verb with the familiar notion of scalarity.

### 4.3 Evaluative morphemes as functional heads

At this point it should be clear that the semantic import given by evaluative morphology modifies the verb in its internal aspectual side. How can we characterize this fact assuming a syntactic approach to suffixation? First of all, we have seen that deverbal verbs do not change the argument structure of the verbal base, so it would be hard to say that this kind of derivation takes place inside the VP. On the other side, it is equally difficult to assume that it takes place in the IP space, since there is no obvious adverbial phrase semantically connected to this aspectual modification. Thus, it is tempting to assume that evaluative morphemes occupy a structural area above the VP and below the IP, namely the *vP*. The structure I propose for *mangiucchiare* (as an example) is therefore the following:



**Table 5: Deverbal verbs**

abbruciacchiare	cucicchiare	leggiucchiare	ridacchiare	spendacciare
aderizzare	dolicchiare	macchiettare	rosicchiare	spendicchiare
ammalazzare	dolicciare	mangicchiare	rubacchiare	spenducchiare
ammonticchiare	dormicchiare	mangiucchiare	saltellare	spennacchiare
ancorizzare	falseggiare	mescolare	salticchiare	spiegazzare
annaspicare	fischierellare	minuzzolare	sbacchiare	spilluzzicare
avvolicchiare	fischiettare	mordicchiare	sballottolare	spruzzolare
avvoltolare	folgoreggiare	mormoracchiare	sbevazzare	sputacchiare
bacchiare	foracchiare	mormoreggiare	scacazzare	spuzzecchiare
beccheggiare	francheggiare	mozzicare	scassinare	stentacchiare
becchettare	frugacchiare	palpeggiare	scherzeggiare	stintignare
beccolare	frugolare	parlicchiare	schiamazzare	stiracchiare
beccucchiare	fumacchiare	parlottare	sciupacchiare	stormeggiare
beccuzzare	fumeggiare	parlucchiare	scollacciarsi	studiacchiare
bevacchiare	giocacchiare	passeggiare	scopiazzare	sudacchiare
bevazzare	giocherellare	pelacchiare	scorrazzare	suonicchiare
bevicchiare	giochicchiare	pennelleggiare	scribacchiare	svagolare
bevucchiare	girellare	pesticciare	scricchiolare	sventolare
braccheggiare	gironzolare	piacicchiare	scrivacchiare	svolacchiare
brancicare	gocciolare	piaciucchiare	scrivicchiare	svolazzare
brandeggiare	gridacchiare	piagnucolare	scrivucchiare	tagliuzzare

bruciacchiare	grillettare	piangiucchiare	sforacchiare	tasteggiare
bucacchiare	grufolare	picchiettare	sfotticchiare	tombolare
bucherellare	guadagnucchiare	picchiolare	sfumazzare	tossicchiare
cacazzare	guaiolare	pieghettare	sghignazzare	tremolare
campicchiare	imparacchiare	piovicciare	sgraffignare	trotterellare
cantarellare	inciampicare	piovigginare	sgranocchiare	urtacchiare
canterellare	innamoracchiare	pulseggiare	smangiucchiare	vagolare
canticchiare	innamorazzare	punzecchiare	sminuzzare	vendicchiare
cascolare	insegnucciare	puzzacchiare	sonacchiare	vivacchiare
ciampicare	intendicchiare	puzzicchiare	sonicchiare	vivucchiare
cianciugliare	lavoracchiare	puzzicchinare	sonnecchiare	volacchiare
costicchiare	lavoricchiare	ragionacchiare	sparacchiare	volicchiare
crepolare	leggicchiare	rampicare	spelacchiare	voltolare



## Conclusions

In this dissertation I tried to provide an exhaustive description of Italian evaluative morphology. One of the basic guidelines of my work is the intuition that the core aspects of the meaning of evaluative morphology – despite their apparent variety and inconsistency – can be actually reduced to very general semantic notions, which in turn show independent motivation in other grammatical areas. As we mentioned in the previous chapters, it is tempting to suppose that at least some of the general semantic patterns across categories can be reduced to parallel functional schemes in the extended projections of lexical categories: if, as suggested by Ramchand (2006:1), “the abstract structuring principles of reference are the same across categories, even though the basic ontological domains are different (Substance (N) *vs.* Space (P) *vs.* Property (A) *vs.* Time (V))”, then we could derive a much simpler, more regular syntactic model.

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