
CHAPTER 10

.....

EXPRESSIVITY AND SYNTAX

.....

ANDRÉS SAAB

10.1 INTRODUCTION: MORE THAN WORDS

.....

The main theme of this chapter is the contribution of syntax to the expressive function of language. I assume that expressive meanings act in parallel to representational or truth-conditional meanings (see Kaplan 1999/2004, Kratzer 1999, Potts 2005, McCready 2010, Predelli 2013, Gutzmann 2015, Orlando & Saab 2020b, Saab & Carranza 2021, among many others). On this view, expressivity is detected by its impact on the *use-conditions* of phrases or sentences. The idea comes from Kaplan's (1999/2004) original insights on interjections like *ouch* or *alas*, which according to him can be formally modeled by quantifying over *contexts of use* (\leftrightarrow *Expressivity: an introduction* by DANIEL GUTZMANN AND KATHARINA TURGAY, Chapter 1 of this volume). Consider the following paradigm:

- (1) a. **Ouch!** It hurts.
- b. **Oops!** It turned off again.
- c. **Alas!** The party was canceled.

An intuitive paraphrase for these examples would have to capture the fact that the interjections involved in each sentence do not affect the way in which the world is represented by sentences like *it hurts*, *it turned off again* or *the party was canceled*. By uttering these

interjections, the speaker merely communicates a certain emotional disposition. Indeed, presence or absence of the emotive interjections do not alter the truth-conditions of the examples in (1). Such dispositions, however, are entirely conventional and can be accurately formalized with the same tools we use for modeling truth-conditions, i.e., the tools of set theory. In Kaplan's words "the semantic information in the word 'ouch' is —more accurately, is represented by— the set of those contexts at which the word 'ouch' is expressively correct (since it contains no descriptive information), namely, the set of those contexts at which the agent is in pain. That set of contexts represents the semantic information contained in the word 'ouch.'" (Kaplan 1999/2004: 15-16). The line dividing each meaning dimension is given by the formal notions of *context* (understood in a Kaplanian sense) and *possible world*. But crucially, there is no difference in status. Both expressive and representational meanings are encoded in lexical items. Provided a syntactic analysis, sentences containing any of those meanings are axiomatically interpreted on the basis of the proper analyses.

Yet, it is not clear at all that Kaplan's interjections behave as linguistic constructs.¹ Regarding them, Kratzer (1999) comments:

There is a phonology. **There is no syntax.** There is no compositional semantics. There are no interactions to investigate. Are we even looking at Language? (Kratzer 1999: 1, my emphasis)

Yet, many other expressions in natural language trigger use-conditions in the sense Kaplan favors and are integrated into phrase structures and compositional processes of semantic interpretation.² As an illustration, consider the Spanish word *puta* as it occurs in the sentences below:

- (2) a. *Ana es puta.*
 Ana is whore
 'Ana is a whore.'
- b. *La puta de Ana llegó tarde.*
 the EPITHET of Ana arrived late
 'That whore Ana arrived late.'
- c. *Esa puta profesora me desaprobó otra vez!*
 that EXPRESSIVE ADJECTIVE professor me failed again
 'That fucking (female) professor failed me again!'
- d. *Putá! Llegó Andrés.*
 INTERJECTION arrived Andrés
 'Fuck! Andrés arrived!'

A slur or taboo word like *puta* is used in predicate position in an example like (2a). In this occurrence, the word has a *mixed* meaning. On the one hand, the sentence says that

¹ But see → *Expressivity and interjections* by ULRIKE STANGE-HUNSDÖRFER, Chapter 25 of this volume for the linguistic intricacies of interjections.

² Kratzer herself proposes a Kaplanian approach to discourse particles in German arguing that they are integrated into the sentence structure in ways which are similar to high sentential adverbs.

Ana pertains to the set of sex workers, so it will be true only in case Ana indeed pertains to that set. On the other hand, the sentence also communicates that a certain negative stereotype is in force in the context of use and that, by default, the speaker ascribes to such a stereotype. We can detect the activity of the expressive and representational dimensions by different means, but perhaps the most conspicuous way of doing it is by showing their *independence* (see Potts 2005). Consider negation:

- (3) *Ana no es puta.*
 Ana is not whore
 ‘Ana is not a whore.’

By uttering this sentence, the speaker is merely saying that Ana does not pertain to the set of sex workers. Yet, she is still communicating the same negative attitude towards sex workers she communicates in the sentence in (2a). We say, then, that expressive meanings “scope out” of truth-conditional operators, like negation. The same scoping-out effects are observed for the rest of the examples in (2).

Now, when we look at the entire paradigm, we immediately notice that none of the other occurrences of the word *puta* retains the classificatory force it has in (2a). It is an epithet in (2b), i.e., a mere misogynistic insult, and an emotional indicator in (2c) and (2d), i.e., in none of these two cases a misogynistic flavor remains. The main question to be addressed can be formulated as follows:

- (Q) How may any word become expressive in the relevant sense? Or how did **puta** lose its original predicative force in (2a) to merely communicate a variety of different use-conditions in (2b)–(2d)?

it is possible to assume that the Spanish lexicon lists each instance of the relevant phonetic form as a separate lexical item, each of which introduces different degrees of expressive meanings. Yet, we can alternatively assume that syntax plays a crucial role in the generation of the expressive dimension. This seems a promising way of looking at the cases in (2) since, as we will see, the distribution of these expressives fits a particular syntactic configuration, which is, indeed, responsible for the distinctive expressive flavors of each relevant sentence or phrase. Now, the question arises as to how to model the syntax of expressivity. Different answers to this question should largely impact on our conception of the design of the language faculty. There are two families of theories relevant to this debate. At the core of the first type of approach, it is the more or less explicit assumption that the language faculty is equally designed to serve different communicational purposes without any difference in status. The idea is already present in the first Kaplanian multidimensional insights, but it is explicitly implemented in different ways by Potts (2005) and Gutzmann (2019).³ As we will see, for Potts expressivity only requires lexical encoding plus the expressive axioms it triggers. There is *a priori* no reason to think that expressive constructions require, in addition, any particular syntactic activity. This is not Gutzmann’s opinion, for whom expressivity cannot be reduced only to lexical-semantic

3 See → *Expressivity and multidimensional semantics* by DANIEL GUTZMANN, Chapter 11 of this volume, for an overview.

encoding; the syntactic activity of an expressive feature is also required.

- (4) **Hypothesis of expressive syntax** (Gutzmann 2019: 4)
Expressivity does not only play a role for semantics and pragmatics, but it is a syntactic feature.

However, this feature does not depart from standard syntax, i.e., it involves the usual syntactic processes of Agree, Merge or Movement. Put differently, both for Potts and Gutzmann there is not any representational priority.

The second group of theories makes exactly the opposite claim. They all assume that the language faculty is primarily a mean for rational thinking. Let us state the idea as a general conjecture:

- (5) **The representation-first conjecture (RF-conjecture)**
Language is mainly a representational device.

The RF conjecture has a long tradition both in philosophy and linguistics. A very transparent formulation was made by Pos (1934):

I believe that, in order to understand the emotive dimension in a linguistic perspective, one has to base oneself on language conceived as an instrument for reasoning. On this basis, affective meaning would appear to be a complication of rational language. (Pos 1934: 138 *apud* Foolen 2022: 45)

According to Pos, many words which have a logical origin can be recycled as emotive markers, showing that the representational function has priority in the language design. The RF-conjecture in (5) evidently connects to the idea that, in a sense, expressive meanings must be constructed by grammatical strategies that depart from standard grammar.⁴ This can be detected in almost each level of linguistic analysis: phonological, morphological and purely syntactic. As a brief illustration of what is observed in other domains, consider that in Rioplatense Spanish, for example, a mechanism of syllable inversion converts neutral words into triggers of particular use-conditions, namely, syllable inversion restricts contexts of use to very informal or colloquial ones. So, if a speaker says *feca* instead of the non-inverted *café* ‘coffee’, she is conventionally communicating that the context she is in is a very informal one (see Bohrn 2015, Saab 2021b). The example is relevant for at least two reasons: (i) it shows that some use-conditional meanings must be deduced not at LF, but at PF, the post-syntactic component in which syllable inversion applies, and (ii) it makes clear that expressivity requires some sort of formal manipulation, of words in this case.⁵

4 In the same vein, if the RF-conjecture is on the right track, one can wonder whether the design of the language faculty makes available grammatical categories which are indubitably linked to emotions as it does with categories for representation (e.g., tense, aspect, number, gender, and so on). In a very recent paper, Wiltschko (2024) argues that there are no pure grammatical categories for emotions, and those that have been classified as such (exclamatives, miratives, etc.) have a different origin (epistemic in most cases). This is also true, she argues, even in the case of interjections.

5 In this case, of course, one could be tempted to derive the meaning that syllable inversion produces as a manner implicature.

Now, as in the previous case, there are different conceptions of what a “complication of rational language” could mean. Corver (2016), for instance, pushes the idea further and explicitly proposes that emotive language requires *deviation from the rules of grammar*. A more moderate implementation of the RF-conjecture, one indeed closer to Pos’ original insights, can be found in Saab (2022a), according to whom many expressive meanings are the direct consequence of syntactic recycling, a grammatical strategy that simply consists of externally merging words in non-representational positions, i.e., in “expletive” positions.

In principle, different expressive phenomena across languages could favor one or another way of modeling the grammar of expressivity. Put differently, there are plausible empirical reasons to think of expressivity as an epiphenomenon involving different types of grammatical strategies. Now, although these conceptions on the grammar of expressivity have some tradition in linguistics, the syntax of expressivity in a Kaplanian multi-dimensional framework is a very recent area of scientific research and, compared to the advances made on the semantics of expressivity, there are still many theoretical and empirical gaps to fill. This chapter offers, then, a first approximation to the types of proposals found in the literature and a way to adjudicate among different analytical options by exploring the syntax of the more well-studied cases of expressive constructions in multidimensional theories, namely: slurs, epithets, and expressive adjectives, among other relevant constructions.

The chapter is organized in the following way. In Section 10.2, I compare slurs and epithets in order to show that epithets, unlike slurs, which are predicative expressions, do not head the nominal projection in which they occur but are externally merged in a non-predicative position in the functional spine of pronouns. This expletivization strategy accounts for the basic meaning contrast between (2a) and (2b). In Section 10.3, I focus on expressive adjectives, like (2c). Expressive adjectives are known for triggering what Gutzmann (2019) has called *argument extension*, i.e., a particular syntax-semantic mismatch according to which the putative semantic argument of the expressive operator does not match its syntactic argument. After discussing the main solutions proposed to resolve the puzzle, I offer my own solution, inspired in a previous work by Lo Guericio & Orlando (2022). Concretely, I argue that argument extension effects result from late merger of the expressive in a cycle of the syntactic derivation in which an isolated conventional implicature is triggered. The two syntactic strategies of recycling and late recycling that account for the distribution of epithets and expressive adjectives, respectively, straightforwardly extend to the domain of binominals in Romance, which as is well-known has been mainly analyzed as underlying subject-predicate structures by den Dikken (2006) and many others. Yet, under closer inspection, binominals have both an expressive syntax and semantics, i.e., they pertain to the realm of the grammar of expressivity and use-conditions. Finally, in Section 10.5, I offer some final thoughts and briefly discuss some forms of expressivity that, as argued by Gutzmann (2019), involve the syntactic activity of an expressive feature, or that, as argued by Corver (2016), require, instead, some sort of rule manipulation at PF.

10.2 SYNTACTIC RECYCLING: FROM SLURS TO EPITHETS

.....

As I have already noted, group slurs are mixed expressive words. In their canonical uses, they give us a profile of the speaker and her social-cultural context. A speaker who uses a group slur *classifies* in the representational dimension and *typifies* in the expressive dimension. Typified social kinds are grouped by sexual orientation, political beliefs, social class, ethnicity, gender and age, among other well-known types. As mixed words, they have a clear impact both on truth- and use-conditions. Syntactically, this implies that these words must be base-generated in predicative positions. Their expressive flavor is, then, a lexical matter. This is not the case of epithets, which have lost their representational force by virtue of the syntactic environment in which they occur. In this section, I compare slurs and epithets with the aim of showing that they trigger a systematic structural ambiguity (Orlando & Saab 2020a, Saab & Orlando 2021). As I argue, such an ambiguity makes a good case for the theory of syntactic recycling commented in the previous section.

To start with, consider the case of the slur for homosexuals in Rioplatense Spanish:

- (6) *Andrés es puto.*
 Andrés is homosexual._{PEJ}
 ‘Andrés is a f...’

This sentence makes the same representational contribution as the following one, in which the neutral word *homosexual* is used instead:

- (7) *Andrés es homosexual.*
 Andrés is homosexual
 ‘Andrés is homosexual.’

Yet, the sentence in (6) is restricted to contexts in which an homophobic stereotype is in force. This is not the case with the second sentence, which has more contexts of use. Put differently, the two sentences have the same truth-conditions but differ in use-conditions. The trigger of such a difference is a lexical matter, namely, we say that *puto* is a mixed word, particularly biased for some contexts of use (see McCready 2010, Predelli 2013). What is the contribution of syntax here? In principle, none. In the simplified analysis provided in the tree below, we can see that *puto* and *homosexual* are both main predicates of the subject *Andrés*:

- (8)
-
- ```

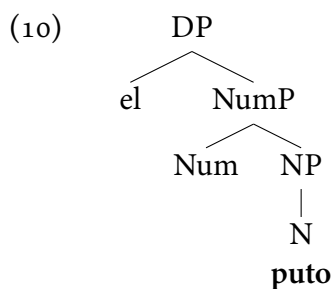
graph TD
 TP --> DP
 TP --> VP
 DP --- Andrés
 VP --> V
 VP --> NP
 V --- es
 NP --- puto_homosexual[puto/homosexual]

```
- puto/homosexual**

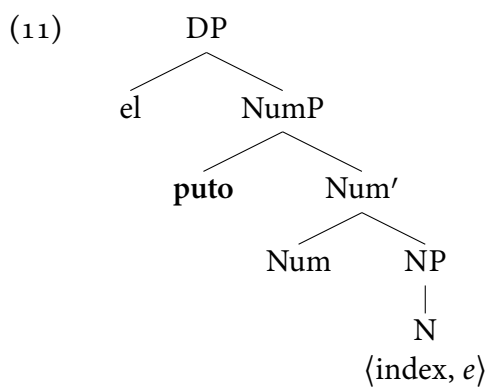
Now, consider the ambiguity of this sentence:

- (9) *El puto llegó tarde a la fiesta.*  
 the f... arrived late to the party  
 ‘The f... arrived late to the party.’

In this case, the subject DP can be ambiguously interpreted. On one reading, the entire DP is interpreted as an R-expression with the slur word as the head of the nominal phrase. The truth-conditions of the sentence are such that it is true only in case the individual referred to by the definite description is a member of the set of homosexuals. In addition, the sentence communicates an homophobic bias by virtue of the mixed character of the slur word.



There is, however, another interpretation, in which only the bias is being communicated, i.e., set membership is not part of the meaning. On this reading, the subject DP is a mere pronominal index ornamented with an homophobic bias. [Orlando & Saab \(2020a\)](#) argue that the source of this ambiguity is essentially syntactic. Concretely, under the epithetic reading, the original slur word is syntactically recycled in an expletive position of the pronominal structure. By assumption, such a position is the specifier of NumP (but this is not crucial):



These analyses make sense of the intuition that a sentence like (9) is ambiguous in the ways already indicated. Now, there is robust independent evidence for distinguishing two structural sources. In  $\leftrightarrow$  *Expressivity in Spanish* by ANDRÉS SAAB, Chapter 45 of this volume several arguments are presented to the effect of properly disambiguate the relevant strings in Spanish. I will briefly comment on some of them and, then, I will show that similar arguments can be extended to English. Finally, I will add a novel argument from



Italian that nicely illustrates the structural ambiguity between slurs and epithets.

The first thing to note is that, according to the analysis proposed, epithets are considered as particular instances of expressive pronouns, whereas slurs are regular R-expression. This predicts a different behavior in binding environments. For instance, DPs containing slurs must be sensitive to Principle-C of Binding Theory, which requires R-expressions to be free (i.e., not bound for a local antecedent). Now, when we consider simple Principle-C environments, like sentence (12) illustrates, the result is either ungrammatical (i.e., \*S), under the slur reading, or infelicitous (i.e., #S), under the epithetic reading:

- (12) {\*/#}Él<sub>i</sub> dijo que [el puto]<sub>i</sub> llegó tarde a la fiesta.  
           he said that the f... arrived late to the party  
           ‘He<sub>i</sub> said that [the f...]<sub>i</sub> arrived late to the party.’

According to Dubinsky & Hamilton (1998), this is because epithets are antilogophoric pronouns subject to the following pragmatic restriction:<sup>6</sup>

- (13) **Antilogophoricity constraint for epithets** (Dubinsky & Hamilton 1998: 689)  
 An epithet must not be anteceded by an individual from whose perspective the attributive content of the epithet is evaluated.

In the previous example, and in particular under *de se* reading of the sentence, the matrix subject is simultaneously the perspective-bearer and the antecedent of the epithet and, consequently, the result is infelicitous due to the antilogophoric restriction. Dubinsky & Hamilton provide ways of avoiding the antilogophoric effect by, for instance, detaching the perspective-bearer from the antecedent. In the following example, the matrix subject, *Andrés* or *él*, are the antecedents of the epithet or of the R-expression, but not the perspective-bearers, which in this case is the speaker of the context:

- (14) Aun cuando yo pueda perdonarlo, Andrés<sub>i</sub>/él<sub>i</sub> me demostró que \*Andrés<sub>i</sub>/el puto<sub>i</sub> no se lo merece. ‘Even though I can forgive him, Andrés<sub>i</sub> showed me that \*Andrés<sub>i</sub> / the EPITHET<sub>i</sub> doesn’t deserve it.’

Note now that the sentence structure still feeds a potential Principle-C environment, blocking the introduction of the proper name *Andrés* and, more importantly, the slur reading of *puto*, which can only be interpreted as an epithet.

This argument shows that epithets are strong pronouns subject to a pragmatic restriction, but it does not show yet that *puto* is really recycled outside the predicative domain. It could be still the case that *puto* itself is the pronominal index, reducing the ambiguity slur/epithet to a purely lexical ambiguity. A crucial diagnostic to rule out this possibility comes from NP-ellipsis. As the following contrast shows only slurs, illustrated in (15a), can be subject to nominal ellipsis; binominal constructions containing epithets (see Section 10.4.1), illustrated in (15b), strongly reject deletion of the epithet (<...> = ellipsis site):

6 Admittedly, this formulation is not entirely satisfactory and looks incompatible with the fact that embedded epithets are speaker-oriented by default. This is not the place to review Dubinsky & Hamilton’s antilogophoric constraint, so I will use it only as a way to distinguish epithets from R-expressions.



- (15) a. *el puto de al lado y el ⟨puto⟩ de arriba*  
 the SLUR of to.the side and the ⟨SLUR⟩ of upstairs  
 ‘the *f...* next door and the one living upstairs...’  
 b. \**el puto de Andrés y el ⟨puto⟩ de Pablo*  
 the EPITHET of Andrés and the ⟨EPITHET⟩ of Pablo

This is straightforwardly accounted for if slurs and epithets are differently distributed within the structure of the nominal phrase. Slurs, as true nominal heads, can be elided by NP-ellipsis, a deletion operation targeting the entire NP layer. Now, epithets occur in a position external to the NP, which is, moreover, headed by a pronominal index; therefore, in DPs containing epithets there is no suitable target for NP-ellipsis.

Finally, the two structures can be disambiguated by using intensifiers, which are compatible only with epithets, not with slurs:

- (16) *El muy puto llegó tarde.*  
 the very EPITHET arrived late  
 ‘That complete *f...* arrived late.’

I refer the reader to → *Expressivity in Spanish* by ANDRÉS SAAB, Chapter 45 of this volume for more diagnostics relevant to Spanish. At any rate, the considerations made here seem to generalize beyond Spanish. Orlando & Saab (2020a) show that the intuitive ambiguity attested in examples like (9) also arises in English. In effect, note that the following string can be disambiguated in the two ways proposed for Spanish: (i) either *whore* is a slur, in which case the individual at hand is classified as pertaining to the set of sex workers, or (ii) the word is a mere insult, without any classificatory force. In the two cases, what is preserved is the misogynistic bias in a parallel dimension of meaning, as shown below (bullets are used as in Potts for separating meaning dimensions):

- (17) That **whore** arrived late to the party.  
 a. **Interpretation #1:** That prostitute arrived late to the party • a misogynistic stereotype is in force  
 b. **Interpretation #2:** She (namely, the woman referred to in the context of utterance) arrived late to the party • a misogynistic stereotype is in force

The two readings can be disambiguated by constructing Principle-C environments that avoid antilogophoricity. In this respect, compare (18a) with (18b), in which *the whore* is only acceptable as co-referential with *Mia*, if interpreted as an epithet:

- (18) a. \*/#Alice<sub>i</sub> said that [the whore]<sub>i</sub> had arrived late.  
 b. Mia<sub>i</sub> is so talkative that everybody thinks that [the whore]<sub>i</sub> will get into trouble with the police.

Unlike Spanish, nominal epithets in English do not admit degree words like *very*, but they can be modified by adnominal modifiers like, say, *complete*, in which case the slur reading is inaccessible:

- (19) That complete(\*ly) whore arrived late.

And finally, even when the language does not have NP-ellipsis of the Spanish type, the anaphor *one* can be used as a suitable test. As illustrated in the following minimal pair, *one* anaphor can replace an entire NP including the slur word in (20a), but not an epithet, as shown in (20b):

- (20) a. I'm talking about that annoying whore, not this charming one.  
 b. \*that annoying whore Anne and this charming one Mary

Now, I will turn attention to a new piece of evidence from Italian. In this language, the distribution of definite articles and demonstratives gives additional support to the hypothesis that epithets are expressive pronouns. Consider the word *puttana* 'whore' as it occurs in the following sentence:<sup>7</sup>

- (21) *E' arrivata la/quella puttana.*  
 is arrived the.F.SG/that.F.SG whore  
 'The/that whore has arrived.'

When the definite article heads the DP, only the slur interpretation is obtained, whereas both slur and epithet readings are available with the demonstrative. Robust evidence that this is the case is **provide** by binominals, which reject the presence of the definite article (see Section 10.4 for discussion on binominals).

- (22) *quella/\*la puttana di Giulia*  
 that.F.SG/the.F.SG whore of Giulia  
 'that whore Giulia'

The same contrast is observed with political (23), homophobic (24), racial (25) and nationality (26) slurs/epithets:

- (23) a. *E' arrivato il/quel fascio.*  
 is arrived the.M.SG/that.M.SG fascist  
 'The/that fascist has arrived.'  
 b. \**il/quel fascio del mio cugino*  
 the.M.SG/that.M.SG fascist of.the my cousin  
 'my cousin, that fascist'
- (24) a. *E' arrivato il/quel frocio.*  
 is arrived the.M.SG/that.M.SG f...  
 'The/that f... has arrived.'  
 b. \**il/quel frocio del tuo amico*  
 the.M.SG/that.M.SG f... of.the your friend  
 'your friend, that f...'
- (25) a. *E' arrivato il/quel negro.*  
 is arrived the.M.SG/that.M.SG n...  
 'The/that n... has arrived.'

7 I am thankful to Jan Casalicchio for the Italian examples and discussion.

- b. \**il/quel*                      *negro del negoziante*  
 the.M.SG/that.M.SG n...    of.the dealer  
 ‘the dealer, that n...’
- (26) a. *E’ arrivato il/quel*                      *cruccho.*  
 is arrived the.M.SG/that.M.SG kraut  
 ‘The/that kraut has arrived.’
- b. \**il/quel*                      *cruccho del tuo amico*  
 the.M.SG/that.M.SG kraut of.the your friend  
 ‘your friend, that kraut’

As argued in Saab (2022a), the mandatory presence of the demonstrative with Italian epithets follows from the fact that empty nouns and nominal ellipsis systematically require the presence of the demonstrative and reject the definite article. This is illustrated in the following examples:

- (27) a. \**la/quella*              *di Carlo*  
 the.F.SG/this.F of Carlo  
 ‘Carlo’s (one)’
- b. \**i/quelli*                      *che mi piacciono*  
 the.M.PL/these.M that me please  
 ‘the ones that I like’
- (Leonetti 1999: 61)

Therefore, the Italian facts confirm that the analysis proposed in the tree in (11), which basically states that epithets are pronominal expressions, is on the right track.

I, then, conclude that syntactic recycling is one of the ways in which pure expressive meanings (e.g., epithet meanings) can be obtained by simply merging syntactic objects, which are otherwise truth-conditionally relevant, in positions which are not representational. At least for the case of epithets, no deviation from normal syntax is observed. The evidence also shows that the source of the attested slur/epithet ambiguities in Spanish, English or Italian is syntactic, not lexical. With Orlando & Saab (2020a,b), let us assume that slurs are mixed words, with the representational and expressive meanings acting in parallel. The expressive meaning would consist of a homophobic stereotype applied to the relevant individual. For instance, for an homophobic slur like *puto* in Spanish, we would have the following simplified entry ( $\blacklozenge$  is the metalogical symbol for mixed types in McCready (2010)):<sup>8,9</sup>

8 Alternatively, we can also model the expressive meaning more along the original lines of Kaplan by stating use-conditions in lexical entries.

(i) *puto* is felicitously used in a context  $c$  if and only if  $c \in \{c : c_s \text{ is in an homophobic context at } @\}$

In fact, as we will see at the end of Section 10.3.3, we will be forced to introduce some use-conditions more along this way in a cycle of grammatical computation inaccessible to LF but accessible to what Reinhart (2006) has called *the context system*.

9 The  $\blacklozenge$  symbol is used in McCready for expressive types which are resource sensitive, an option not allowed in Potts’s (2005) logic, in which all expressive types are not resource sensitive. In effect, as we have already seen in (36), applying an expressive operator to a truth-conditional argument returns the argument to the

(28)  $\llbracket \text{puto} \rrbracket = \text{puto}(x) \blacklozenge \text{Homophobic Stereotype}(x)$

As already proposed, syntax can recycle the word in a non-predicative position, in which case the truth-conditional dimension is lost and the word is interpreted as an epithet:

(29)  $\llbracket \text{el puto de Andrés} \rrbracket = \text{Andrés} \bullet \text{Homophobic Stereotype}(\text{Andrés})$

In sum, the slur/epithet ambiguity cannot be seen as a lexical matter. The problem is that the lexical ambiguity hypothesis, in addition to its clear ad-hoc character, misses the generalization that there is a correlation between the External Merge position of certain words or phrases in the high functional domains and its anti-representational effects. This makes epithets similar to other well-known instances of expletives. In effect, pure expletives such as *it* or *there* are not special lexical items, but just pronouns whose syntactic distribution determines a vacuous interpretation. Consider, for instance, the occurrences of *it* in (30). As it is clear, only in (30a) *it* can be read as a true expletive; in the other two cases, it is a free variable in argument position.

- (30) a.  $\text{It}_{\text{expl}}$  seems that it is going to rain.  
 b.  $*\text{It}_{\text{expl}}$  kills the rat.  
 c.  $*\text{John}$  ate  $\text{it}_{\text{expl}}$ .

Now, as pointed out by Gutzmann (2015), the analogy is not perfect, given that: (i) epithets are not forced to occur in the syntactic positions they do by selection restrictions on core functional categories, as true expletives are, and (ii) epithets but not expletives are semantically active at the use-conditional level. In my view, expletivization of expressives is a syntactically *marked* strategy in the sense that in this case, unlike expletives like *it* or *there*, External Merge is not triggered by grammatical selectional features (say, EPP features). The only requirement is syntactic compatibility and semantic interpretability at the use-conditional dimension. Yet, unlike Corver (2016), there is no deviation from the rules of grammar, but just a particular type of free variation in the application of External Merge in the syntax.

In sum, the above-mentioned syntactic differences between slurs and epithets allow us to maintain the view that there are no different lexical entries for the kind of words we are considering. More importantly, if the idea is on the right track, epithets constitute an ideal scenario for grammatical experimentation, in which the semantic activity of the expressive dimension can be isolated from the representational dimension.

---

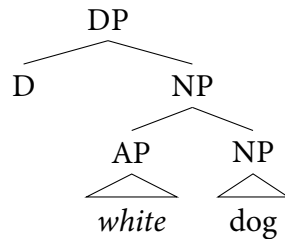
truth-conditional dimension unaltered for further semantic computation. This does not work for some non-propositional expressive types, which take arguments to form conventional implicated meanings (e.g., some types of honorifics in Japanese;  $\rightarrow$  *Expressivity and honorifics* by DAVID Y. OSHIMA, Chapter 24 of this volume). This is solved by making some expressive types resource sensitive. Now, once an expressive object of this mixed expressive type has gotten all its argument, an additional axiom turns  $\blacklozenge$  into  $\bullet$ , in order to get an object ready for interpretation. This is why we see a  $\bullet$  in the simplified representations in (17a).



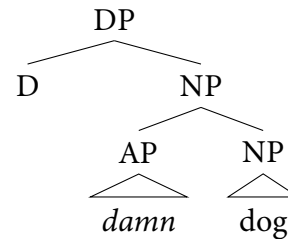
### 10.3.1 A short description of EAs

According to Potts (2005), descriptive (DAs) and expressive adjectives (EAs) share essentially the same syntax. In Potts's own words "neither EAs nor epithets display syntactic properties that suggest a nonstandard syntax" (Potts 2005: 163). Put another way, the syntax of *damn dog* follows the same rules of grammar as, say, *white dog*. For English, this means that EAs occupy the canonical prenominal position of the vast majority of adjectives:

(33)

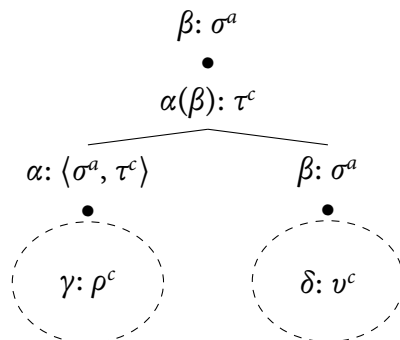


(34)



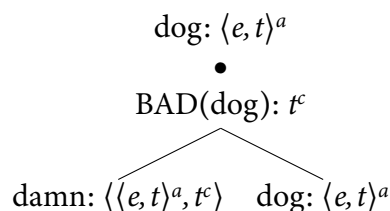
Then, what determines the expressive dimension of EAs is their lexical content, which trigger a particular axiom, namely, Conventional Implicature Application (CI Application), as defined below (Potts 2005: 64):

(35)



Simplifying, an EA takes an argument denoting at the truth-conditional or at-issue dimension (annotated with the superscript  $a$ ) and returns the same argument at the truth-conditional dimension plus a conventional implicature at the expressive dimension (annotated with the superscript  $c$ ). The two dimensions are separated through the metalogical operator  $\bullet$ . Applied at the relevant example, the rule gives the following result:

(36)



Now, in his extensive study on EAs in German and English, Gutzmann (2019) argues that, besides initial appearances, DAs and EAs contrast in a series of non-trivial syntactic

properties. Here, I will only discuss German, because it better illustrates some of Gutzmann's points, but the same observations naturally extend to English.

Prenominal position and concord are, perhaps, the only similarities between the two types of adjectives. As for the relative ordering between EAs and nouns, compare the following two examples, which show that restrictive DAs and EAs occupy the canonical prenominal position:

(37) [DP Der { verdammt  
verfickt  
verflucht } Hund] hat auf das Sofa gepinkelt.

'The {damn, fucking, cursed} dog peed on the couch.'

(38) [DP Der { aggressive  
große  
junge } Hund] hat auf das Sofa gepinkelt.

'The {aggressive, big, young} dog peed on the couch.'

EAs, like DAs, also require concord in case, gender and number:

- (39) a. *der verdammt-e Hund*  
the.NOM.SG.M damn-NOM.SG.M dog.NOM.SG.M  
'the damn dog'
- b. *ein-∅ verdammt-er Hund*  
a.NOM.SG.M damn-NOM.SG.M dog.NOM.SG.M  
'a damn dog'
- c. *ein-e verdammt-e Katze*  
a.NOM.SG.F damn-NOM.SG.F cat.NOM.SG.F  
'a damn cat'
- d. *die verdammt-en Hund-e*  
a.NOM.PL.M damn-NOM.PL.M dog.NOM.PL.M  
'the damn dogs'

Now, it seems that the similarities stop here. Unlike canonical gradable DAs, EAs do not tolerate degree modifiers or to co-occur with comparative or superlative forms:

- (40) a. \**der sehr verdammt Hund*  
the very damn dog
- b. \**der {verdammt-ere, verdammt-este} Hund*  
the {damn.COMP, damn.SUP} dog

Importantly, EAs cannot occur in true predicative position, e.g., as complements of copular verbs:

- (41) a. \**Maya hat verdammt gesungen.*  
Maya has damn sung
- b. \**Das Auto ist verdammt.*  
the car is damn



Finally, EAs cannot coordinate with other EAs or with DAs:

- (42) a. \**Der verdammte und verfickte Hund hat auf das Sofa gepinkelt.*  
 the damn and fucking dog has on the couch peed  
 b. \**Der verdammte und große Hund hat auf das Sofa gepinkelt.*  
 the damn and big dog has on the couch peed

Spanish and Romance in general present a similar pattern of commonalities and differences between DAs and EAs. Of course, the adjective ordering in Romance is probably a mirror image of the ordering in Germanic (see Cinque 2010 for comparison, references and an analysis). As is well known, Romance languages exploit both the prenominal and postnominal positions, with the prenominal ordering exclusively associated with the modal, non-restrictive, specific and evaluative readings (among other options). The postnominal position is, instead, more flexible in the type of adjectives that it allows. So, even when all restrictive adjectives are postnominal, non-restrictive adjectives can also occur in such a position. Perhaps, for this reason, both Cinque (2010) for Italian and Resnik (2013) for Spanish claim that EAs can occur in both positions:

- (43) a. *De nuevo trajo esa (maldita) moto (maldita).*  
 of new brought.3SG that (damn) motorcycle (damn)  
 ‘Once again, (s)he brought that (damn) motorcycle (damn).’  
 b. *No aguanto más este (puto) clima (puto).*  
 not tolerate.1SG more this (fucking) weather (fucking)  
 ‘I cannot tolerate this (fucking) weather (fucking) anymore.’ (Resnik 2013: 56)
- (44) *Ho cercato di parlare con Gianni, ma [quel (maldetto) imbroglione] /*  
 have.1SG tried to talk with Gianni, but that damn swindler /  
*[quell’ imbroglione (maldetto)] non si è fatto trovare.*  
 that swindler damn not himself has made find  
 ‘I tried to talk to Gianni, but that damn swindler was not to be found anywhere.’  
 (Cinque 2010: 87)

Yet, at least for Spanish, the relevant adjectives in postnominal position do not trigger argument extension. In this respect, Resnik’s examples in (43) sharply contrast with the following pair, in which only the adjective in prenominal position is acceptable:

- (45) *Ana no deja de patear esa puta pelota.*  
 Ana not stop of kick.INF that fucking ball  
 ‘Ana cannot stop kicking that fucking ball.’  
 (46) #*Ana no deja de patear esa pelota puta.*  
 Ana not stop of kick.INF that ball fucking

The most natural interpretation of the EA here is that the speaker is frustrated with the whole situation and not with the ball:

(47) Ana cannot stop kicking that ball • ☹ (Ana cannot stop kicking that ball)

This is not the case in Resnik's examples in which a more local reading is forced. I conclude, then, that true EAs do not occur in postnominal position and conjecture that in postnominal position, these adjectives are interpreted literally as other evaluative adjectives, although they tend to trigger some sort of expressive pragmatic inference.<sup>11</sup>

Now, like in German, we can see that EAs in Spanish are extremely poor in the combinations they allow. Compared to DAs, they do not tolerate superlatives:

- (48) a. *el más fino vino del país*  
 the most fine wine of.the country  
 'the finest wine in the country'  
 b. *#las más putas llaves*  
 the most fucking keys

They do not admit true degree modifiers:

- (49) a. *la muy/poco/demasiado astuta abogada*  
 the very/little/too clever lawyer.F  
 'the very/not too/ too clever lawyer'  
 b. *\*las muy/poco/demasiado putas llaves*  
 the very/little/too fucking keys  
 'the very/not too/too fucking keys'

They reject adverbial modification:

- (50) a. *el tristemente célebre autor de la novela*  
 the sadly famous author of the novel  
 'the sadly famous author of the novel'  
 b. *el sorprendentemente largo título de su nuevo libro*  
 the surprisingly long title of her new book  
 'the surprisingly long title of her new book'
- (51) a. *\*las tristemente putas llaves*  
 the sadly fucking keys  
 'the sadly fucking keys'  
 b. *\*el sorprendentemente puto auto*  
 the surprisingly fucking car  
 'the surprisingly fucking car'

They cannot be coordinated either with DAs or with other EAs (and give true coordination meanings):

11 Notably, in order to favor such an inference the entire DP must be headed by a demonstrative, not by a regular definite article, a restriction not observed with true EAs in prenominal position (see also → *Expressivity in Spanish* by ANDRÉS SAAB, Chapter 45 of this volume).

- (52) a. \**el absurdo y puto ataque a la libertad de expresión*  
 the absurd and fucking attack to the liberty of speech  
 b. #*las putas y malditas llaves*  
 the fucking and damn keys

Finally, Spanish EAs, like German ones, cannot occur as predicates in copular sentences:

- (53) a. *La carta es misteriosa.*  
 the letter is mysterious  
 ‘The letter is mysterious.’  
 b. \**La carta es puta.*  
 the letter is fucking

See Cuonzo (2021) for a broader survey of Romance languages that also points out to the conclusion that Romance EAs, like Germanic ones, do not behave as standard adjectives. They are structurally poorer and show a more restrictive distribution in the functional structure of DPs. Put differently, as argued by Gutzmann (2019), EAs have more in common with expletives than with contentful items. It is not clear, however, how this expletive-like character explains argument extension. Indeed, as we have seen in the previous section, epithets also seem to share some properties with expletives, although they never trigger argument extension. In the next section, I show that argument extension correlates with the semantic flexibility of the argument extension trigger, a fact that crucially distinguishes EAs from epithets, which do not allow either argument extension or semantic flexibility.

### 10.3.2 Argument extension and semantic flexibility

According to Potts (2005), both EAs and epithets are triggers for CI Application, although the input argument they require differs: (i) properties in the case of EAs, (ii) entities in the case of epithets:

- (54) a. *damn*:  $\langle \langle e^a, t^a \rangle, t^c \rangle$   
 b. *idiot*:  $\langle e^a, t^c \rangle$

However, although epithets and EAs are expressives in the favored sense, they do not behave the same when it comes to argument extension effects; concretely, only EAs show argument extension. We have already seen this in Potts’ original examples in (32), but any of the examples used so far can be interpreted with this type of semantic-syntactic mismatch. This is not the case with epithets, which behave as expected in terms of compositionality.

The question is, then, whether there is indeed any relevant correlation between argument extension and other syntactic properties of EAs. In answering this question, Saab (2023) introduces another property of EAs, which indeed distinguishes them from epithets and other expressive items. Concretely, EAs are quite flexible with respect to the semantic type of their putative arguments. For instance, in addition to their combination with common nouns, they can also combine with proper names, i.e., with *e* denoting

expressions. There are two scenarios to consider. First, an EA can combine with proper names in exclamatives used to express some emotion about the referent of the proper name (positive in (55a), negative in (55b)), like the following ones:<sup>12</sup>

- (55) a. *Bendita Ana! Llegó a tiempo.*  
 blessed Ana arrived.3SG to time  
 ‘Blessed Ana! She arrived on time.’  
 b. *Maldito Juan! Nunca llega a tiempo.*  
 damn Juan never arrives to time  
 ‘Damn Juan! He never arrives on time.’

Not surprisingly, these expressives only occur in prenominal position (cf. *?\*Ana bendita!*, *\*Juan maldito!*), showing that there is a designated position for these adnominal expressives in Spanish.

Second, in argument position, the combination is also legit, but only when co-occurring with the definite article or other determiners:

- (56) a. *\*Maldito Juan nunca llega a tiempo.*  
 damn Juan never arrives to time  
 b. *El maldito Juan nunca llega a tiempo.*  
 the damn Juan never arrives to time  
 ‘The damn Juan never arrives on time.’

And again, the EA can only occur prenominally (e.g., *\*El Juan maldito...*). Following Saab & Lo Guercio (2020), I assume that proper names in referential uses have a syntax different from common nouns, including proper names in predicate uses (e.g., *la Ana que conozco*, ‘The Ana I know’). The crucial difference between the two classes of nouns is that proper names lack a number projection between D and N.<sup>13</sup>

- (57) Juan: [<sub>DP</sub> D [<sub>NP</sub> Juan ]]

Unlike the most standard approach to proper names in terms of N-to-D movement in the syntax (Longobardi 1994, 2005), I also assume that D adjoins to N at PF under adjacency,

<sup>12</sup> Importantly, these uses are not vocatives; indeed, they are banned as vocatives:

- (i) a. *\*Bendita Ana, llegá a tiempo, por favor!*  
 blessed Ana arrive.IMP to time please  
 ‘\*Blessed Ana! Arrive on time, please!’  
 b. *\*Maldito Juan, dame mi plata!*  
 damn Juan give.IMP-ME my money  
 ‘\*Damn Juan! Give my money!’

<sup>13</sup> Evidence in favor of the numberless character of proper names comes for their impossibility to pluralize:

- (i) *\*Juanes nunca llegan a tiempo.*  
 Juanes never arrive.3PL to time  
 Intended: ‘Juanes never arrive on time.’

creating a complex word containing D and the proper name root, as shown below:<sup>14</sup>

(58) [N Juan+D]

Whenever adjacency is interrupted, like in (56b), D cannot adjoin to the proper name and an article is inserted. The relevant structure is illustrated below:

(59) Juan: [<sub>DP</sub> el [<sub>NP</sub> **maldito** [<sub>NP</sub> Juan]]]

Therefore, I conclude that (56b) is a true referential use of a proper name in which the rule that produces the usual N-D complex is interrupted.

If these considerations on the use of EAs with referential proper names are plausible, then we are led to conclude that EAs are semantically flexible regarding their denotation domains. In principle, EAs can combine with *e* and  $\langle e, t \rangle$  types. This semantic flexibility is not observed with epithets, which always take individuals as arguments.<sup>15</sup> I conjecture that the connection between semantic flexibility and argument extension constitutes a genuine syntactic correlation that any theory of expressivity must account for. In the next section, I critically discuss the solution to argument extension offered in Gutzmann (2019) and propose a novel analysis that accounts for most properties of EAs and, more importantly, for the correlation just introduced here.

### 10.3.3 Analytical options: Agree or Late Recycling

As already observed, Potts conjectures that argument extension must involve some type of unavoidable semantic adjustment. This is not Gutzmann's opinion for whom argument extension is the direct result of an Agree dependency. Following Zeijlstra (2012), he assumes an upward Agree model in which uninterpretable features can probe upwards searching for matching interpretable features contained in a head *c*-commanding the probe (Gutzmann 2019: 54):<sup>16</sup>

(60)  $\uparrow$ Agree<sub>*i*</sub>: (Zeijlstra 2012: 514)  
 $\alpha$  can  $\uparrow$ Agree<sub>*i*</sub> with  $\beta$  iff

- a.  $\alpha$  carries at least one uninterpretable feature and  $\beta$  carries a matching interpretable feature.
- b.  $\alpha$  *c*-commands  $\beta$ .
- c.  $\beta$  is the closest goal to  $\alpha$ .

<sup>14</sup> The motivation to adopt a PF solution will become clearer in Section 10.5.2.

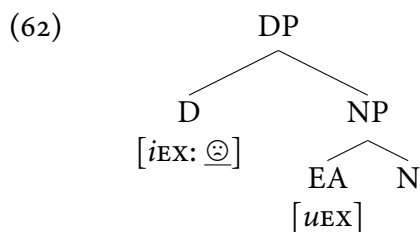
<sup>15</sup> Importantly, semantic flexibility is not an exclusive property of Spanish EAs. German EAs also combine with proper names ( $\leftrightarrow$  *Expressivity in German* by DANIEL GUTZMANN AND KATHARINA TURGAY, Chapter 42 of this volume) and the same is observed with nominal expressives like *a porra de NP/proper name* lit. 'the cum of NP/proper name' in Brazilian Portuguese ( $\leftrightarrow$  *Expressivity in Brazilian Portuguese* by RENATO MIGUEL BASSO AND LUISANDRO MENDES DE SOUZA, Chapter 44 of this volume). See also Section 10.4.2 for an example of semantic flexibility in Italian.

<sup>16</sup> Gutzmann (2019: Chapter 3.4) discusses other Agree options and uses  $\uparrow$  to denote upward-looking agreement (in contrast to downward-looking) and the subscript *i* to indicate that the search of the probe is triggered by reasons of interpretability (instead of valuation).

Taking this definition for granted, Gutzmann proposes that the syntax of EAs justifies the presence and activity of a formal expressive feature in the syntax. The idea was stated in (4) in the introduction, and is repeated below:

- (61) **Hypothesis of expressive syntax** (Gutzmann 2019: 4)  
Expressivity does not only play a role for semantics and pragmatics, but it is a syntactic feature.

As other well-known syntactic features, the feature [EX] can be interpretable or uninterpretable. By assumption, interpretable [*iEX*] has the D or C heads as its syntactic locus. EAs, in turn, are bearers of uninterpretable [*uEX*]. Given (60), EAs can look upwards for a matching interpretable feature. Suppose that interpretable [*iEX*] is on D. Then, the basic configuration would be as follows:

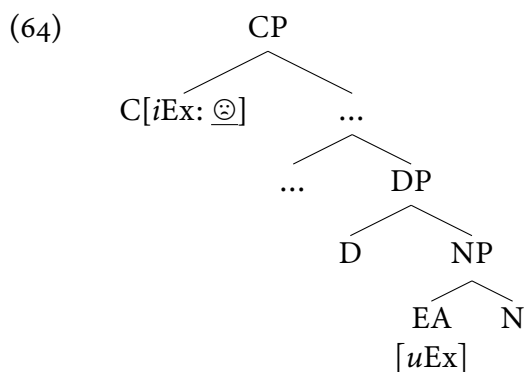


For a sentence like *I hate your damn dog* in which the speaker's anger is directed towards the relevant dog, *damn* enters into an Agree dependency with the interpretable expressive feature located on D and values its uninterpretable feature in the usual way. On this reading, semantic composition is entirely resolved at the D node, as expected, making argument extension completely illusory.

Next, consider the most interesting case, the one in which the adnominal expressive seems to semantically compose with the entire proposition:

- (63) a. The dog ate the **damn** cake.  
b. The dog ate the cake • ☹(The dog ate the cake)

For cases like this, [*iEX*] must be placed on the matrix C, position accessible to the EA within the object DP:



According to Gutzmann, evidence that this approach is on the right track comes from certain instances in which the interpretation of the expressive seems to be clause-bounded.

For instance, in the following example, the EA can semantically modify either *the cake* or the embedded C, but not the matrix C or the matrix subject:

- (65) Peter said that the dog ate the **damn** cake.  
 a. ☹(The cake)/☹(The dog ate the cake)  
 b. #☹(Peter)/#☹(Peter said that the dog ate the damn cake)  
 (Gutzmann 2019: 113)

Yet, besides initial appearances, there are many cases in which we observe putative instances of “long-distance” Agree. Lo Guercio & Orlando (2022) offer the following examples in which the most natural readings are that the speaker is frustrated with respect to the fact that the Peter is a liar or that he forgot the anniversary, respectively:

- (66) [Scenario: Peter ate a birthday cake that was meant for the speaker and then lied about it and blamed the dog. The speaker found out that Peter was lying.]  
 a. Peter said that the **damn** dog ate my cake. I can't believe that guy.  
 b. ☹(Peter)/☹(Peter said that the dog ate my cake)
- (67) a. Peter didn't remember that today is our **damn** anniversary.  
 b. ☹(Peter didn't remember that today is our anniversary)/☹(Peter)  
 (Lo Guercio & Orlando 2022: 65)

But there is more. As Lo Guercio & Orlando argue, the content of EAs is much more unspecific than an analysis in terms of functional expressive combination would predict. Among other contents, EAs can modify presupposed or conversationally implicated contents. For instance, in the example below, the speaker is expressing her frustration with respect to the implicated meaning that the bank did not grant her the money. Yet, such an implicated meaning is not part of the semantic derivation and cannot, consequently, be the argument of any expressive operator:

- (68) [Scenario: the speaker went to the bank to try to get a credit for his business. His business partner waited for him in the car.]  
 A: Did we get the money?  
 B: Start the **damn** car.  
 a. +> The bank did not grant us the money.  
 b. ☹(The bank did not grant us the money)/#☹(the car)  
 (Lo Guercio & Orlando 2022: 57)

Another argument that also casts doubts on the Agree analysis involves the contrast in (45), repeated below:

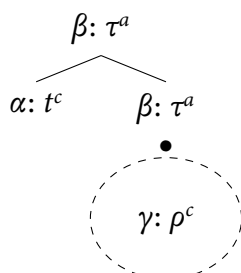
- (69) *Ana no deja de patear esa puta pelota.*  
 Ana not stop of kick.INF that fucking ball  
 'Ana cannot stop kicking that fucking ball.'
- (70) #*Ana no deja de patear esa pelota puta.*  
 Ana not stop of kick.INF that ball fucking



As already observed, argument extension is only legit if the adjective *puta* occurs in prenominal position. This is unexpected under the Agree approach, since, in principle, the same adjective in postnominal position satisfies  $\uparrow\text{Agree}_i$  as defined in (60).

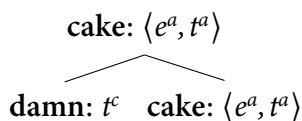
For reasons like the ones just adduced, Lo Guercio & Orlando propose that EAs introduce use-conditions not through expressive functional application (CI Application) but through the rule of **Isolated CI**, as formulated in Potts (2005: 66):

(71)



The rule passes the meaning of the expressive's sister unaltered and adds the conventional implicature that the speaker is in an heightened emotional state at @. The crucial property of this rule is that there is no functional combination. For instance, applied to the example in (63), the rule produces the following output at the relevant point of the semantic computation:

(72)



Under this analysis, argument extension is an illusion, since, strictly speaking, there is no semantic argument at any level of analysis. The expressive semantic core is simply modeled as a certain emotional disposition of the speaker. Therefore, particular interpretations must be the byproduct of different sorts of pragmatic inferences that enrich the unspecific content of the EA. Now, admittedly, this analysis works at the cost of accepting that a binary branching combination in the syntax can feed a semantic axiom that is non-functional in nature. One plausible way of maintaining Lo Guercio & Orlando's (2022) approach without introducing complications in the derivation from syntax to LF is assuming that EAs are merged in another cycle of the syntactic derivation. If this is the case, then, the Isolated CI rule would be the superficial reflex of a late merger derivation in the syntax. Yet, unlike other late merge approaches (e.g., Bhatt & Pancheva 2004, Lebeaux 2009), in which the late merged object is still accessible to LF, I contend that the process takes place at some point of the post-syntactic derivation in the way from syntax to PF. Crucially, since LF is "blind" to PF processes, EAs are semantically isolated from the rest of the sentence; hence, they do not partake in standard compositional processes and are not interpreted by the conceptual-intensional system but by the contextual system instead. Following Reinhart (2006), I assume that the context system works independently from other thought systems and, essentially, interpret linguistic constructs which are relevant for context of use:

The hardest to define given our present state of knowledge are the context systems that narrow the information transmitted through the derivation (coded in the relevant representation), and select the information that is useful for the context of use. (Reinhart 2006: 4)

On the view favored here, the context system can access to any point of the syntactic derivation including those that go beyond syntax and reach the PF interface. Evidently, this view implies a radical departure from Potts and others, since now there is no way to derive some use-conditions at LF. Therefore, I conjecture that EAs (and other expressives) can be modeled as introducing restrictions over contexts of felicitous use, which are read by the context system along the following lines

- (73)  $[_N [EA + N]]$  is felicitously used in a context  $c$  if and only if  $c \in \{c: c_s \text{ is in a heightened emotional state at } @\}$

Thus, I treat EAs as an instance of *stylistic semantics* in the sense of Saab (2021b), i.e. as kind of conventionalized meaning that results from a PF process. The view I advance here receives empirical support from at least three considerations. First, it provides a principled explanation for the fact that EAs exhibit argument extension. In effect, the theory accounts for argument extension in a straightforward way: EAs may receive non-local interpretations because they are not present in LF, hence they do not partake in standard compositional processes. Moreover, since EAs contribute a kind of meaning that is un-specific regarding the target of the speaker's negative emotional attitude, they leave room for the audience to draw pragmatic inferences concerning this issue, which explains why EAs exhibit so much flexibility in their interpretation. Second, the view explains why EAs cannot interact with superlative and comparative morphemes, take degree or adverbial modifiers, or be coordinated: all of these are compositional operations that take place in the way from syntax to LF, hence they are banned from interacting with PF meanings. Finally, the analysis straightforwardly explains semantic flexibility, since EAs are syntactically merged in a cycle of the computation in which semantic types are inaccessible. The only requirement is that EAs combine with grammatical categories of the nominal type headed by, say, common nouns or proper names. This is not the case of epithets which, as we have seen in Section 10.2, are recycled in the narrow syntax and, consequently, are sensitive to semantic types, combining only with entity-denoting expressions.

#### 10.4 (LATE) RECYCLING AND THE SYNTAX OF ROMANCE BINOMINALS

.....

In the two previous sections, I have sketched a theory according to which pure expressive meanings can arise as the result of expressive recycling. Depending on the timing of recycling, two types of expressives can be detected: (i) epithets, or (ii) expressive adjectives. The crucial difference among these types is their behavior with respect to argument extension and semantic flexibility. While EAs show argument extension and are

semantically flexible, epithets behave “well” both in terms of semantic typing and semantic compositionality. I have conjectured that this difference is accounted for if epithets are merged during the syntactic-semantic derivation and EAs are late merged during the post-syntactic-PF derivation. In this section, I show that both epithets and EAs can also participate in binominals structures. If this is correct, the received view on binominals in Romance, according to which they are subject-predicate structures (see [den Dikken 2006](#)), must be rejected in favor of a (late) recycling syntactic analysis and a multidimensional semantics.

### 10.4.1 Equative binominals

As already noted, in Potts’ approach the epithet and its argument combine directly by CI Application, regardless of the empty or overt realization of the argument. I have adopted the idea that CI Application is the relevant interpretation axiom, but I did not provide any relevant detail. If we applied Potts’ analysis to Spanish, then we would have the following rough representation for a case like *el idiota de Andrés* (see also (29)):

$$(74) \quad \llbracket \textit{el idiota de Andrés} \rrbracket = \text{Andrés} \bullet \textit{idiota}(\text{Andrés})$$

This analysis departs from mainstream approaches to binominals in Spanish and Romance, according to which the relation between *idiotia* and *de Andrés* is property ascription, i.e., truth-conditional predication ([Suñer Gratacós 1990](#), for a first theory in Spanish, and [den Dikken 2006](#), for a general theory for Germanic and Romance). On this analysis, *el idiota de Andrés* is syntactically derived by moving the predicate *idiotia* over the DP which works as the subject of the predicational structure. A simplified analysis à la [den Dikken](#) would be as follows, in which the R(elator) head moves to the *de* position triggering predicate inversion of the “predicate” *idiotia*:

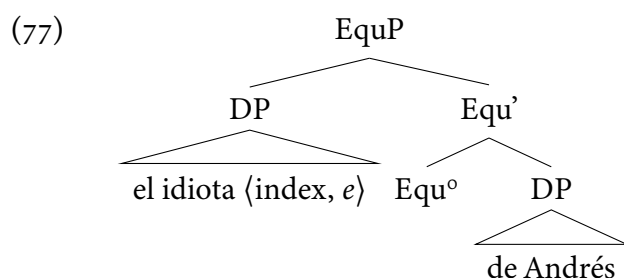
$$(75) \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{a. } \llbracket \text{RP} \llbracket \text{XP Andrés} \rrbracket \llbracket \text{R' relator} \llbracket \text{YP idiotia} \rrbracket \rrbracket \rrbracket \\ \text{b. } \llbracket \text{FP} \llbracket \text{XP idiotia} \rrbracket_j \llbracket \text{F' de+relator}_i \llbracket \text{RP} \llbracket \text{NP Andrés} \rrbracket \llbracket \text{R' } t_i t_j \rrbracket \rrbracket \rrbracket \end{array}$$

As I have already shown, this analysis misses the generalization that in the binominal construction the expressive word does not contribute any classificatory force. To reinforce the point, consider the following minimal pair containing the word *animal*. In the copular sentence in (76a), the word can be interpreted in two ways: either we are talking about a living being or we ascribe Andrés to the stereotype of animals. Instead, in the binominal construction in (76b), only the stereotype reading is available.

$$(76) \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{a. } \textit{Andrés es (un) animal.} \\ \quad \text{Andrés is (an) animal} \\ \quad \text{Reading 1: ‘Andrés is an animal.’ (i.e., a living being)} \\ \quad \text{Reading 2: ‘Andrés is a (stereotype) of an animal.’} \\ \text{b. } \textit{el animal de Andrés} \\ \quad \text{the animal of Andrés} \\ \quad \text{‘that animal Andrés’ (only reading 2)} \end{array}$$

The difference between slurs and epithets, as we have already seen, boils down to their merge position, namely, only slur words are merged in predicative position. Epithets, as other expressives, are merged in the high functional domain of pronominal DPs. Crucially, on this analysis, epithets are CI operators whose argument is a pronominal index (see Section 10.2).

Now, the dependency between the epithet and the *de*-phrase in binominals is indirect. In Saab (2022a), I have proposed that these binominals have the syntax and semantics of equatives. Here, I assume a minimal modification of that analysis, according to which the pronominal DP containing the epithet and the *de*-phrase are syntactically mediated through a functional head which I have called Equ(ative)<sup>o</sup>.



The Equ head semantically relates the two DPs and returns the index if an equative presupposition is satisfied. On this view, the entire DP ends denoting a mere pronominal index at the truth-conditional dimension and a conventional implicature at the expressive dimension:

(78)  $\llbracket \textit{el idiota de Andrés} \rrbracket = g(\text{index}) \bullet \text{idiot}(\text{Andrés})$   
 Presupposition:  $\{g(\text{index}) = \text{Andrés}\}$

This analysis is confirmed by a variety of different considerations. First, in binominals, Italian, as we have already noticed, is forced to use demonstratives instead of regular definite articles, i.e., binominals exhibit exactly the same pattern the language observes in contexts of empty nouns (see Section 10.2):

(79) *quell'/\*l' idiota di Gianni*  
 that.M.SG./\*them-SG idiot of Gianni  
 'that idiot Gianni'

(80) a. *\*la/quella di Carlo*  
 the.F.SG/this.F of Carlo  
 'Carlo's (one)'  
 b. *\*i/quelli che mi piacciono*  
 the.M.PL/these.M that me please  
 'the ones that I like'

(Leonetti 1999: 61)

Second, as argued in Saab (2022a,b), unlike what the predicate raising analysis predicts, the preposition *de* 'of' forms a constituent with its complement DP, as shown by the fact that the entire *de*+DP string can be coordinated (81) and be used as a fragment answer (82):

(81) *los idiotas de Andrés y de Pablo*  
 the idiots of Andrés and of Pablo  
 ‘those idiots Andrés and Pablo’

(82) A: *el idiota de QUIÉN?*                      B: *de ANDRÉS*  
 the idiot of who                                      of ANDRÉS

Finally, evidence in favor of the equative analysis comes from the fact that the identity introduced via the equative presupposition generalizes to other two binominal schemes. First, some mixed expressive nouns like *mierda* ‘shit’ or *porquería* ‘dirt’ (↔ *Expressivity in Spanish* by ANDRÉS SAAB, Chapter 45 of this volume) can occur prenominal in a binominal scheme, in which the complement of the *de*-phrase is a bare NP. In this case, there is an equation between whatever property the indexical phrase makes salient and the property that the bare NPs *libro* or *departamento* denote.

(83) a. *No voy a leer esa mierda de libro.*  
 not go.1SG to read.INF that.F.SG shit.F.SG of book.M.SG  
 ‘I am not going to read that shit of a book.’  
 b. *Vivo en una porquería de departamento.*  
 live.1SG in a.F.SG shit.F.SG of apartment.M.SG  
 ‘I live in a shit of an apartment.’

The equative relation also extends to binominals that take CP complements, like illustrated in the following examples, in which the expressive word is a variety of an expressive noun, concretely, an abstract expressive noun, like *boludez/pelotudez* ‘bullshit’ or *hijaputez* lit. ‘motherfuckness’, translated as ‘wickedness’ (see Saab 2022b):

(84) a. *esa boludez de que Andrés canta bien*  
 that.F.SG bullshit.F.SG of that Andrés sings well  
 ‘that bullshit that Andrés sings well’  
 b. *esa hijaputez de denunciar maestros*  
 that.F.SG wickedness.F.SG of denouncing teachers  
 ‘that wickedness of denouncing teachers’

Generalizing each case, we acknowledge three schemes, whose main difference is the syntactic category of the complement of the *de*-phrase: DPs, NPs and CPs. In summary, the three types of equations Spanish uses in this type of expressive constructions can be represented as follows:

(85) a. det + EPITHET + of + DP  
 b. det + MIXED EXPRESSIVE + of + NP  
 c. det + ABSTRACT EXPRESSIVE NOUN + of + CP

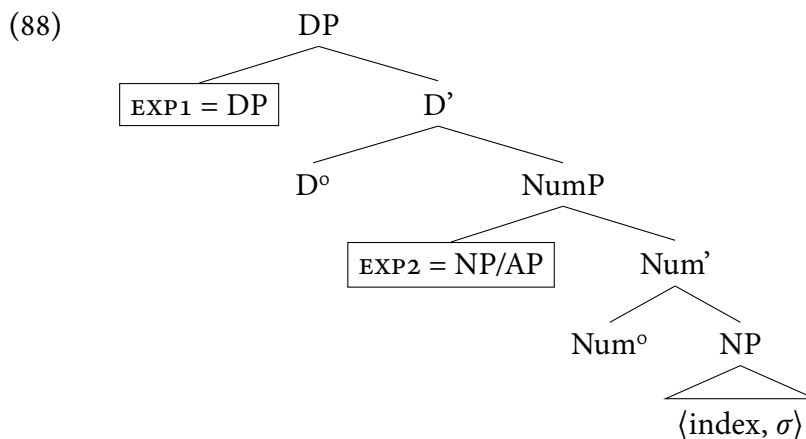
Semantically, each of these categories extensionally corresponds to expressions denoting in *e*, ⟨*e*,*t*⟩ or *t*, respectively. We have, then, three different kinds of nominal indexes associated to these three semantic types. The final picture is one in which binominals end up introducing equations for individuals, properties or propositions.

- (86) a.  $\langle \text{index}, e \rangle = e$   
 b.  $\langle \text{index}, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle = \langle e, t \rangle$   
 c.  $\langle \text{index}, t \rangle = t$

As a final comment on the structure of binominals, it is important to note that each of these expressive pronominal DPs come in two varieties. In one syntactic scheme, the epithet does not form a constituent with the D head, which is part of the extended projection of the nominal index. Examples like (87) show that the D head obtains its concord features on the basis of the gender and number features of the pronominal index, which is the true concord and Agree controller. This example is particularly relevant since it clearly shows that the epithet *gallina* bears its own gender features, differing from the gender feature of the pronominal index:

- (87) *[el gallina de Juan]<sub>i</sub> dice que lo<sub>i</sub> amenazaron.*  
 the.M.SG chicken.F.SG of Juan.M.SG says that CL.M.3SG threatened  
 ‘That chicken Juan says that they threatened him.’

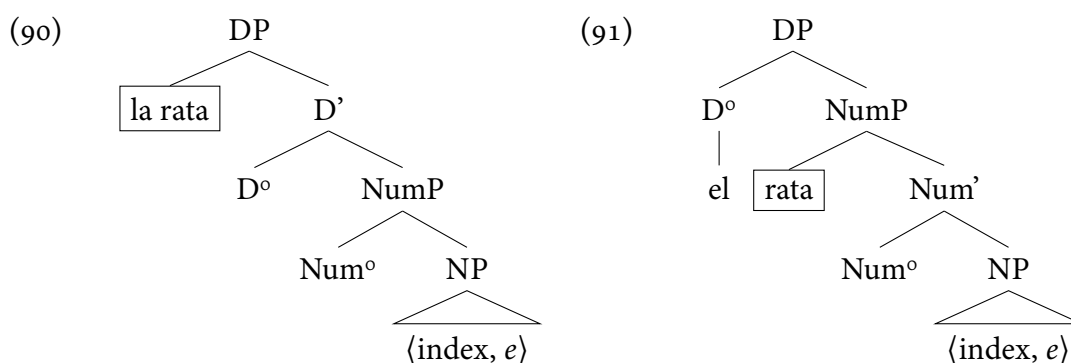
Now, in other cases, the expressive word does form a constituent with the determiner. For instance, in all the examples in (83) and (84), there is concord between the expressives and the articles/demonstratives. It seems, then, that there are two syntactic positions. Following the typology in Saab (2008), I propose that some expressive words, which form their own DP, are merged in the specifier of the main D head. This is the case of *una mierda* ‘a shit’ or *esa boludez* ‘that bullshit’. When merged in that position, they also realize the definiteness features of the main D head itself, which, due to a typical Double Comp Filter effect, cannot be realized when its specifier is filled. Most epithets, instead, are realized as already proposed, as expletives of NumP, or another related functional category. Schematically, the two positions can be represented as follows:



Importantly, these two positions are not exclusively associated to specific expressive words, since there are epithets that behave like *mierda* or *boludez*. As an illustration, consider the case of the epithet *rata* ‘rat’, which derives from a feminine common noun. Depending on whether or not the epithet forms a constituent with the preceding article, a change in meaning is detected, as the following translations show:

- (89) a. *la rata* (*de Andrés*)  
 the.F.SG rat.F.SG (of Andrés)  
 ‘that evil guy (Andrés)’  
 b. *el rata* (*de Andrés*)  
 the.M.SG rat.F.SG (of Andrés)  
 ‘that miser (Andrés)’

The structural difference between these two occurrences of the epithet *rata* is represented in the trees below, in which the two positions already proposed are filled with the corresponding epithet:



Therefore, there are good reasons to conclude that syntactic recycling can take place at two different positions within the functional spine of DPs.

#### 10.4.2 Pure expressive binominals

Recall that epithets and EAs are crucially distinguished by the observation that only EAs show argument extension. Gutzmann (2019) suggests, although indirectly, that the difference between epithets and EAs could be the byproduct of their different categorial status:

It is very interesting that expressive adjectives show this split between where they are realized and where they are interpreted. This is especially surprising given the fact that expressive epithets like *bastard* in that *bastard Kresge* have semantically been analyzed in the same way as expressive adjectives. Why should this be? What is special about adjectives and their place inside the DP that they behave in this way, whereas nominal elements do not seem to behave in a similar way? (Gutzmann 2019: 264–265)

Yet, when one looks beyond Germanic languages, it seems that there are other *expressive nominals* that do trigger argument extension. One case is attested in Brazilian Portuguese, language in which the most productive counterpart of Germanic EAs is a kind of binominal construction of the form [*D* + NOMINAL EXPRESSIVE + *of* + *DP*]. Consider the following example adapted from Basso (2020) (see also  $\leftrightarrow$  *Expressivity in Brazilian*



*Portuguese* by RENATO MIGUEL BASSO AND LUISANDRO MENDES DE SOUZA, Chapter 44 of this volume):<sup>17</sup>

- (92) *Eu perdi a porra das chaves.*  
I lost the fucking of.the keys  
'I lost the damn keys.'

This sentence is naturally interpreted as informally indicated in the following simplified representation, in which the frowned-face operator affects the entire sentence:

- (93) I lost the keys • ☹(I lost the keys)

Crucially, *a porra* can also combine with proper names, confirming the correlation already observed between argument extension and semantic flexibility (see Section 10.3.2). The example in (94) shows two things: (i) that combination with proper names is perfectly natural in the language, and (ii) that even in this syntactic environment, argument extension can be triggered, since the most natural interpretation is not that the speaker is emotional about Pedro; she is just expressing her frustration with the situation that the addressee does not stop talking about Pedro:<sup>18</sup>

- (94) *Para de falar da porra do Pedro.*  
stop.IMP of talk.INF of.the.DET.F.SG cum.F.SG of Pedro  
'Stop talking about that fucking Pedro.'

Similar observations can be made with respect to the Italian expressive *cazzo* lit. 'dick' (see Doliana 2016, Cuonzo 2019, Vanden Wyngaerd & Cavarani 2024). Consider the following example:

- (95) *Ho lavorato tutto il cazzo di giorno.*  
have.1SG worked all the dick of day  
'I have worked all fucking day.'

Here, the most natural interpretation is one in which the speaker is emotional about the hard-working day, i.e., *cazzo* triggers argument extension:

- (96) I have worked all day • ☹(I have worked all day)

In addition, like EAs and *a porra* in Brazilian Portuguese, *cazzo* also accepts combinations with proper names, as the following example from Doliana (2016) illustrates:<sup>19</sup>

17 → *Expressivity in Brazilian Portuguese* by BASSO AND MENDES DE SOUZA, Chapter 44 of this volume, also includes the following nouns into the list of argument extension triggers: *merda* 'shit', *bosta* 'crap', *porra* 'cum', *caralho* 'dick', *filho da puta* 'son of a bitch'. Yet, it is still remains to be tested if all these nouns really form a natural class of expressives with respect to argument extension and other properties.

18 I am thankful to Samara Almeida for her judgments and for this and many other examples, which I cannot include here due to space reasons.

19 Doliana uses this example to show that the preposition *di* also forms a constituent with the proper names, a clear indication that it is not a copular element (see the previous section).

- (97) *Ma sti cazzo di Doliana e (di) Anderucci 'ndo stanno?!*  
 but those dick of Doliana and of Anderucci where be.3PL  
 'Where are those fucking Doliana and Aderucci?!' (Doliana 2016: 89)

Therefore, it is not the grammatical category of the relevant expressives what distinguishes EAs from epithets. But most importantly, as already discussed in Vanden Wyngaerd & Cavarani (2024) with respect to the Italian facts, binominals containing nominal expressives are fully incompatible with a subject-predicate analysis, since, as we have repeatedly seen, pure expressives cannot occur in predicate position. This means that the *of* element in each language cannot be seen as the nominal counterpart of the sentential copula *to be*.

Of course, we cannot extend the equative analysis to these cases, either. In fact, note in passing, that the Italian *cazzo* does not require the mandatory use of demonstratives (see, for instance, the example in (95)) showing that we are not dealing with an underlying indexical, like in the case of epithets. Therefore, I think that a plausible analysis would consist in extending the late recycling approach sketched for EAs in Section 10.3.3 to these examples of pure expressive binominals. Such an analysis would naturally account for the fact that, like EAs, expressive nominals trigger argument extension and show semantic flexibility.

Before closing this section, I would like to add a final note on the structure of these binominals. Interestingly, the different distribution of nominal expressives in Brazilian Portuguese and Italian seems to give additional support to the hypothesis that there are at least two expressive positions in DPs, as illustrated in (88). In Brazilian Portuguese, the nominal expressive forms a constituent with the determiner, since it agrees with it in gender and number regardless of the gender and number of the main NP. Consider the case of *porra*, again, which is a feminine and singular noun. As the following example shows, the first article shares the feminine and singular properties of the expressive noun despite *carros* 'cars' being masculine and plural.

- (98) *a porra dos carros*  
 DET.F.SG CUM.F.SG OF.DET.M.PL CAR.M.PL  
 'the fucking cars'

This is not the case in Italian, language in which *cazzo* is invariably masculine and singular and the determiner agrees with the complement of the *di*-phrase. Vanden Wyngaerd & Cavarani (2024) provide the examples in (99) and (100), which respectively show this with respect to gender and number:

- (99) *quella cazzo di lettera*  
 that.F.SG dickM.SG of letter.F.SG  
 'that fucking letter' (Vanden Wyngaerd & Cavarani 2024: 340)
- (100) *quei cazzo di articoli*  
 that.M.PL dickM.SG of paper.M.PL  
 'those shit of papers' (Vanden Wyngaerd & Cavarani 2024: 341)

To conclude, I conjecture that late expressive recycling can also take place at different positions in the tree, perhaps the same proposed for other expressive phrases in (88). Many analytical details require still further elaboration and there are, of course, other distributional differences that are in the need of a more in-depth inquiry. However, it seems clear that both equative and pure expressive binominals are not underlying subject-predicate structures and must be analyzed with the tools of the grammar of expressivity.

## 10.5 FINAL REMARKS: BEYOND EXPRESSIVE RECYCLING

.....

Throughout this chapter, I have tried to sketch an answer to our initial question:

- (Q) How may any word become expressive in the relevant sense? Or how did *puta* lose its original predicative force in (2a) to merely communicate a variety of different use-conditions in (2b)–(2d)?

In looking for such an answer, I have reviewed the more canonical types of expressive constructions in multidimensional semantics, namely, slurs, epithets and expressive adjectives and nominals, including binominal constructions of the Romance type. I have conjectured that syntax plays a crucial role in deactivating the truth-conditional dimension of words and phrases. Concretely, there is a grammar of expressivity that can be essentially reduced to a process of syntactic and post-syntactic recycling. The idea can be implemented through a version of *unmotivated* External Merge. In a sense, this is similar to Chomsky's (1995) original definition of Merge in the Minimalist Program, where it was conceived of as a *for free* operation, i.e., not triggered by any subcategorization feature. I think, however, that it is useful to have motivated and unmotivated Merge as two variants of the same basic syntactic operation. Unmotivated Merge gives us some sort of syntactic free variation, which is directly read by the context system to deliver use-conditions in the Kaplanian sense. This free variation activity in non-representational syntactic and post-syntactic positions would be the ultimate reason behind the pure expressive meanings that epithets and expressive adjectives/nominals have.

However, I would not like to give the impression that all types of expressivity meanings can be reduced to any of the two variants of grammatical recycling proposed here. In this final section, I briefly argue that an expressivity feature is needed for other types of expressive phenomena and that there are plausible reasons to propose that in some cases a given grammatical rule can freely apply to give use-condition at PF, in a sense similar, although not identical, to what Corver (2016) has proposed for many expressive phenomena in Dutch dialects.

### 10.5.1 Is there an expressive feature in the syntax?

I have argued that the syntax underlying argument extension does not justify the presence of a syntactic [EX] feature. So, at least for this empirical domain, the *Hypothesis of Expressive Syntax*, repeated below, would not hold:

(101) **Hypothesis of expressive syntax**

Expressivity does not only play a role for semantics and pragmatics, but it is a syntactic feature. (Gutzmann 2019: 4)

Yet, there are other domains in which the hypothesis seems to be correct. As is well-known, myriads of grammatical constructions require the activation of the left-periphery of sentences, which connects grammar and discourse in specific ways. Exclamatives, imperatives, focus and many other phenomena in many languages are derived through different instances of Agree and A-bar movement. Whether these phenomena trigger use-conditions or not is still a debatable topic. For instance, Kratzer (2004) has argued that certain sub-types of focus might be modeled as triggering expressive meanings. Beyond the sentential left-periphery, Gutzmann & Turgay (2015) and Gutzmann & Turgay (2019) have presented compelling evidence from German to detect the activity of an [EX] feature for expressive intensifiers and I have tried to show that the analysis can be properly adapted to account for certain minimality effects attested with some types of expressive intensifiers in Spanish (for data and discussion on German and Spanish, see → *Expressivity in German* by DANIEL GUTZMANN AND KATHARINA TURGAY, Chapter 42 of this volume, and → *Expressivity in Spanish* by ANDRÉS SAAB, Chapter 45 of this volume).

In turn, in a recent work, Bohrn & Carranza (2024) show that the mixed adjective *reverendo* in Rioplatense Spanish only combines with nouns which are already marked for expressivity:

- (102) a. *reverendo* {*hijo de puta, boludo, puto, quilombo*}  
 MIXED ADJECTIVE {mother fucker, asshole, faggot, mess}  
 b. \**reverendo* {*profesor, amigo, problema, auto*}  
 MIXED ADJECTIVE {professor, friend, problem, car}

The same can be said with respect to the expressive pseudo-partitive *manga* in the same dialect, which only combines with expressive plural nouns:

- (103) a. *una manga de* {*hijos de puta, boludos, putos*}  
 a bunch of {mother fuckers, assholes, faggots}  
 b. \**una manga de* {*profesores, amigos, jugadores*}  
 a bunch of {professors, friends, players}

As far as I can tell, cases like these can be seen as a particular instance of (101). Concretely, there is here some sort of expressive selection requiring that some expressive adjectives or functional items only combine with expressive nouns.

### 10.5.2 More on free variation and expressivity

Recall the Representation-first Conjecture:

- (104) **The representation-first conjecture (RF-conjecture)**  
 Language is mainly a representational device.

It seems that epithets and expressive adjectives/nominals make a good case for the RF-conjecture. At least, they show that, in order to get pure expressive meanings, a variety of recycling strategy must apply in the syntax or after. But this is not always the case. In the realm of adnominal honorifics in Rioplatense Spanish, some behave just a regular Pottsonian expressives. Consider, for instance, the case of *don/doña* (see Saab 2021a and  $\leftrightarrow$  *Expressivity in Spanish* by ANDRÉS SAAB, Chapter 45 of this volume):

- (105) a. *Don Luis llegó tarde.*  
 HON.M Luis arrived late  
 ‘Mr. Luis arrived late.’  
 b. *Doña María llegó tarde.*  
 HON.F Maria arrived late  
 ‘Mrs. María arrived late.’

A plausible Pottsonian lexical entry for *don/doña* would be as follows:

- (106) Lexical entry for *don/doña*:  $\llbracket don/doña \rrbracket = \lambda x. \text{Respect}(c_{\text{speaker}}, x): \langle e^a, t^c \rangle$

Then, for an honorific phrase like *don Luis*, the semantic value we obtain results from adding a conventional implicature to the regular denotation of the proper name:

- (107)  $\llbracket don Luis \rrbracket = \text{Luis} \bullet \text{Respect}(c_{\text{speaker}}, \text{Luis})$

Other adnominal honorifics, instead, seem to behave as EAs. This is the case of *señor/a*, which (i) combines indistinctly with common nouns or proper names (see the minimal pair in (108) below), and (ii) triggers a restricted form of argument extension, in the sense that for an example like (108a), the honorific syntactically combines with the common noun, but semantically seems to modify the entire DP:

- (108) a. *La señora abogada llegó temprano.*  
 the HON lawyer arrived early  
 ‘The HON LAWYER arrived early.’  
 b. *Señora Ana, entre, por favor.*  
 HON Ana come-in please  
 ‘Mrs. Ana, please, come in.’

This double parallelism between epithets and *don/doña*, on the one hand, and between EAs and *señor(a)*, on the other, is reflected in the Table 10.1.

TABLE 10.1 – Table 1: Argument extension and semantic flexibility

|                      | Epithets | <i>don/doña</i> | EAs | <i>señor(a)</i> |
|----------------------|----------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|
| Argument extension   | no       | no              | yes | yes             |
| Semantic flexibility | no       | no              | yes | yes             |

Yet, the parallelism is not perfect since it is not advisable to derive *don/doña* from any of the two forms of syntactic recycling we have discussed in this chapter. Perhaps,

recycling was observed at some stage of the diachronic evolution of the honorific, but synchronically, the form is grammaticalized as an honorific modifier (see Bernstein, Ordóñez & Roca 2019).

Now, other related adnominal expressives would require another sort of explanation. In another recent paper, Aguilar Guevara & Oggiani (2024) analyze the behavior of the dialectal alternation between determined and undetermined proper names in Rioplatense Spanish, as illustrated in the following minimal pair:

- (109) a. *María vino a mi fiesta.*  
 María came to my party  
 ‘María came to my party.’  
 b. *La María vino a mi fiesta.*  
 the María came to my party  
 ‘María came to my party.’ (Aguilar Guevara & Oggiani 2024)

As they argue in detail, the use of the determiner triggers an expressive meaning of familiarity. In order to see the familiarity effect, consider their example below. As they show, in a scenario in which Carla is the speaker’s new Tinder, using the definite article is strongly infelicitous:

- (110) *Hoy conocí a Carla/#la Carla.*  
 today met.1SG DOM Carla/the Carla  
 ‘Today, I met Carla for the first time.’ (Aguilar Guevara & Oggiani 2024)

Thus, for this use of the definite article, we would be tempted to propose a Pottsian lexical entry similar to (106), along the following lines:

- (111)  $[[el/la]] = \lambda x. \text{Familiar}(c_{\text{speaker}}, x): \langle e^a, t^c \rangle$

However, this seems an *ad-hoc* move, which simply consists of duplicating lexical entries for the definite article. Alternatively, one can conceive of this use of the definite article as a case of deviation from the rules of grammar in a way similar to what Corver (2016) has proposed for many expressive constructions in several Dutch dialects. Recall that I have assumed that in proper names D adjoins to N under adjacency at PF, creating the following complex head. Below, I repeat the simplified analysis in (58):

- (112)  $[_N \text{ Carla} + D]$

Suppose, however, that for some speakers, the rule is merely optional, in a way such that at some point of the PF derivation, the following representation is obtained:

- (113)  $[_{DP} D_{\text{AFFIX}} [_{NP} \text{ Carla}]]$

If D is an affix, then absence of D affixation is rescued by inserting an expletive article:

- (114)  $[_{DP} \text{ la} [_{NP} \text{ Carla}]]$

This analysis is perhaps more moderate than Corver’s (2016) approach, but it still re-

quires the blocking of an obligatory rule in the language. This creates another form of free variation, which serves as input to the context system, which interprets the result assigning the use-conditional meaning of familiarity.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

.....

I would like to express my gratitude to Nicolás Lo Guercio for many comments and corrections on a previous version of this chapter. He and Eleonora Orlando were the perfect co-authors of many of my previous works on expressivity, without which this chapter could not even exist. I am also grateful to Samara Almeida, who encouraged me to finish this chapter and provided several examples from Brazilian Portuguese. My gratitude extends to the editors of this handbook, Daniel Gutzmann and Katharina Turgay, not only for giving the chance to write this chapter, but also for their endless patience and guidance.



---

.....

## B I B L I O G R A P H Y

.....

- Aguilar Guevara, Ana & Carolina Oggiani. 2024. Determined Proper Nouns in Rioplatense Spanish express interpersonal proximity. *Borealis*, *in press*.
- Basso, Renato Miguel. 2020. Use-conditional expressions and non-local interpretation: A case study of a Brazilian Portuguese structure. In Roberta Pires de Oliveira et al. (eds.), *Brazilian Portuguese Syntax and Semantics*, 163–182. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Bernstein, Judy, Francisco Ordóñez & Francesc Roca. 2019. On the emergence of personal articles in the history of Catalan. In Miriam Bouzouita, Anne Breitbarth, Lieven Danckaert & Elisabeth Witzenhause (eds.), *Cycles in language change*, 88–108. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bhatt, Rajesh & Roumyana Pancheva. 2004. Late merger of degree clauses. *Linguistic Inquiry* 35(1). 1–45.
- Bohrn, Andrea. 2015. Inversión silábica y realización de género y número: El caso del vesre rioplatense. *RASAL lingüística*. 29–48.
- Bohrn, Andrea & Fernando Carranza. 2024. *Un reverendo quilombo: sobre intensificadores expresivos internos de connotación negativa en español rioplatense*. Talk given at the *I Simposio sobre la peyoración*, September 23–24. Universidad de la República, Montevideo.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1995. *The Minimalist Program*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Cinque, Guglielmo. 2010. *The Syntax of the Adjectives: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Corver, Norbert. 2016. Emotion in the build of Dutch: Derivation, augmentation and duplication. *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 132(4). 232–275.
- Cuonzo, Clara. 2019. *Quella cavolo di sedia: What expressives can tell us about the internal make-up of DPs*. University of Cambridge MA thesis.
- Cuonzo, Clara. 2021. Pure expressive adjectives in Romance. *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique* LXVI(2–3). 133–155.
- den Dikken, Marcel. 2006. *Relators and Linkers: The Syntax of Predication, Predicate Inversion, and Copulas*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Doliana, Aaron. 2016. Agree and Minimality in the DP: The challenge of the *Cazzo-of-N* construction in Italian. *Proceedings of ConSOLE XXIV*. 88–111.
- Dubinsky, Stanley & Robert Hamilton. 1998. Epithets as antilogophoric pronouns. *Linguistic Inquiry* 29(4). 685–693.
- Foolen, Ad. 2022. Language and emotion in the history of linguistics. In Gesine Lenore Schiewer, Jeanette Altarriba & Bee Chin Ng (eds.), *Language and Emotion* (HSK 46.1), 31–53. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Gutzmann, Daniel. 2015. *Use-Conditional Meaning: Studies in Multidimensional Semantics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gutzmann, Daniel. 2019. *The Grammar of Expressivity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gutzmann, Daniel & Katharina Turgay. 2015. Expressive intensifiers and external degree modification. *The Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 17(3). 185–228.
- Gutzmann, Daniel & Katharina Turgay. 2019. Secondary content: An introduction. In Daniel Gutzmann & Katharina Turgay (eds.), *Secondary Content: The Semantics and Pragmatics of Side Issues*, 1–25. Leiden: Brill.
- Kaplan, David. 1999/2004. *The meaning of ouch and oops: Explorations in the theory of meaning as use*. 2004 version. Ms. University of California, Los Angeles.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 1999. *Beyond ouch and oops: How descriptive and expressive meaning interact*. Talk given at the Cornell Conference on Theories of Context Dependency. March 26, 1999. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University. <http://semanticsarchive.net/Archive/WEwNGUyO/>.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 2004. Interpreting focus: Presupposed or expressive meanings? A comment on Geurts and van der Sandt. *Theoretical Linguistics* 30(1). 123–136.
- Lebeaux, David. 2009. *Where Does Binding Theory Apply?* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Leonetti, Manuel. 1999. *Los determinantes*. Madrid: Arcos Libros.
- Lo Guercio, Nicolás & Eleonora Orlando. 2022. Expressives and argument extension. *Proceedings of SALT* 32. 44–62.
- Lo Guercio, Nicolás & Andrés Saab. 2024. *Argument extension and late merge*. Ms, IIF-SADAF-Conicet.
- Longobardi, Giuseppe. 1994. Reference and proper names: A theory of N-movement in syntax and logical form. *Linguistic Inquiry* 25. 609–665.
- Longobardi, Giuseppe. 2005. Toward a Unified Grammar of Reference. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 25. 5–44.
- McCready, Elin. 2010. Varieties of conventional implicature. *Semantics & Pragmatics* 3(8). 1–57.
- Orlando, Eleonora & Andrés Saab. 2020a. A stereotype semantics for syntactically ambiguous slurs. *Analytic Philosophy* 61(2). 101–129.
- Orlando, Eleonora & Andrés Saab. 2020b. Slurs, stereotypes and insults. *Acta Analytica* 35. 599–621.
- Pos, Hendrik J. 1934. Les particules, leurs fonctions logiques et affectives. *Recherches Philosophiques* 3. 321–334.
- Potts, Christopher. 2005. *The Logic of Conventional Implicature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Predelli, Stefano. 2013. *Meaning without Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Reinhart, Tanya. 2006. *Interface Strategies: Optimal and Costly Computations*. Cambridge, MA: MIT press.
- Resnik, Gabriela. 2013. Gramaticalización de adjetivos en español rioplatense: El caso de los relativos. In Laura Kornfeld & Inés Kuguel (eds.), *El español rioplatense desde una perspectiva generativa*, 53–70. Mendoza: Universidad Nacional de Cuyo.
- Saab, Andrés. 2008. *Hacia una teoría de la identidad parcial en la elipsis*. University of Buenos Aires dissertation.
- Saab, Andrés. 2021a. A short note on honorifics and personal articles in Spanish and Catalan: Consequences for the theory of proper names. *Isogloss: Open Journal of Romance Linguistics* 7/6. 1–14.
- Saab, Andrés. 2021b. On the locus of expressivity: Deriving parallel meaning dimensions from architectural considerations. In Eleonora Orlando & Andrés Saab (eds.), *Slurs and Expressivity: Semantics and Beyond*, 17–44. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Saab, Andrés. 2022a. Introducing expressives through equations: Implications for the theory of nominal predication in Romance. *Proceeding of SALT* 32. 356–383.
- Saab, Andrés. 2022b. Propositional equations through expressive selection. *Cadernos de Squibs* 8(2). 100–118.
- Saab, Andrés. 2023. *Honoring and insulting in the syntax and beyond*. Talk given at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin (Register ERC project), June 12th.
- Saab, Andrés & Fernando Carranza. 2021. *Dimensiones del Significado: Una Introducción a la Semántica Formal*. Buenos Aires: Editorial SADAF.
- Saab, Andrés & Nicolás Lo Guercio. 2020. No name: The allosemy view. *Studia Linguistica* 74(1). 60–97.
- Saab, Andrés & Eleonora Orlando. 2021. Epítetos e insultos de grupo en español: Sobre una ambigüedad y sus implicaciones sintáctico-semánticas. *Studies in Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics* 14(1). 161–205.
- Suñer Gratacós, Avel·lina. 1990. *La predicación secundaria en español*. Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona dissertation.
- Vanden Wyngaerd, Guido & Edoardo Cavarani. 2024. Che cazzo di articolo di merda! In Anke Himmelreich, Daniel Hole & Johannes Mursell (eds.), *To the left, to the right, and much in between: A Festschrift for Katharina Hartmann*, 337–349. Frankfurt: Goethe-Universität Frankfurt.
- Wiltschko, Martina. 2024. Emotions do not enter grammar because they are constructed (by grammar). *Language under Discussion* 7(1). 1–62.
- Zeijlstra, Hedde. 2012. There is only one way to agree. *The Linguistic Review* 29(3). 491–539.