

*A morpho-syntactic analysis of evaluatives in Italian*

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses some aspects of the derivational morphology of nouns in Italian. More precisely we will investigate evaluative suffixes and the relation between derivational and inflectional morphemes. These topics form part of a more general theoretical and descriptive question, i.e. the nature of morphological exponents in Romance languages. Our proposal is that both inflectional and derivational morphology in nouns are endowed with semantic content, and we provide evidence for their active involvement at the interpretive interface. We concentrate on the diminutive (Dim) *-in-*, the endearing (End) *-ett-*, *-ell-*, the augmentative (Aug) *-on-* and the pejoratives (Pej) *-acci-*, *-ucci-*. Evaluatives express size properties or the grading of individuals with reference to physical or culturally-determined properties and can be understood as predicates that contribute to restricting the argumental variable of the root. Specifically, we investigate: the singulative effect of evaluatives; the structures in which evaluatives change a verbal root to a nominal element; the constraints on the reciprocal order of different evaluatives; the combination of evaluatives with adjectival roots.