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Augmentative, pejorative, diminutive and endearing heads in the extended nominal projection*

Guglielmo Cinque

In this paper evidence will be provided that augmentative, pejorative, diminutive and endearing morphemes are rigidly ordered with respect to one another, pointing to the existence of correspondingly ordered functional heads in the extended nominal projection. The evidence will primarily come from the relative order of the augmentative, pejorative, diminutive and endearing suffixes of Italian, but also from the order of the corresponding bound and unbound morphemes of other languages.

Keywords: augmentative/pejorative/diminutive/endeared ordered morphemes; associated ordered functional heads; extended nominal projection.

1. Introduction

In Cinque (2007) I had proposed that diminutive and endearing morphemes are associated with specific heads of the nominal phrase. Here, in extending that analysis to augmentative and pejorative morphemes, I will try to determine the order (hierarchy) of the four heads with respect to each other and with respect to the other functional heads of the nominal extended projection.

In the nominal phrase of every language, the notions of ‘small’ and ‘big’, and the affective notions ‘nice/lovely’ and ‘bad/ugly’ with which they are often associated (Jurafsky 1996), appear to find a specific grammatical encoding through diminutive, endearing, augmentative and pejorative morphemes.¹

* This article is dedicated to Adriana Belletti, a dear colleague and friend from the early days of the generative enterprise in Italy (though she is much younger). Thanks to two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

1. While diminutives are assumed to be grammatically encoded in virtually every language (cf. Haas 1972; Nieuwenhuis 1985: Chapter 8; Jurafsky 1996), augmentatives are often claimed not to be universally attested. This is, however, not entirely clear given the different means in

The width of this phenomenon and the grammatical nature of its realisation suggest that there may in fact be dedicated positions for the diminutive, endearing, augmentative and pejorative meanings in the functional structure of the nominal phrase in all languages.

In order to determine the order of these positions, one must clearly distinguish the functional/grammatical notions of ‘diminution’, ‘augmentation’, ‘endearment’ and ‘derogation’ from the syntactic, morphological, phonological means recruited to express them, as one and the same grammatical means may be recruited to express distinct functional/grammatical notions. Take for example the suffix *-ino/a* of Italian. This is used to express not only the functional/grammatical notion of simple ‘diminution’ (small *x*: *colonnina* ‘small column’; cf. *colonna* ‘column’), but also a variety of other functional/grammatical notions (which turn out to occupy different positions in the extended nominal projection). For example, it can also express:

- a. endearment: *mammìna* ‘dear mother’ (not ‘small mother’) (cf. *mamma* ‘mother’) [the endearing head will be argued later to be lower than the diminutive head];
- b. derogation: *avvocatino* ‘worthless lawyer’, e.g. in a sentence like *E’ un avvocatino da quattro soldi* ‘(lit.) He is a lawyer-ino for four coins’) [the pejorative head will be argued below to be lower than the augmentative head, but higher than the diminutive one];
- c. approximation: *quindicina* ‘around fifteen’ (cf. *quindici* ‘fifteen’) [numeral approximation is arguably a head close to, possibly above, the numeral phrase],

and it can also function as a simple derivational suffix, which derives one noun from another which refers to a related, but different, kind of object (cf. *cucchiaio* ‘spoon’ and *cucchiaino* ‘tea spoon’);² in the case of mass nouns also turning them into count

which diminution, augmentation (and endearment and derogation) are realized. Depending on the language, the grammatical encoding may involve the phonology (alteration of consonants or vowels, tonal variation, etc.), the morphology (addition of affixes, change of gender or noun class, reduplication, etc.) or the functional lexicon (particles, functional adjectives, etc.), the latter being less readily recognizable as a source of diminutives and augmentatives. See Sapir (1911), Nichols (1971), Haas (1972), Matisoff (1992), Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi (1994), Jurafsky (1996), Bauer (1997), Derzhanski (2005). English, to give one example, is occasionally said not to have any diminutives as it does not employ diminutive morphology productively. But its (unstressed) adjective ‘little/li’l’ has been shown by its special syntax to be a diminutive morpheme (see for example Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994, 114f, and § 2.3.2 below). So the possibility exists that augmentation too (as well as endearment and derogation) may find a grammatical encoding that is not immediately obvious, in this as in other languages. The analysis will be restricted to morphemes in the nominal projection, without considering those of adjectives (or other grammatical categories). Parts of the analysis of Cinque (2007) will be resumed here.

2. Cf. De Belder, Faust and Lampitelli’s (2014) derivational use of diminutives.

nouns (cf., e.g. *pane* ‘bread’, *panino* ‘roll (of bread)’; *cioccolato* ‘chocolate’, *cioccolatino* ‘chocolate sweet’).³

2. The position of the augmentative, pejorative, diminutive and endearing heads

2.1 The augmentative, pejorative, diminutive and endearing suffixes of Italian

Italian has a number of diminutive, endearing, augmentative and pejorative suffixes. Those that are by far the most productive are *-ino* and *-etto*, for diminution and endearment (cf. Lepschy 1989: 122ff.), and *-one* and *-accio*, for augmentation and derogation, respectively. As has been noted in the literature, these suffixes can be combined (see Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994: 100, and references cited there). However, it turns out that they can only be combined in a certain order. For example, possible combinations are *-ett-ino* and *-acci-one* (even if they are not available for every stem), but definitely not *-in-etto* and *-on-accio*. See (2) and (3):⁴

- (2) a. uomo om-etto om-ino
 ‘man’ ‘frail man’ ‘small man’
 om-ett-ino *om-in-etto
 ‘small frail man’
- b. casa cas-etta cas-ina
 ‘house’ ‘cosy house’ ‘small house’
 cas-ett-ina *cas-in-etta
 ‘small cosy house’
- c. faccia facc-etta facc-ina
 ‘face’ ‘pretty face’ ‘small face’
 facc-ett-ina *facc-in-etta
 ‘small pretty face’

3. Like Dutch *-je* (see the discussion in Jurafsky 1996:555 and Wiltschko 2006, among others).

4. The combination *-acci-one* is in general less productive than *-ett-ino*. The assertion that *-in-etto* and *-on-accio* are not possible sequences is naturally only valid for the genuine combinations of the true diminutive/augmentative and endearing/pejorative suffixes. Where *-ino* or *-one* are part of a crystallised form with a non-compositional meaning (*tavolino* ‘dresser table’, *portone* ‘door of a building’), such sequences will be possible (*tavolinetto*, *portonaccio*). Ettinger’s (1974:158ff) few cases of *-inetto* and *-onaccio* appear to be of this type. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994: 100) note that both *tazz-ett-ina* ‘small cup’ and *tazz-in-etta* are acceptable, although “the latter form may sound a bit obsolete or may be heard as a diminutivized form of a slightly lexicalized base *tazzina* ‘coffee cup’”.

- d. stanza stanz-etta stanz-ina
 ‘room’ ‘cosy room’ ‘small room’
 stanz-ett-ina *stanz-in-etta
 ‘small cosy room’
- (3) a. uomo om-accio om-one
 ‘man’ ‘ugly man’ ‘big man’
 om-acci-one⁵ *om-on-accio
 ‘big ugly man’
- b. donna donn-accia donn-ona
 ‘woman’ ‘ugly woman’ ‘big woman’
 donn-acci-ona *donn-on-accia
 ‘big ugly woman’
- c. zio zi-accio zi-one zi-acci-one *zi-on-accio
 ‘uncle’ ‘ugly uncle’ ‘big uncle’ ‘big ugly uncle’
- d. cane cagn-accio cagn-one
 ‘dog’ ‘ugly dog’ ‘big dog’
 cagn-acci-one⁶ *cagn-on-accio
 ‘big ugly dog’

If we now turn to the interpretation of these suffixes, we see that *-ino* and *-one* are usually diminutive and augmentative, respectively, while *-etto*, and even more clearly *-accio*, are affective (*-etto* endearing, and *-accio* derogatory/pejorative). For example, *omino* can simply refer to a small man, while *ometto* involves an element of judgement; similarly, *casina* objectively points to the reduced dimensions of a house, whereas *casetta* implies an emotional involvement (it is no accident that in the context of children’s games it is *casetta*, not *casina*, which is used: *giocare a mamma casetta*, *fare casetta* ‘to play house’ vs. **giocare a mamma casina*, **fare casina*; the two forms actually differ in meaning: *mi manca la mia casetta* ‘I miss my home’ vs. *mi manca la mia casina* ‘I miss my small house’). Even clearer is the distinction between *-one*, the augmentative suffix, and *-accio*, the pejorative suffix (cf. (3)). *Fare una figuraccia*, for example, differs from *fare una figurona* in that the former means ‘to cut a bad figure’ while the latter means ‘to make a big (and beautiful) show’.

If the order of the suffixes ordinarily reflects the syntactic derivation applied to the root of the complex word, with the suffixes that realise lower functional heads being closer to the root than those that realize higher ones (in accordance with Baker’s 1985 Mirror Principle), then we have to conclude that the endearing head is (immediately)

5. Cf. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994:444).

6. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994:448) mention the example: *Prendi il tuo cagnac-cione tutto sporco e portalo fuori!* ‘Get your filthy big ugly dog and take it outside!’

lower than the diminutive head and that the pejorative head is (immediately) lower than the augmentative head, as shown in (4):⁷

- (4) a. Dim > End
-in- > -ett-
- b. Aug > Pej
-on- > -acci-

In fact it turns out that the latter two heads are merged higher than the former two, giving the overall order shown in Table 1:

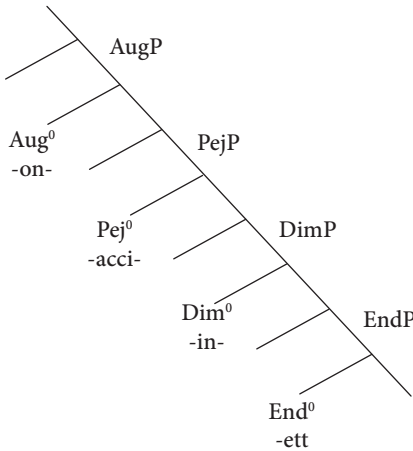


Table 1.

This can be seen from the fact that *-ett-* combines with all of *-in-*, *-acci-*, *-on-*, in the order *-ett-in-*, *ett-acci-*, *ett-on-*, though not in the order *-in-ett-*, *-acci-ett-*, *-on-ett-* (see (2) above and (5)–(6)):

- (5) a. *zi-ett-acci-o*
Uncle-END-PEJ-MascSg
- vs.
- **zi-acc-ett-o* (cf. *zi-ett-o*; *zi-acci-o*)
uncle-PEJ-END-MascSg
- b. *cagn-ett-acci-o*
dog-END-PEJ-MascSg
- vs.
- **cagn-acc-ett-o* (cf. *cagn-ett-o*; *cagn-acci-o*)
dog-PEJ-END MascSg

7. The suffix *-ino*, when it is used on its own, can also be used endearingly. We take this to be an example of its ambiguity between a purely diminutive value and an endearing value; something which allows it to be inserted in the head of the endearing projection (also see the case of the German *-lein* in Footnote 12 below).

- c. libr-ett-acci-o
book-END-PEJ-MascSg
- vs.
- *libr-acc-ett-o (cf. *libr-ett-o*; *libr-acci-o*)
book-PEJ-END MascSg
- (6) a. pezz-ett-on-e
piece-END-AUG-MascSg
- vs.
- *pezz-on-ett-o (cf. *pezz-on-e*; *pezz-ett-o*)⁸
piece-AUG-END MascSg
- b. bambin-ett-on-e
child-END-AUG-MascSg
- vs.
- *bambin-on-ett-o (*bambin-on-e*; *bambin-ett-o*)
child-AUG-END MascSg
- c. zi-ett-on-e vs.
uncle-END-AUG-MascSg
- vs.
- *zi-on-ett-o (cf. *zi-etto*, *zi-one*)⁹
uncle-AUG-END-MascSg

from the fact that *-in-* in turn combines with the higher morphemes *-acci-* and *-on-* in the order *-in-acci-*, *-in-on-*, but not the other way around (see (7) and (8)):

- (7) a. Om-in-acci-o
man-DIM-PEJ-MascSg
- vs.
- *om-acc-in-o
man-PEJ-DIM-MascSg
- (8) a. Om-in-on-e
man-DIM-AUG-MascSg
- vs.
- *om-on-(c-)ino¹⁰
man-AUG-DIM-MascSg

8. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994:151 and 447)

9. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994:482).

10. *Maglioncino* is a false counterexample. *Maglione* ‘pullover’ is not a productive augmentative form of *maglia* ‘sweater’ but an independent word, derived through *-one* used as a derivational suffix.

and finally from the fact that *-acci-* combines with *-on-* in the order *-acci-on-* but not *-on-acci-*, which is what we saw above in (3).

Suggestive cross-linguistic evidence confirming these orderings, at least for the diminutive and endearing heads, comes from a number of languages, discussed in the next sections.

2.2 Notes on the diminutive and endearing suffixes of German, Piapoco and Russian

The endearing suffix is overtly found closer to the noun than the purely diminutive suffix also in German, Piapoco and Russian.

2.2.1 German

In (northern and standard) German, for example, there are two suffixes *-chen* and *-lein* (cf. Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994: 103), which can appear both on their own or combined, but only in the order *-lein-chen*. See (9):¹¹

- (9) a. Katze Kätz-lein Kätz-chen Kätz-lein-chen *Kätz-chen-lein
'cat'
- b. Oma Oma-lein Oma-chen Oma-lein-chen *Oma-chen-lein
'grandma'
- c. Haus Häus-lein Häus-chen Häus-lein-chen *Häus-chen-lein
'house'
- d. Stadt Städt-lein Städt-chen Städt-lein-chen *Städt-chen-lein
'city'
- e. Tisch Tisch-lein Tisch-chen Tisch-lein-chen *Tisch-chen-lein
'table'
- f. Brief Brief-lein Brief-chen Brief-lein-chen *Brief-chen-lein
'letter'

As pointed out to me by Walter Schweikert, out of the two, it is the suffix *-lein* which is interpreted as endearingly, while *-chen* is more typically purely diminutive.¹²

11. Many thanks to Walter Schweikert for pointing out to me this property of the two 'diminutive' suffixes in German, and to him and to Joachim Sabel for discussing with me the interpretation of the examples given here.

12. In the southern varieties of German, where only the suffix *-lein* (*-le*, *-li*) is used, this suffix is used both diminutively and endearingly (Walter Schweikert p.c.). I interpret this as meaning that it can be inserted in both the diminutive and the endearing head positions. Joachim Sabel points out that *-chen* when used for materials causes an individuation and allows plurals (*das/die Wässer-chen/Stäub-chen* 'piece(s) of dust/water'); a characteristic effect of purely diminutive morphemes.

2.2.2 *Piapoco*

As reported in Bailey (2007: 40), in Piapoco, a Maipurean language spoken in Colombia, the hypocoristic [endearing] suffix /-ya/ needs to be attached to the diminutive morpheme /-na/ and is closer to the root than the diminutive morpheme:

- (10) zumaiyana
 tuma-i- ya- na
 child-MASC-END-DIM
 'little child'

2.2.3 *Russian*

Judging from the following passage of Voeykova (1998), Russian also shows the same phenomenon:

The double diminutives are formed by adding two diminutive suffixes to the simplex, for instance *mal'chishechka* 'boy-DIM-DIM', formed with -ECH and -K from *mal'chik* [...]. Usually if there are two 'degrees' of diminutivization, the second diminutive (DIM-DIM) takes the semantic meaning of smallness, whereas the first (-DIM) one, the most common, is used only for expressive nuances.¹³

Voeykova (1998: 101f)

It is difficult to view this cross-linguistic convergence as accidental. We thus have some confirmation that alongside the functional projection that hosts the normal diminutive morphemes, there also exists a lower functional projection devoted to the expression of an endearing value. Although we do not have analogous confirming cross-linguistic evidence, we expect the same to hold of the augmentative and pejorative projections.¹⁴

13. Potentially problematic is the case of Bulgarian, where – as pointed out to me by Iliyana Krapova – in the (rigid) combination of the two suffixes, it is the second and not the first that is interpreted endearingly:

- | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----------|----|--------------|----|------------------|
| (i) | a. | brat | b. | brat-le | c. | brat-le-ntse |
| | | brother | | brother-Dim | | brother-Dim-End |
| (ii) | a. | krak | b. | kra-če | c. | kra-če-ntse |
| | | leg/foot | | leg/foot-Dim | | leg/foot-Dim-End |

This would cease to be problematic if one were to take the NP in Bulgarian to raise from directly under the endearing projection to a specifier above the diminutive projection (cf. Table 1), without pied-piping (roll-up), a generally legitimate option, documented in Cinque (2005). This account of the Bulgarian facts can possibly be extended to the similar facts in Kwakw'ala (Wakashan) (Julien 2005: 10, Note 11).

14. Concerning augmentatives, Ngiti (Nilo-Saharan), according to Lojenga (1994: § 5.7.2), has two different augmentative suffixes (-*ba* 'big' and *akpà* 'long/tall') which may be combined in the order -*akpà-ba* (cf. *osu-akpà-ba* 'big long snake'). They are not adjectives, which are

2.3 The position of the four heads in the extended nominal projection

2.3.1 *The diminutive and augmentative particles of Nankina and Fuyug*

A preliminary clue as to the position occupied by the diminutive and augmentative heads within the extended projection of the NP seems to come from the ordering of the diminutive and augmentative particles with respect to the other elements of the nominal phrase in a number of (non-Austronesian) Papuan languages of New Guinea. See for example (11)a–b from Nankina (Spaulding & Spaulding 1994: 116), and (12) a–b from Fuyug (Bradshaw 2007: 53f):

- (11) a. Wam d^Λv^Λk sek de ya-sat
 talk **short** **DIM** one say-INT.1S
 ‘I will tell a short story’
- b. K^Λnd^Λp kuon^η **damini** wiet de jik^η ^Λ-w^Λn
 wood stick **large** **AUG** one heavy do-DS.3S
 ‘The huge piece of wood was heavy...’
- (12) a. And **galib** **akan**.
 thing **small** **DIM**
 ‘It is a very small thing.’
- b. Tomba hu=ni es **uwand** **akan**.
 Tomba 3S=EMPH child **small** **DIM**
 ‘Tomba is a very small child.’

The particles *sek* (diminutive) and *wiet* (augmentative) in Nankina appear between the numeral and the corresponding size adjective *dvk* ‘short/small’ and *damini* ‘big’. Plausibly such reverse order (N A Dim/Aug Num) can be derived from the base structure [NumP [Dim/Aug AP_{size} [_{NP} N]]], via movement of the NP around AP_{size}, followed by further movement of the NP pied piping the size adjective around the Dim/Aug morpheme and subsequent pied-piping of [NP AP_{size} Dim/Aug] around NumP (cf. Cinque 2005):¹⁵

pre-nominal in Ngiti (§ 9.2.1.1: e.g. *ádzi imbi* ‘(lit.) long rope’), but are in the mirror-image order of the Merge position of the corresponding adjectives of size and length (according to Scott’s 2002: 114 adjectival hierarchy).

The combination of augmentative, pejorative, diminutive and endearing suffixes among each other should be distinguished from the repetition of the same suffix that some languages utilize to express intensity (‘very (very) small’): Sardinian *minorededdu*, Argentinian Spanish *cerquititita* (Bauer 1997: § 5.4). If the suffix is a head of a projection this may suggest that the same material is copied onto the degree specifier of the same projection.

15. Judging from Schmidt (2002: 823), also in Rotuman (Austronesian), there is a diminutive particle also located between the numeral and an adjective (see (i)) (though Den Dikken (2003: 6) interprets it as a classifier for “relatively small entities”):

The above data seem therefore to provide evidence that the diminutive and augmentative heads are strictly linked (and contiguous) to the size adjective.¹⁶ This conclusion finds some indirect support from English.

2.3.2 *The functional adjective little in English and its order wrt other adjectives*

In English, the adjective *little*, aside from its use as a size adjective analogous (for some speakers) to *small*, which can receive contrastive stress (*I can't stand little/smáll cars* – Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994: 114), and its use in predicative position as in *a queer man, little in stature* (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994: 114), seems to have a use that closely corresponds to that of the diminutive suffixes in the Romance Languages.¹⁷ In this case, *little* does not receive stress (or is reduced to *li'*), and shows another property that seems to indicate its functional nature; it can only be attributive (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994: 115). In fact, as pointed out to me by Richard Kayne, there is a contrast between 'John made a little mistake' and '*?John made a mistake that was little'.

If the canonical order of the main classes of adjectives, value (*nice*), size (*big*), shape (*round*), colour (*white*), and provenance (*Chinese*), is the order indicated in

-
- (i) rī 'aI fo'ou he rua 'i
house wood new DIM two DEM.1PL
'These two new wooden houses'

Also see the cases of White Hmong (Matisoff 1992) and Coatzospán Mixtec (Small 1990), which have augmentative/diminutive particles between the numeral (+ classifier) and the N, with adjectives following the noun, which suggests partial raising of the NP, to a position between the augmentative/diminutive particles and the adjectives:

- (ii) ib tug niag nom loj (Matisoff 1992:307)
one clf aug chief big
'An important chief'
- (iii) úvī á vi kwetsī sán (Small 1990:353)
two dim house small.PL that
'those two tiny little houses'

16. Cf. Spaulding and Spaulding (1994): "*Wiet*, the opposite of *sek*, encodes large size, intensity or important social status [...]. It collocates frequently with *damini* 'large, many' and with reference to important males" (116).

17. The first suggestion of the similarity between the analytic diminutive in English with *little* and the synthetic diminutive in other European languages seems to have come from Kruisinga (1942). See Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi (1994: 114) and references cited there.

(13),¹⁸ then the data in (14) – (18) showing that *little* must follow the value adjective, but precede those of size, shape, colour and provenance,¹⁹ suggest that the diminutive functional projection is located (with the augmentative, pejorative, and endearing projections) below the projection hosting value adjectives (ValueP) and above the projections that host the adjectives of size (SizeP), shape (ShapeP), colour (ColourP), and provenance (ProvenanceP), as illustrated in (19).²⁰

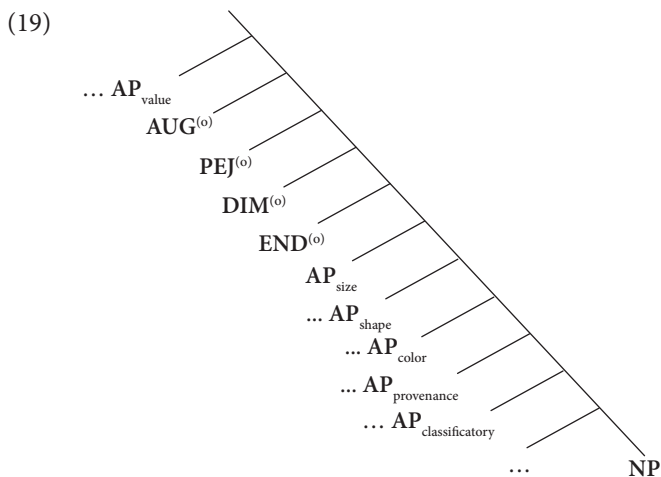
- (13) value > size > shape > colour > provenance > NP
- (14) a. That's quite a nice little discovery you've made there
b. *?That's quite a little nice discovery you've made there
- (15) a. ?That's a big little discovery you've made there²¹
b. That's a little big discovery you've made there
- (16) a. You, my little round baby face
b. *?You, my round little baby face
- (17) a. You, my little white guinea pig
b. *?You, my white little guinea pig
- (18) a. My little Chinese doll
b. *My Chinese little doll

18. See Sproat & Shih (1990), Cinque (1994, 2010) and references mentioned there.

19. I am grateful to Cynthia Pyle and Richard Kayne for helping me with the data in (14)–(18).

20. Certain languages show cases of diminutive agreement. See the case of Maale (Azeb Amha 2001:71) and Teop (Mosel with Thiesen 2007: § 7.6). Possibly cases of diminutive agreement are the sets of diminutive/endering demonstratives of Korean (Bauer 1997:22, referring to Sohn 1994:497) and Ayoreo (Zamucoan – Bertinetto 2009: § 2.5.3). In colloquial Brazilian Portuguese diminutives seem to be able to attach to demonstratives, e.g. *esse-zinho* (this:masc- dim:masc) 'this tiny one', *aquela-zinho* (that:masc- dim:masc) 'that tiny one' (Aikhenvald 2007: § 8), but there is evidence that they actually attach to a silent noun: *esSE-THING/PERSON-zinho*, the reason being that the following cases, where the (overt) noun follows *-zinho*, are completely ungrammatical (Aquiles Tescari Neto, p.c.): **essezinho menino*, **essezinho professor*. For other languages (Basque, Tigre, etc.) with diminutive demonstratives, which might be similarly analysed, see Nieuwenhuis (1985:69 and 217).

21. The non total ungrammaticality of (15)a could be taken to involve not the size adjective *big* (which should be lower than the diminutive and endearing projections), but the augmentative functional adjective *big* (see Footnote 23 below). In (15)b, as well as in *my little big kid*, *my little big adventure*, etc., *big* would instead, be an instance of the size adjective.



In other words, also thinking of the evidence reviewed in the preceding sections, diminutive *little*, often used endearingly²² (in which case we take it to be merged in the endearing projection), occupies a position to the left of (and higher than) the position occupied by size adjectives.²³

Should the particular order (hierarchy) of augmentative, pejorative, diminutive and endearing projections suggested here be confirmed by further inquiry, the question would arise concerning the ultimate cause of such an order. Semantics, by itself, would not seem to provide a ready answer to this question.

22. See, for example, the contrast between *little* and *small* noted in Kayne (2007: § 3), where *little*, but not *small*, can be used to give praise (only possible if it is interpreted endearingly and not referring to size):

- (i) a. That's quite a little discovery you've made there
- b. That's quite a small discovery you've made there

That *little* has genuine diminutive uses in English is also shown by the fact that it may apply, like diminutive morphology, to categories other than nouns. Cf. *a little wet*, *a little soon* (Bauer 1997: 30).

23. Whether *big* may have corresponding augmentative uses is less clear. Bauer (1997) says that "Extensions with *big* in English, as with augmentatives in general, are much rarer, but consider *Mr Big*, *a big wheel*, *the big (white) Chief*, *the big wet*, and so on." (31).

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