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The syntax of idiom chunks is of particular interest in the light of Rizzi's (1990a) and Cinque's (1990) theory of referential indices. The modest aim of this paper is to describe and classify the syntactic behaviour of a sample of Italian idiomatic expressions. Three classes of idiom chunks are identified on the grounds of the possibility of their undergoing various types of syntactic movement.\*

*1. A new perspective on an old problem.*

The theory of Relativized Minimality (Rizzi 1990a, 1991a) has enlightened the syntactic relevance of a semantic property of constituents, namely, their referentiality. This notion is precisely defined: only true arguments are referential, i.e. only the constituents that receive a referential thematic role, such as Agent, Patient, Experiencer etc., and denote a participant in the event or state expressed by the selecting predicate. All other constituents, either selected or not, are non-referential.

On the basis of this notion, Rizzi argues that the major syntactic boundary to be investigated does not lie between arguments and adjuncts, as usually assumed, but rather between referential and non-referential elements. Consider for instance idiomatic complements: they are non-referential, although selected by the idiomatic verb. The following paradigms show that the direct object of an idiomatic expression in the (a) examples behaves like the adverbial adjunct in the (b) examples in disallowing long wh-movement out of a weak island, such as a wh-clause (1) or a factive complement (2). Both the idiomatic

\* I wish to thank for their helpful suggestions and criticisms P. Acquaviva, P. M. Bertinetto, L. Rizzi, and two anonymous reviewers for the *Rivista di Linguistica*. Thanks also to W. Castelnuovo, M. G. Cepparello, A. Lenzi, and C. Marletti for discussing with me some related semantic issues. Of course, I am the only responsible for the remaining errors.

object and the adjunct contrast with the referential argument in the (c) examples.

- (1) a. \* che credito non sai [a chi dare t ] ?  
 'what credit don't you know in whom to put?'  
 b. \* come non sai [a chi rispondere t ] ?  
 'how don't you know to whom to answer?'  
 c. a chi non sai [come rispondere t ] ?  
 'to whom don't you know how to answer?'  
 (2) a. \* che credito ti sei pentito [di avergli dato t ] ?  
 'what credit do you regret having put in him?'  
 b. \* come ti sei pentito [di esserti comportato t ] ?  
 'how do you regret having behaved?'  
 c. a chi ti sei pentito [di aver risposto t ] ?  
 'to whom do you regret having answered?'

The semantic property of referentiality is syntactically expressed by means of referential indices, according to the following principle:

(3) X can carry a referential index only if it bears a referential thematic role on some level of representation. (Rizzi 1991a:4)

Thus, in the (c) examples of paradigms (1) and (2), the availability of a referential index both on the Wh-phrase and on its trace gives rise to a binding relation which can cross a weak island:

(4) [CP WH<sub>i</sub> ..... [CP ..... t<sub>i</sub> ] ]

In the (a) and (b) examples, on the contrary, the moved constituent is non-referential, and it cannot bind its trace; the only alternative relationship, antecedent government, is blocked by the weak island; therefore, long movement is impossible.

The syntactic implications of referentiality have been further explored by Cinque (1990). Cinque argues that principle (3) is only a necessary condition for the licensing of referential indices: besides the thematic status of the element, its intrinsic referential properties are also relevant, as shown by the contrast in (5). In both sentences the wh-phrase receives the same referential thematic role, but only in the second one the Wh-phrase is Discourse-linked, i.e. it refers to a previously specified set of entities. D-linking seems to be a crucial factor in determining the possibility of binding across a wh-island in (5b):

- (5) a. ?? a chij ti chiedi [quanti soldi<sub>i</sub> hai dato t<sub>i</sub> t<sub>j</sub> ] ?  
 'to whom do you wonder how much money you gave?'  
 b. a quate dei tuoi figlij ti chiedi [quanti soldi<sub>i</sub> hai dato t<sub>i</sub> t<sub>j</sub> ] ?

'to which of your sons do you wonder how much money you gave?'

This kind of contrast is not steady, since D-linking is not always overtly expressed. An overt marker is partitivity (cf. the wh-phrase in (5b)): this relates D-linking to other better defined properties, such as specificity (Enç 1990) or presuppositionality (Diesing 1992). Some wh-operators are inherently D-linked, and this property can be easily detected in certain clitic doubling languages, where only a D-linked direct object can be doubled (Dobrovie-Sorin 1990:352-53, Suñer 1988:416-18).<sup>1</sup>

Up to now, it has been shown that referentiality determines the type of syntactic relationship that a given element can establish under A' movement (binding versus antecedent government; long versus cyclic A' movement).

Consider idiomatic complements, as opposed to referential arguments. Rizzi proposes that they are quasi-arguments receiving some kind of non-referential thematic role. In fact, they cannot bind their trace and thus they are sensitive to weak islands (cf. (1a), (2a)). However, there is another important difference between argumental and idiomatic NPs.

It is well known that idiomatic expressions can be arranged along a scale of syntactic frozenness (Fraser 1970): every idiomatic NP only admits a proper subset of the types of syntactic manipulation which are allowed for a referential argument; the different subsets are ordered by inclusion, so as to define a hierarchy. However, some types of manipulation are inaccessible to all idiomatic NPs and are only allowed for referential arguments.

Let me sketch a general strategy to deal with these fairly complex phenomena.

The hierarchy of syntactic frozenness cannot be reduced to purely configurational conditions. The degree of frozenness of every idiomatic NP clearly depends on some other property. One can assume that whatever properties of the idiomatic NPs are involved, they constitute well-formedness conditions for certain types of syntactic manipulation. And since idiomatic NPs differ from true arguments mainly in their

<sup>1</sup> Cinque (1990) only discusses the effects of D-linking with respect to referential arguments. In his theory, D-linking is not sufficient for licensing a referential index on a constituent. However, some non-referential elements, such as locative phrases, can be D-linked; according to Dobrovie-Sorin (1992), a contrast similar to the one in (5) can be detected in long movement of adjuncts. Thus, principle (3) should be rejected, and the concept of referentiality would be no more linked to Thematic Theory. My grammaticality judgements for Italian do not agree with her conclusions: both (i), with a non-D-linked locative phrase, and (ii) with a D-linked one, are equally ungrammatical:

- (i) \* dove non sai chi abbia comprato il libro t ?  
 where don't you know who bought the book?  
 (ii) \* in quale negozio non sai chi abbia comprato il libro t ?  
 in which shop don't you know who bought the book?

thematic and referential status, the concepts developed by Rizzi and Cinque could turn out to be relevant.

Furthermore, in order to characterize a typology of noun phrases, it is also necessary to understand how the various types of syntactic manipulation are grouped together into subsets, and what principles underlie the inclusion hierarchy. Here, again, some recent achievements in the theory of syntactic movement could prove fruitful. After Rizzi's original proposal, recent work has brought to light the syntactic relevance of the quantificational status of the moved element (cf. Pesetsky 1987, Dobrovie-Sorin 1992, Frampton 1991, and Lasnik & Stowell 1991). This will be discussed in § 3 and throughout the rest of the paper.

The modest aim of this paper is to give an empirical contribution to the study of idiomatic expressions: I will examine a sample of Italian expressions composed of a verb, an idiomatic direct object, and possibly other complements and modifiers. For the moment, the hypotheses hinted at in the previous discussion will be used for classificatory purposes only. I will try to classify the syntactic behaviour of the idiomatic objects under various types of movement: the grammaticality of the resulting sentences will be the criteria for the classification. These criteria do not always converge, but by and large, they allow us to identify three major classes of idiom chunks.

Table 1 shows the sample of 28 idiomatic expressions which I will be examining, together with their English translations. Table 2 represents the three classes. The idiom chunks in the first class resist any type of movement; those in the second class allow a subset of the possible types of movement which I will call, after Lasnik & Stowell (1991), non-quantificational movement (see § 3 and 4). The idioms in the third class allow both non-quantificational movement and a restricted type of quantificational movement (§ 5). There are, however, some syntactic structures that exclude all the idiom chunks in the sample and allow only true referential arguments, in Rizzi's (1990a) sense (§ 6).

Table 1. *The sample.*

1. Tagliare la corda (lit. to cut the rope 'to take French leave')
2. Ficare il naso negli affari altrui (to poke (one's) nose into other people's business')
3. Mettersi l'animo in pace ('to set one's mind at rest')
4. Reggere il moccolo a qualcuno (lit. to hold the candle-end 'to play goosberry')
5. Rompere le uova nel paniere a qualcuno (lit. to break the eggs into the basket to s.b. 'to upset s.b.'s applecart')
6. Alzare il gomito (lit. to raise the elbow 'to get drunk')
7. Sbarcare il lunario ('to scrape a living')

8. Tirare le cuoia ('to kick the bucket')
9. Sudare sette camicie (lit. to wet seven shirts with sweat 'to work very hard')
10. Fare patti col diavolo ('to make agreement(s) with the devil')
11. Fare affari d'oro ('to do golden business')
12. Sputare veleno (lit. to spit poison 'to give vent to one's spite')
13. Piantare grane (lit. to plant trouble 'to cause trouble')
14. Sputar sentenze (lit. to spit judgements 'to play the wiseacre')
15. Fare acqua da tutte le parti (lit. to let water in from all sides 'to be a failure, not to work')
16. Fare fagotto (lit. to make bundle 'to bundle off')
17. Fare mente locale su qualcosa ('to think about something')
18. Fare gli onori di casa (lit. to make the home honours 'to welcome the guests')
19. Fare giustizia ('to make justice')
20. Dare il buon esempio a qualcuno (lit. to give a good example to s.b. 'to set a good example for s.b.')
21. Dare una lezione a qualcuno (lit. give a lesson to somebody 'to punish s.b.')
22. Ingoiare un boccone amaro ('to swallow a bitter pill')
23. Dedicare tempo a qualcuno/qualcosa ('to devote time to s.b./s.t.')
24. Prestare attenzione a qualcuno/qualcosa ('to pay attention to s.b./s.t.')
25. Rendere onori a qualcuno ('to pay homage to s.b.')
26. Fare debiti (con qualcuno) (lit. to make debts (with s.b.) 'to get into debt')
27. Fare progressi (lit. to make progresses 'to make headway')
28. Prendere l'iniziativa ('to take the initiative')

Table 2.

Type I	Type II	Type III
1. Tagliare la corda.	18. Fare gli onori di casa.	23. Dedicare tempo
2. Ficare il naso...	19. Fare giustizia.	24. Prestare attenzione...
3. Mettersi l'animo in pace.	20. Dare una lezione ?	25. Rendere onori...
4. Reggere il moccolo.	21. Dare il buon/cattivo esempio?	26. Fare debiti..
5. Rompere le uova nel paniere.	22. Ingoiare un boccone amaro?	27. Fare progressi...
6. Alzare il gomito.		28. Prendere l'iniziativa
7. Sbarcare il lunario.		
8. Tirare le cuoia.		
9. Sudare sette camicie.		
10. Fare patti col diavolo.		
11. Fare affari d'oro.		
12. Sputare veleno.		
13. Piantare grane.		
14. Sputare sentenze.		
15. Fare acqua...		
16. Fare fagotto.		
17. Fare mente locale su...		



This paradigm exemplifies one of the possible degrees of syntactic frozenness: as a referential argument, the direct object can uniformly undergo any type of manipulation; as a part of an idiomatic expression, it can only be left dislocated.

In conclusion, the syntactic frozenness only concerns the idiomatic complements, and not the idiomatic expression as a whole.<sup>2</sup> It follows that the causes of this phenomenon, whatever they are, lie in the syntactic status of the complements.<sup>3</sup>

Notice that from a strictly configurational point of view the idiomatic NP in (9) counts as a direct object and is assigned the structural Accusative case: in causative constructions, for instance, the subject of the idiomatic verb must be realized within a Prepositional Phrase headed by the preposition *a*, as is generally the case in transitive constructions (cf. Guasti 1993:53-56):

- (10) *ho fatto tagliare la corda a Gianni*  
I made Gianni cut the rope

Therefore, the lack of idiomatic interpretation in (9b)-(9e) is not determined by any structural peculiarity of the idiomatic object: other properties must be sought for.

### 3. The role of quantification.

The central distinction in the theory of syntactic movement is that between A and A' movement. Taking into account the recent elaboration of the sentential functional structure, A positions may be defined as (a) theta-assigned positions, and (b) the Specifiers of the Agreement heads (Rizzi 1991b).

Some data, however, require that a further distinction be made on the basis of a completely independent notion. Lasnik & Stowell (1991) showed that various types of A' movement behave differently with respect to the Weak Crossover effect (WCO): when a trace is bound by an interrogative operator or by a relative pronoun in a restrictive clause, it cannot be coindexed with a pronoun to its left; this does not hold of the traces bound by a null operator in the *easy-to-please* construction, or of parasitic gaps, topicalized constituents, or of the trace in non-restrictive relative clauses:

- (11) a. \* *who<sub>j</sub> does his<sub>j</sub> boss dislike t<sub>i</sub>?*  
b. \* *which man<sub>j</sub> did you say his<sub>j</sub> boss dislikes t<sub>i</sub>?*

<sup>2</sup> A similar point is made by Larsson (1988:341)

<sup>3</sup> However, syntactic frozenness does not prevent the idiomatic NPs from interacting with global semantic properties of the sentence, as shown by negative polarity idioms such as *non capire un tubo* (lit. not to understand a pipe 'not to understand anything at all'), studied by Tovena (1992).

- (12) c. \* *every man<sub>j</sub> that his<sub>j</sub> mother rejected t<sub>i</sub> is sad*  
a. *John<sub>j</sub> should be easy for his<sub>j</sub> wife to love t<sub>i</sub>*  
b. *which man<sub>j</sub> did you look at t<sub>i</sub> before his<sub>j</sub> wife had spoken to e<sub>j</sub>?*  
c. *John<sub>j</sub>, I believe his<sub>j</sub> mother loves t<sub>i</sub>*  
d. *John<sub>j</sub>, whom<sub>j</sub> his<sub>j</sub> mother loves t<sub>i</sub>, is very happy*

According to the Authors, the WCO effect separates quantificational and non-quantificational A' movement. In the first one the moved element satisfies the following definition:

- (13) A true Quantifier Phrase is composed of a quantifier Q and a nominal term T defining a range R that Q quantifies over, such that R is a possibly non-singleton set,

and the bound trace is functionally identified as a variable.

In non-quantificational movement, on the contrary, the A' operator simply inherits its reference from a fixed antecedent; thus, the bound trace does not range over a domain of quantification, and it is functionally identified as a "null epithet".

The Authors conclude that whatever principle is responsible for the WCO effect, it only applies to variables.

This distinction makes crucial reference to the intrinsic quantificational properties of the moved element. Disregarding the nature of the landing position, we can assimilate non-quantificational A' movement to A movement, since in both cases the moved element is not necessarily a Quantifier Phrase.

This assimilation is doubtful from a theoretical viewpoint, but it is useful to classify the syntactic behaviour of idiomatic NPs. In fact, there is a subset of the idiomatic NPs in the sample that seem to give rise to different grammaticality judgements when undergoing non-quantificational (A or A') versus quantificational movement. Therefore, I tentatively assume this distinction.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> A reviewer points out that the notion of non-quantificational movement is problematic, as discussed by Postal (1993). In fact, Postal notes that the generalization about the WCO effect proposed by Lasnik & Stowell (1991) is only partially correct. For instance, it is not always the case that topicalization (a case of non-quantificational movement) does not exhibit WCO effects: a WCO violation arises if the topicalized element is quantified, e.g. in (i):

- (i) \* *everybody else<sub>j</sub>, I told his<sub>j</sub> wife that I had called t<sub>i</sub>*

This observation actually confirms the relevance of the quantificational nature of the moved constituent. The difference between quantificational and non-quantificational movement can then be expressed as follows: in quantificational movement (e.g. questions) the head of the chain must be a QP, whereas in non-quantificational movement the head may be either a QP or a non-quantified noun phrase.

The reviewer also criticizes Lasnik & Stowell's definition (13): this definition seems to imply the obligatory realization of a restrictive term; however, some operators that Lasnik & Stowell classify as QPs, e.g. the restrictive relative pronouns, resemble an unrestricted  $\lambda$ -operator rather than a restricted quantifier; the same  $\lambda$ -operator is also involved in cases of non-quantificational movement such as *rough*-movement and nonrestrictive relative clauses.

We must conclude that the  $\lambda$ -operator is not a QP, but in some cases it falls within the restrictive term of a true quantifier. For instance, in a nonrestrictive relative clause such as

#### 4. Non-quantificational movement.

In this section I will examine the behaviour of idiomatic NPs under A movement and A' movement without quantification. These types of movement distinguish two classes of idiom chunks.<sup>5</sup>

##### 4.1. Passivization.

Passivization involves A movement of the direct object to the preverbal subject position (in current terms, the Spec of Agreement-Subject).

It is well known that not every idiom chunk can be passivized (cf. for instance Chomsky 1980: 149-53 and Fraser 1970). This is also verified in my sample. The expressions in (1) through (17) do not allow passivization; all the others do.

- (14) 1. \* la corda è stata tagliata da Gianni
2. \* il naso è stato ficcato in questa faccenda da Gianni
3. \* l'animo si è stato messo in pace da Gianni<sup>6</sup>
4. ?? il moccolo è stato retto da Gianni per tutta la sera
5. \* le uova mi sono state rotte nel paniero
6. \* il gomito viene alzato troppo spesso da Gianni
7. \* il lunario viene sbarcato da Gianni con difficoltà
8. \* le cuoia sono state tirate da Gianni ieri sera
9. \* sette camicie sono state sudate da Gianni
10. \* patù (col diavolo) sono stati fatti (col diavolo) da Gianni
11. \* affari d'oro sono stati fatti da Gianni questa settimana
12. \* veleno viene sputato da Gianni
13. \* grane sono state piantate da Gianni in ufficio
14. \* sentenze vengono sputate continuamente da Gianni

(i) John, whom I know very well, ...  
the predicate  $(\lambda x)(I \text{ know } x \text{ very well})$  expressed by the relative clause seems to be simply applied to the referential term *John*; on the contrary, in a restrictive relative such as  
(ii) all the boys I know ...

the predicate  $(\lambda x)(I \text{ know } x)$  is included in the restrictive term of the quantifier *all*:  
(iii)  $(\forall y) [( \lambda x)(\text{boy } x) \ \& \ (\lambda x)(I \text{ know } x)](y)$

so that the trace of the relative operator is ultimately interpreted as a variable bound by this quantifier. Cf. also fn. 18.

In the following discussion I will use the term 'non-quantificational movement' to refer to those types of movement in which the moved constituent need not be a QP. The reviewer suggests that the relevant property of non-quantificational movement could be the absence of a *wh*-operator, assuming that topicalization is left-adjunction to some clausal projection (as Lasnik & Stowell 1991 propose). Unfortunately, I cannot take up this interesting suggestion here.

<sup>5</sup> A reviewer points out that among the four types of non-quantificational A' dependencies that Lasnik & Stowell (1991) identify, namely topicalization, *tough*-movement, parasitic gaps and nonrestrictive relativization, only topicalization allows us to draw a distinction between two classes of idiom chunks. Actually, the other dependencies are excluded for all the idiom chunks in the sample, and are only allowed for referential arguments. For a discussion of some of these dependencies see § 6.

<sup>6</sup> This sentence is ruled out by the general impossibility of passivizing reflexive structures.

15. \* acqua (da tutte le parti) era fatta dal nostro progetto
16. \* fagotto è stato fatto da Gianni
17. \* mente locale è stata fatta sulla situazione
18. gli onori di casa sono stati fatti da Lucia
19. giustizia è stata fatta
20. ? una analoga lezione gli è stata data da Gianni
21. ? il buon esempio gli è stato dato dai suoi genitori
22. ? un boccone molto amaro è stato ingoiato da Gianni
23. molto tempo è stato dedicato allo studio di questo problema
24. particolare attenzione sarà prestata a questo aspetto del problema
25. ? grandi onori sono stati resi alla memoria dell'eroe
26. ? enormi debiti sono stati fatti negli ultimi anni
27. grandi progressi sono stati fatti in questo campo della medicina
28. l'iniziativa è stata presa dal comitato

It is usually assumed that idiomatic expressions are subject to an adjacency requirement: the various parts of an idiomatic expression must be generated in structurally adjacent positions (Chomsky 1980:149-53; Vergnaud 1974:57-62). For the idiomatic expressions (1-17), the adjacency requirement seems to hold at S-structure too.

According to Chomsky (1992:30), the adjacency requirement holds at LF, where idiomatic rules apply to the expression to produce its interpretation. If we assume that the idiomatic object cannot be reconstructed in the base position after A movement, then the impossibility of passivization would follow from the adjacency requirement holding at LF. But what about (18-28), where passivization is grammatical? We should assume either that these idiomatic expressions are not interpreted by means of idiomatic rules (hence they are not subject to the adjacency requirement) or that, for unknown reasons, their idiomatic object can be reconstructed in the base position.

The LF adjacency requirement is doubtful, however. From the structural point of view, it can be demonstrated that even when the idiomatic NP stays in its base position, it is not adjacent to the verb, because the latter incorporates to the functional heads in the syntax (cf. § 2). This is the reason why various types of adverbs and floating quantifiers may intervene between the verb and the object; and this, in turn, shows that the requirement cannot be easily stated in terms of linear adjacency either.

##### 4.2. Passivization without overt A movement.

A radically different view comes to mind when one considers the data in (15): these are passive sentences where the deep object has not moved to the preverbal subject position.

- (15)
1. \* è stata tagliata la corda da Gianni
  2. \* è stato ficcato il naso nei miei affari
  3. \* si è stato messo l'animo in pace da Gianni<sup>7</sup>
  4. \* è stato retto il moccolo da Gianni per tutta la sera
  5. \* mi sono state rotte le uova nel paniere
  6. \* è stato alzato il gomito da Gianni ieri sera
  7. \* è stato sbarcato il lunario da Gianni
  8. \* sono state tirate le cuoia da Gianni ieri sera
  9. \* sono state sudate sette camicie da Gianni
  10. \* sono stati fatti patti col diavolo da Gianni
  11. \* sono stati fatti affari d'oro quest'anno
  12. \* è stato sputato veleno da Gianni
  13. \* sono state piantate grane da Gianni
  14. \* vengono sputate sentenze da Gianni
  15. \* è fatta acqua da tutte le parti da questo progetto
  16. \* è stato fatto fagotto da Gianni
  17. \* è stata fatta mente locale sulla situazione

18. ? sono stati già fatti gli onori di casa
19. è stata fatta giustizia
20. gli è stata data una bella lezione
21. ? mi è stato dato il buon esempio
22. ?\* è stato ingoiato un boccone amaro da Gianni
23. ? a questo problema è stato dedicato fin troppo tempo
24. ? a questo problema è stata prestata particolare attenzione
25. sono stati resi grandi onori alla memoria dell'eroe
26. sono stati fatti debiti enormi per salvare questa azienda
27. sono stati fatti progressi notevoli in questo campo
28. finalmente è stata presa l'iniziativa di organizzare una riunione

The grammaticality judgements parallel those of paradigm (14).<sup>8</sup> At first, one could think that the constraint on passivization in idiomatic expressions is not related to the A movement of the object.

But if we assume the principle of Expletive Replacement (Chomsky 1986:179; 1991:440-47), the Logical Form of the sentences in (15) resembles the S-structures of (14). The reasoning runs as follows: by the Full Interpretation Principle, expletive elements lacking any semantic content are superfluous symbols, and they are not legitimate objects at the level of LF; therefore, they must be eliminated. To this effect, the postverbal argument which forms a CHAIN with the expletive moves to the preverbal subject position and "replaces" it (see Chomsky 1991 for a detailed discussion). This is also an instance of A movement. Then, assuming the Full Interpretation Principle, we could try to reduce all the data in (14) and (15) to a well-formedness condition on A movement.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. fn. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Apart from the expression (22). I have no explanation for this asymmetry.

### 4.3. Topicalization.

According to Lasnik & Stowell (1991:697) topicalization is non-quantificational, since the topicalized constituent does not satisfy the definition (13). As a matter of fact, topicalization in English does not show WCO effects. In Italian too the Crossover effect is weaker for a topicalized constituent than for an interrogative one:

- (16) a. ? QUESTA MACCHINA<sub>i</sub> credo che il suo proprietario voglia vendere  
*t<sub>i</sub>*.  
 This car I believe its owner wants to sell  
 b. ?? Che macchina<sub>i</sub> credi che il suo proprietario voglia vendere *t<sub>i</sub>* ?  
 Which car do you believe that its owner wants to sell?

I will not commit myself to any specific analysis of topicalization. For my purposes, it suffices to note that it gives rise to grammaticality judgements roughly parallel to those of the passive sentences in (14) and (15):

- (17)
1. \* LA CORDA ha tagliato da un pezzo
  2. \* IL NASO ficca negli affari altrui
  3. \* L'ANIMO (IN PACE) devi metterli (in pace)
  4. ?? IL MOCCOLO gli reggeva
  5. \* LE UOVA (NEL PANIERE) mi hai rotto (nel paniere)
  6. ?\* IL GOMITO alza troppo spesso
  7. \* IL LUNARIO cerca di sbarcare
  8. \* LE CUCOIA sia tirando
  9. ? SETTE CAMICIE ho sudato
  10. ?? PATTI COL DIAVOLO farebbe
  11. ?? AFFARI D'ORO sia facendo
  12. \* VELENO sputa su chiunque
  13. \* GRANE sia piantando
  14. \* SENTENZE sputa continuamente
  15. ?? ACQUA DA TUTTE LE PARTI faceva
  16. \* FAGOTTO ha fatto
  17. \* MENTE LOCALE (SULLA SITUAZIONE) devi fare (sulla situazione)
18. ? GLI ONORI DI CASA voleva fare
  19. ? GIUSTIZIA dice di voler fare
  20. UNA BELLA LEZIONE dovresti dare a quel mascalzone
  21. ? IL BUON ESEMPIO dovresti dare ai tuoi figli
  22. ? UN BOCCONE AMARO ho dovuto ingoiare
  23. FIN TROPPO TEMPO gli ho dedicato
  24. ? MOLTISSIMA ATTENZIONE hanno prestato alle mie proposte
  25. GRANDISSIMI ONORI si dovrebbero rendere a questo eroe

26. ? MOLTISSIMI DEBITI ha fatto nell'ultimo anno  
 27. DEI PROGRESSI INCREDIBILI sta facendo  
 28. ? UNA BELLA INIZIATIVA avete preso

Topicalization is generally marginal, perhaps because idiomatic NPs are not very salient in the discourse. But in my opinion, a border-line should be drawn between (17) and (18).

Benincà (1988: 152) judges fully grammatical the topicalization in (9), (10) and (15). However, she observes that in these expressions all the idiomatic constituents must be topicalized together.<sup>9</sup> This suggests that at least some cases should be analysed as VP topicalization (L. Rizzi, p.c.). Recall that in Italian the verb always moves out of the VP, incorporating into the sentential functional heads (§ 2); the residue of the VP, containing the complements and modifiers, can be then topicalized. The result is that the internal components of the VP move together like a single constituent.

Under this analysis, these data do not tell us anything about the possibility of moving the idiomatic object *per se*. But notice that this analysis is not appropriate for the expressions in (18)-(28), where the VP complements and modifiers are not forced to move with the idiomatic object.

#### 4.4. Reordering the complements.

Another relevant phenomenon is the possibility of reordering the verb's complements, studied in detail by Belletti & Shlonsky (1992). Reordering is possible when the complements are referential arguments, as in (18):

- (18) a. ho messo quel libro sul tavolo  
 I put that book on the table  
 b. ho messo sul tavolo quel libro  
 I put on the table that book

On the contrary, if both the complements receive an idiomatic interpretation, the order is fixed, with the direct object preceding the PP. Any permutation results in ungrammaticality, as in (19), or in a referential interpretation, as in (20). Consequently, the Authors propose that this is the basic order. The second order must be derived by movement.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the following data she reports:

- (i) PANE PER I SUOI DENTI ha trovato.  
 (ii) \* PANE ha trovato per i suoi denti.  
 (iii) \* PANTI farebbe col diavolo. (cf. /0)  
 (iv) \* ACQUA faceva da tutte le parti. (cf. /5)

- (19) a. ho fatto un buco nell'acqua  
 I made a hole in the water  
 'I failed'  
 b. \* ho fatto nell'acqua un buco  
 I made in the water a hole  
 ho messo le carte in tavola  
 I put the cards on the table  
 'I made a show-down'  
 b. ho messo in tavola le carte<sup>10</sup>  
 I put on the table the cards

According to the Authors, two distinct processes can reorder the verbal complements in Italian: the object can be postposed into the right-hand Specifier of a Focus Phrase immediately dominating the VP, or the PP can be scrambled, i.e. left adjoined to a maximal projection, leaving the direct object in its canonical position.<sup>11</sup> Both types of reordering involve non-quantificational movement, since the reordered complements do not satisfy the definition (13).

Turning now to my sample, I found the following situation. When both the complements are idiomatic, reordering is impossible, as already observed in (19)-(20). If the PP is a referential argument or the object can be passivized, reordering is possible (except for (17)).

- (21) 2. \* ficcava nei miei affari il naso  
 3. \* si è messo in pace l'animo  
 4. \* reggevo a quei due il moccolo  
 5. \* mi ha rotto nel paniere le uova  
 10. \* ho fatto col diavolo patti  
 12. ? sputava su chiunque veleno  
 15. \* faceva da tutte le parti acqua  
 17. \* ho fatto sulla situazione mente locale  
 20. ? hanno dato a quel ragazzo una bella lezione  
 21. ho dato a mio figlio il buon esempio  
 23. ho dedicato a Gianni molto tempo  
 24. ho prestato a Gianni la massima attenzione  
 25. hanno reso a quel soldato grandissimi onori  
 26. ? ho fatto con la mia banca dei debiti spaventosi  
 27. hanno fatto in questo campo dei progressi sorprendenti

<sup>10</sup> A similar result is obtained with other expressions composed of an idiomatic NP and an idiomatic PP, such as *mettere [il carro] davanti ai buoi* 'to put the cart before the horses', *fare [i conti] senza l'oste* 'to reckon without one's host', *mettere [i bastoni] fra le ruote* 'to put a spoke in somebody's wheel', *cogliere [la palla] al balzo* 'to catch the ball on the bounce', *tirare [l'acqua] dal proprio mulino* 'to bring grist to one's mill'. But notice that in *fare [di ogni erba] [un fascio]* (lit. 'to make of every herb a bundle 'to lump everything together') the reverse order is fixed.  
<sup>11</sup> There is also a third possibility, namely, Heavy NP Shift, but for our purposes we need not distinguish it from the movement to Spec, FocusPhrase.



Assuming Belletti & Shlonsky's analysis, we must conclude that in (19-20) and in the ungrammatical sentences in (21) both the idiomatic object and the idiomatic PP disallow movement, so that there is no way to reorder them. And symmetrically, the grammatical sentences in (21) admit in principle two derivations.

The following argument could help us to solve this ambiguity of derivation. Belletti (1990:60-64) argues that manner adverbials are generated in a position left adjoined to the VP. When the complements are reordered, two situations could arise: if the object is postposed, the reordered complements should linearly follow the adverb. If the PP is scrambled, however, it must left-adjoin to a maximal projection dominating its base position (either the VP or some higher functional projection) for the c-command condition to be met: hence, the PP should linearly precede the adverb.

Notice that when the complements are referential, both the orders <adverb, PP, NP> and <PP, adverb, NP> are possible, as expected, although in the latter case the adverb receives a parenthetic intonation.<sup>12</sup>

- (22) a. Maria ha rivelato finalmente a Gianni tutta la verità  
 Maria revealed finally to Gianni the whole truth  
 b. Maria ha rivelato a Gianni, finalmente, tutta la verità  
 Maria revealed to Gianni finally the whole truth

As for the idiomatic expressions (20-27), the data are not entirely clear, but the preferred order seems to be <PP, adverb, NP>:

- (23) 20. ?? hanno dato finalmente [pp a quel ragazzo] [NP una bella lezione]  
 hanno dato [pp a quel ragazzo], finalmente, [NP una bella lezione]  
 21. ?? abbiamo dato fin dall'inizio [pp a nostro figlio] [NP il buon esempio]  
 abbiamo dato [pp a nostro figlio], fin dall'inizio, [NP il buon esempio]  
 23. ?? abbiamo dedicato ultimamente [pp a questo progetto] [NP troppo poco tempo]  
 abbiamo dedicato [pp a questo progetto], ultimamente, [NP troppo poco tempo]  
 24. ?? hanno prestato finalmente [pp anche a Gianni] [NP un po' d'attenzione]  
 ? hanno prestato [pp anche a Gianni], finalmente, [NP un po' d'attenzione]  
 25. ?? hanno reso apparentemente [pp a Gianni] [NP grandissimi onori]

<sup>12</sup> A possible objection is that parenthetic elements are not really inserted in the sentential structure, but only linearly inserted in the string. We would then expect insertion of parenthetic elements to be more or less unrestricted; but this is not the case. In (22a), for instance, the parenthetic intonation on the adverb is excluded.

- hanno reso [pp a Gianni], apparentemente, [NP grandissimi onori]  
 26. ?? ha fatto recentemente [pp con la sua banca] [NP moltissimi debiti]  
 ? ha fatto [pp con la sua banca], recentemente, [NP moltissimi debiti]  
 27. ?? abbiamo fatto ultimamente [pp in questo campo] [NP molti progressi]  
 abbiamo fatto [pp in questo campo], ultimamente, [NP molti progressi]

The contrast suggests that reordering is obtained by scrambling the referential PP, even in those expressions where the idiomatic object allows non-quantificational movement (23-27).<sup>13</sup> In conclusion, the following generalization emerges: when both the complements are idiomatic, they cannot move, and reordering is impossible. When the PP is referential, it can be scrambled, leaving the idiomatic object in the base position. If the contrast in (23) is real, it does not allow us to distinguish two classes of idiomatic NPs in the way other types of non-quantificational movement do; however, the data are at least consistent with the observation that the idiom chunks between (1) and (17) cannot move.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4.5. Two classes of idiomatic NPs.

Summarizing the data, we found in the sample a subset of idiomatic NPs which refuse non-quantificational movement (both A and A'). These are the NPs in (1)-(17). Notice that they share some common properties:

<sup>13</sup> Possibly, this is related to the fact that a postposed object obligatorily conveys new information (Belletti & Shlonsky 1992); perhaps an idiomatic NP cannot play this role. For the moment, the question remains open.

<sup>14</sup> One could wonder what happens in the expressions where the direct object is referential and the PP is idiomatic. Reordering is possible, but in this case, we would expect NP postposition to apply. This gives the prediction that the order <adverb, PP, NP> should be preferred. However, the prediction is not clearly fulfilled. Consider the following expressions: *mandare [qualcuno] a quel paese* 'to tell somebody to go to hell', *mettere [qualcuno] alla berlina* 'to expose somebody to public scorn', *mettere [qualcuno] con le spalle al muro* 'to put somebody with his back against the wall', *conciare [qualcuno] per le feste* 'to give somebody a good thrashing', *mettere [qualcuno] in guardia/in riga* 'to put somebody on his guard/to make somebody toe the line': both the orders are possible:

- (i) ho mandato finalmente [pp a quel paese] [NP il mio capoufficio]  
 ? ho mandato [pp a quel paese], finalmente, [NP il mio capoufficio]  
 (ii) hanno messo finalmente [pp con le spalle al muro] [NP i politici corrotti]  
 hanno messo [pp con le spalle al muro], finalmente, [NP i politici corrotti].  
 (iii) ? hanno messo sicuramente [pp in guardia] [NP il loro capo]  
 ? hanno messo [pp in guardia] sicuramente [NP il loro capo]

We could argue that the idiomatic PP is never moved, and the order <PP, adverb, NP> is derived by Heavy NP Shift of the object across the right-adjoined adverb. Be this as it may, the possibility of the order <adverb, PP, NP> still contrasts with the data in (23), thus confirming the relevance of the referential status of the direct object.

(a) the determiner is invariable;  
 (b) there may be some fixed modifiers, but free modification is impossible;

(c) the interpretation is completely metaphorical, in that the original meaning of the lexical items is irrelevant, and the meaning of the whole expression cannot be predicted on the basis of any general rule. (Some lexical items even lack any non-idiomatic interpretation, as in (7) and (17)). In this sense, the semantic relationship linking the idiomatic NP to the verb is "non-compositional".<sup>15</sup>

A possible syntactic correlate of such non-compositionality is the lack of theta-assignment. Let us suppose that these idiomatic NPs are not assigned a thematic role by the verb. This poses the problem of their legitimacy with respect to the Full Interpretation Principle applying at the level of LF. By this principle, no superfluous symbols can occur at LF: every syntactic category must have a language-independent interpretation which contributes to determine the meaning of the sentence. But a non-thematic NP has no autonomous function, no interpretation independent of that of the idiomatic expression as a whole. Therefore, we can assume that it is "deleted" as an autonomous syntactic category. This could be accomplished in two different ways. The idiomatic element could be simply deleted after the application of an interpretive idiomatic rule, leaving an empty category lacking any feature specification (cf. Chomsky 1991:428-429 on the deletion of the traces of the Agreement heads). Otherwise, the idiomatic NP and the verb (trace) could be reanalysed as a "complex verb". This operation would be akin to Larson's (1988:347-380) V' Reanalysis, which turns a V' category into a V° one. However, for this operation to be possible at LF, the verb's trace should be analysed as a "copy" of the verb, extending a proposal of Chomsky (1992).

In either case, the idiomatic object does not exist as an autonomous syntactic category at LF. This has an immediate consequence in the domain of movement: if the direct object position is deleted at LF, what happens to a chain terminating in this position? Recall that idiomatic NPs lack a referential index: the chain is based on a syntactic relationship of antecedent government holding between pairs of positions, each of which constitutes a chain link. When a position in a pair is deleted, at least one link of the chain is lost. In this way, the head of the chain is disconnected from its base position. We can assume that an element not connected with the base position is uninterpretable. It follows that the remaining links will constitute an illicit object at LF.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> A reviewer accepts a non fixed, determiner in the expressions (11) (e.g. *fare molti affari d'oro*) and (13) (e.g. *piantare una/molle grane*), but he still finds passivization impossible. This would show that, at least in his idiolect, property (a) is not shared by all type I idiom chunks, and that the latter may have some degree of semantic compositionality.

<sup>16</sup> A reviewer suggests an opposite approach to the problem: in the structure (i) NP V° t

This line of reasoning, if correct, could explain the irremovability of the idiomatic NPs in (1-17) in a principled way. Only when they remain in the base position, they can be eliminated at LF without any further consequences for the syntactic structure.

In the ungrammatical sentences in (15), the expletive and the idiomatic NP form a CHAIN at S-structure. Since the latter element is deleted, it cannot replace the expletive in the Spec of Agreement-Subject; thus, the expletive ultimately violates the Full Interpretation Principle.

Notice that this hypothesis poses an absolute constraint against movement: it predicts that this class of idiom chunks will resist quantificational movement too. This prediction will be checked in the next section.<sup>17</sup>

Having stipulated the non-thematic status of the NPs in (1-17), we are led to the opposite stipulation for the idiom chunks which freely undergo non-quantificational movement. Intuitively, they differ from the previous ones in that their interpretation is partially predictable and depends on the lexical meaning of the items involved.

There is a possible argument in favour of their thematic status (cf. Rizzi 1990b:11). Consider the following data from French. Some idiomatic expressions exhibit the same behaviour as the Italian expressions in paradigms (14-15): A movement in passivization is possible if and only if the corresponding "impersonal" passive is grammatical.

- (24) a. il a été tiré par de cette affaire  
       b. il a été rendu justice dans cette ville  
       c. il a été porté secours aux victimes de cet accident
- (25) a. parti peut être tiré de cette affaire  
       b. justice a été rendue dans cette ville  
       c. ? secours a été porté aux victimes de cet accident
- (26) a. \* il a été avalé des couleuvres par Jean  
       b. \* il a été fait des affaires par Jean  
       c. \* il a été cherché des noises à Jean
- (27) a. \* des couleuvres ont été avalées par Jean  
       b. \* des affaires ont été faites par Jean  
       c. \* des noises ont été cherchées à Jean

where NP is connected to a non-referential idiomatic position, NP is deleted in LF. In the resulting structure (i) V° ec

the empty category cannot be a trace or a variable, because there is no antecedent/operator to bind it; it cannot be PRO since it is governed, and it cannot be *pro* either, since it cannot be identified in Rizzi's (1986) sense. Therefore the empty category is uninterpretable, and the structure is ruled out.

<sup>17</sup> Notice also that the base position of these NPs does not fall under the definition of A position (§ 2), being non-thematic. If it is analysed as an A' position, then the ungrammatical sentences in (14) are redundantly ruled out as cases of improper movement.

Contrary to Italian, French does not allow free subject inversion. The subject can only be inverted in unaccusative contexts, and furthermore, only if it is indefinite, as shown in (28).

- (28) a. *il est arrivé trois filles*  
*it came three girls*  
 b. \* *il est arrivé les filles*  
*it came the girls*

Belletti (1988) gives a Case-theoretic account of this Definiteness Effect. The postverbal subject lacks Nominative case, either because this case must be assigned to the lexical expletive pronoun, or because it cannot be assigned under government, as Roberts (1991) proposes. Consequently, the inverted subject can only receive the inherent Partitive case from the governing verb. In (28a) the subject occupies its base position and it is marked with Partitive case. But this case is incompatible with definite and universally quantified NPs: hence, (28b) is ruled out as a violation of the Case Filter.

We can conclude that in paradigm (24) the indefinite idiomatic NPs receive Partitive case (Accusative case is absorbed by the passive morphology). But by the uniformity condition on inherent case assignment (Chomsky 1986:194), inherent cases may only be assigned in correspondence with theta-marking. This implies that the idiomatic NPs in (24) are assigned a thematic role by the verb.

With these tentative hypotheses, the different behaviour of the two classes of idiom chunks would be reduced to their different thematic status.

Table III

- |                                 |                                      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Tagliare la corda.           | 18. Fare gli onori di casa.          |
| 2. Ficare il naso...            | 19. Fare giustizia.                  |
| 3. Mettersi l'animo in pace.    |                                      |
| 4. Reggere il moccolo.          | 20. Dare una lezione (?)             |
| 5. Rompere le uova nel paniere. | 21. Dare il buon/cattivo esempio (?) |
| 6. Alzare il gomito.            | 22. Ingoiare un boccone amaro (?)    |
| 7. Sbarcare il lunario.         | 23. Dedicare tempo                   |
| 8. Tirare le cuoia.             | 24. Prestare attenzione              |
| 9. Sudare sette camicie         | 25. Rendere onori...                 |
| 10. Fare patti col diavolo.     | 26. Fare debiti...                   |
| 11. Fare affari d'oro.          | 27. Fare progressi...                |
| 12. Sputare veleno.             | 28. Prender l'iniziativa             |
| 13. Piantare grane.             |                                      |
| 14. Sputare sentenze.           |                                      |
| 15. Fare acqua...               |                                      |

16. Fare fagotto.  
 17. Fare monte locale su...

### 5. Quantificational movement.

In this section I will turn to the behaviour of the idiomatic NPs under quantificational movement, where the moved element satisfies Lasnik & Stowell's definition (13). Notice that quantificational movement is always A', but not vice versa. In other terms, true quantified phrases must occur in an A' position at LF at last. This derives from a constraint by which only variables and constants may occur in an A position at LF (May 1985:26-7).

Chomsky (1981:327-8) observed that idiomatic NPs behave differently with respect to different types of interrogation:

- (29) a. \* what did you take *t* of the orphans?  
 b. how much care did you take *t* of the orphans?

I will consider in turn various types of quantificational movement, showing that they distinguish a third type of idiom chunk, and in the last section I will discuss a possible explanation for the properties of type III idioms based on the principles of the Thematic Theory.

#### 5.1. Restrictive relativization.

Restrictive relative clauses are usually analysed as 'open sentences' whose denotation is intersected with that of the modified common noun. Hence, the relative pronoun acts as a sort of  $\lambda$ -operator, and it satisfies the definition (13).<sup>18</sup>

The possibility of relativizing the direct object distinguishes, again, two classes of idiomatic expressions.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> This definition resembles the standard definition of a generalized quantifier, which denotes the family of the sets that bear a specified relation to the set denoted by the restrictive term of the quantifier. It is not clear whether the definition in (13) implies a distinction between restrictive clause and 'body' of quantification: if it does, then the relative operator does not satisfy it, since it lacks a restrictive term (cf. the discussion in Lasnik & Stowell 1991:706-7).

The Authors observe that the crossover effect is stronger when the NP modified by the relative clause contains a quantificational determiner:

- (i) ? The man<sub>i</sub> who his<sub>i</sub> mother loves *t<sub>j</sub>* is happy  
 (ii) \* Every man<sub>i</sub> who his<sub>i</sub> mother loves *t<sub>j</sub>* is happy.

In this case, the relative clause is part of the restrictive term of a quantified phrase satisfying (13).<sup>19</sup> Some idiomatic objects can be relativized or questioned if they receive an 'exclamative' interpretation.

- (i) *se tu avessi visto i salti di gioia che faceva!*  
 (ii) *sappesi le grane che sta piantando!* (=13)  
 (iii) *se tu sapessi i bocconi amari che ho dovuto ingoiare!* (=22)  
 (iv) *se tu avessi visto quanti salti di gioia faceva!*

- (30) 1. \* la corda che ha tagliato ...  
 2. \* il naso che ficca nei miei affari...  
 3. \* l'animo che si è messo in pace...  
 4. \* il moccio che reggeva ai due innamorati...  
 5. \* le uova che mi ha rotto nel paniere...  
 6. \* il gomito che alza troppo spesso...  
 7. \* il lunario che sbarca...  
 8. \* le cuoia che ha tirato ieri...  
 9. \* le sette camicie che ha sudato...  
 10. ?? I patti (col diavolo) che ha fatto (col diavolo)...  
 11. ?? gli affari d'oro che ha fatto lo hanno reso ricco  
 12. \* il veleno che spunta...  
 13. ?? le grane che sta pianando...  
 14. \* le sentenze che sputa...  
 15. \* l'acqua che questo progetto fa da tutte le parti...  
 16. \* il fagotto che ha fatto...  
 17. \* la mente locale che ha fatto...  
 18. ?? gli onori di casa che ha fatto erano splendidi.  
 19. \* la giustizia che ha fatto...  
 20. la lezione che gli hanno dato, non se la scorderà presto.  
 21. ?? il buon esempio che gli ho dato gli servirà per tutta la vita.  
 22. ? il boccone amaro che ho dovuto ingoiare mi ha rovinato la giornata.  
 23. il tempo che posso dedicarti oggi è ben poco  
 24. ? l'attenzione che hanno prestato ai miei consigli era ben poca  
 25. gli onori che gli hanno reso erano eccessivi  
 26. i debiti che ha fatto ultimamente sono ingenti  
 27. i progressi che sta facendo mi sorprendono  
 28. l'iniziativa che hai preso è discutibile<sup>20</sup>

(v) vedessi quante grane sta piantando!

(vi) se tu sapessi quanti bocconi amari ho dovuto ingoiare!

<sup>20</sup> In most grammatical cases the head is an abstract mass or plural noun; hence, the relative clause could be analysed as an 'amount relative' (Carlson 1977). I assume that this is also a case of quantificational movement, although the variable bound by the relative operator varies over a range of quantities rather than of individuals.

## 5.2. Left dislocation in negative sentences.

A pattern similar to (30) can be found in a type of left dislocation structure studied by Cinque (1990:79-86).

In Italian, left dislocation of a direct object requires the realization of a clitic resumptive pronoun (cf. (31)). However, if the direct object is introduced by a weak determiner and the object position falls within the scope of sentential negation, the resumptive pronoun may be omitted: the direct object is then obligatorily interpreted in the scope of negation and the monotonicity of its determiner is reversed (cf. Barwise & Cooper 1981:186), as shown in (32).

(31) quel libro, l'ha letto Gianni  
 that book, *clitic* read Gianni  
 'that book, Gianni read it'

(32) molti amici, non ha invitato  
 many friends, he didn't invite  
 'he invited few friends'

Cinque proposes that in these structures a null operator moves to the Spec, CP adjacent to the left dislocated phrase, binding a variable in the corresponding direct object position; this is why the resumptive pronoun is omitted. The null operator is licensed by the quantificational force that the dislocated phrase acquires by being coindexed with the negation:

(33) ICP NP<sub>i</sub> ICP OP<sub>i</sub> ..... neg<sub>i</sub>..... e<sub>i</sub>l

It is difficult to analyse this complex derivation as an instance of quantificational movement satisfying the definition (13), although open.<sup>21</sup> From an empirical viewpoint, the grammaticality judgements parallel those of restrictive relativization:

<sup>21</sup> This "amalgamation" of the determiner with the sentential negation can only occur if the negation e-commands the relevant NP at S-structure. Adopting an idea recently explored by Zanuttini (1991), one could suppose that the NP (or the null operator in (32)) must move by LF to the Spec of the Neg projection, where it is coindexed with the negative head by Spec/Head agreement. Notice that amalgamation is sensitive to islands intervening between the Neg projection and the base position of the NP, as shown in (i) (wh-island) and (ii) (factive island). This makes a movement analysis particularly appealing.

(i) non voglio sapere [chi, abbia letto molti libri]  
 I don't want to know who read many books  
 \* I want to know who read few books.

(ii) non mi pento [di aver letto molti libri]  
 I don't regret having read many books  
 \* I regret having read few books.

However, P. Acquaviva (p.c.) pointed out that a preverbal subject can be amalgamated with a higher negation, as in (iii).

(iii) non credo che [molte persone abbiano letto Finnegans Wake]  
 I believe that few persons read Finnegans Wake.

- (34)
1. \* la corda, non ha tagliato di certo
  2. \* il naso, non ha ficcato nei miei affari
  3. \* l'animo, non mi metterò mai in pace, dopo questa storia
  4. \* il moccolo, non gli ho retto
  5. \* le uova (nel paniere), non voglio rompergli (nel paniere)
  6. \* il gomito, non ha alzato
  7. \* il lunario, non riesce mai a sbarcare
  8. \* le cuoia, non ha ancora tirato
  9. \* sette camicie, non ha sudato di sicuro
  10. \* patti (col diavolo), Gianni non ha fatto (col diavolo)
  11. \* affari d'oro, non possiamo fare in questo periodo
  12. \* veleno, non ha sputato
  13. ?\* grane, non pianta mai
  14. \* sentenze, non sputa mai
  15. \* acqua (da tutte le parti), non fa di certo (da tutte le parti)
  16. \* fagotto, non ha fatto
  17. \* mente locale, non ho ancora fatto (sulla situazione)
  18. \* gli onori di casa, non ho mai fatto
  19. \* giustizia, non hanno ancora fatto
  20. ?? una bella lezione, non gli hanno ancora dato
  21. ?? cattivi esempi, non gli hanno mai dato, nella sua famiglia
  22. ?? molti bocconi amari, non ha dovuto ingoiare
  23. molto tempo, non mi hanno dedicato
  24. ? molta attenzione, non mi hanno prestato di certo
  25. grandi onori, non gli hanno reso
  26. ? grossi debiti non ha più fatto, che io sappia
  27. ? molti progressi non ha ancora fatto, purtroppo
  28. grosse iniziative, non ha mai preso senza consultarmi

### 5.3. Amount interrogation.

The interrogative operator *quanto/quant* (how much/many) has a peculiar property: it is only compatible with a mass or plural head noun, i.e. a noun with a cumulative reference in the sense of Link (1983), and it does not seem to quantify directly over individuals. In fact, the answers to this kind of interrogation are typically numeral or "proportional" determiners which do not refer to (sets of) individuals, but to a "higher-order" property of sets or quantities of matter, namely, their size with respect to a given measure unit. Anyway, the amount interrogative operator satisfies the definition (13); the range of the variable includes the denotations of the possible answers, however we characterize them. This type of quantificational movement also

A movement analysis incorrectly predicts an ECP violation in this case.

distinguishes two classes of idiomatic expressions, as shown in paradigm (35).

- (35)
1. \* quanta corda ha tagliato?
  2. \* quanti nasi hanno ficcato nei tuoi affari?
  3. \* quanti animi si sono messi in pace?
  4. \* quanti moccoli hai retto a quei due?
  5. \* quante uova (nel paniere) ti ha rotto (nel paniere)?
  6. \* quanti gomiti ha alzato?
  7. \* quanti lunari ha sbarcato?
  8. \* quante cuoia ha tirato?
  9. ?\* quante camicie ha sudato?
  10. \* quanti patti (col diavolo) ha fatto (col diavolo) ?
  11. \* quanti affari d'oro ha fatto?
  12. \* quanto veleno ha sputato?
  13. ?\* quante grane ha piantato?
  14. \* quante sentenze sputa?
  15. \* quanta acqua fa questo progetto?
  16. \* quanti fagotti ha fatto?
  17. \* quante menti locali hai fatto sulla situazione?
  18. \* quanti onori di casa hai fatto?
  19. \* quanta giustizia hanno fatto?
  20. ?? quante lezioni ti hanno dato negli ultimi tempi?
  21. ?\* quanti buoni esempi gli ha dato la sua famiglia?
  22. ? quanti bocconi amari ha dovuto ingoiare?
  23. quanto tempo ti hanno dedicato?
  24. quanta attenzione ti hanno prestato?
  25. ?? quanti onori gli hanno reso?
  26. quanti debiti ha fatto, ultimamente?
  27. quanti progressi credi che potrà fare?
  28. quante iniziative ha preso senza consultarti?

### 5.4. What-interrogation.

A similar pattern emerges with the interrogative operator *che 'what'* and in pseudo-clefts.<sup>22</sup> Notice that the pseudo-cleft is incompatible with mass nouns: this fact by itself excludes the idiomatic expressions in (12),(15),(23-24) in paradigm (37). The interrogative operator *what*,

<sup>22</sup> The operator *what* clearly satisfies the definition (13). As for the pseudo-cleft, its quantificational status can be compared to that of restrictive relativization; it gives rise to the WCO effect as well:

(1) \* la macchina che credo che il suo proprietario voglia vendere  $\epsilon_1$  è questa.  
the car that I believe that its owner wants to sell is this one.

when combined with a mass noun, gives rise to a 'kind-of interpretation, as in *che vino preferisci?* 'what kind of wine do you prefer?'. However, this interpretation does not arise with mass idiom chunks; in particular, in the expressions (23) and (24) the ungrammaticality of *what*-interrogation contrasts with the grammaticality of restrictive relativization, left dislocation in negative sentences and amount interrogation (see the paradigms (30), (34) and (35)): this could derive from the fact that their mass Noun heads *tempo* 'time' and *attenzione* 'attention' do not easily allow a kind-of interpretation. As for the expressions in (12) and (15), we can presume that *what*-interrogation is excluded by the same principle that excludes any other type of movement.

- (36)
1. \* che corda ha tagliato?
  2. \* che naso ha ficcato nei tuoi affari?
  3. \* che animo si è messo in pace?
  4. \* che moccolo hai retto ai due fidanzati?
  5. \* che uova (nel paniere) ti ha rotto (nel paniere)?
  6. \* che gomito ha alzato ieri sera?
  7. \* che lunario ha sbarcato?
  8. \* che cuoia ha tirato?
  9. \* che camicie ha sudato?
  10. ?\* che patiti (col diavolo) ha fatto (col diavolo)?
  11. \* che affari d'oro ha fatto?
  12. \* che veleno sputa?
  13. ?\* che grane ha piantato?
  14. \* che sentenze ha sputato?
  15. \* che acqua fa da tutte le parti?
  16. \* che fagotto ha fatto?
  17. \* che mente locale hai fatto sulla situazione?
  19. ?\* che onori di casa ha fatto?
  20. \* che lezione ti hanno dato?
  21. ?? che esempio hai dato a tuo figlio?
  22. ? che boccone amaro hai dovuto ingoiare?
  23. \* che tempo ti hanno dedicato?
  24. ?\* che attenzione ti hanno dedicato?
  25. che onori gli hanno reso?
  26. ? che debiti hai fatto con la banca?
  27. che progressi ha fatto?
  28. che iniziativa ha preso?

- (37)
1. \* la corda che ha tagliato è questa
  2. \* il naso che ha ficcato nei miei affari è questo
  3. \* l'animo che si è messo in pace è questo

4. \* il moccolo che ha retto è questo
5. \* le uova che mi ha rotto nel paniere sono queste
6. \* il gomito che alza spesso è questo
7. \* il lunario che sbarca è questo
8. \* le cuoia che ha tirato sono queste
9. \* le sette camicie che ha sudato sono queste
10. ?\* i patiti (col diavolo) che ha fatto (col diavolo) sono questi
11. ?? gli affari d'oro che ha fatto sono questi
12. \* il veleno che sputa è questo
13. ?\* le grane che ha piantato sono queste
14. \* le sentenze che sputa sono queste
15. \* l'acqua che fa da tutte le parti è questa
16. \* il fagotto che ha fatto è questo
17. \* la mente locale che ha fatto sulla situazione è questa
18. ?\* gli onori di casa che ha fatto sono questi
19. ?? la giustizia che ha fatto è questa

20. ?? la lezione che gli abbiamo dato è questa
21. ? l'esempio che gli hai dato è questo
22. ? il boccone amaro che ho dovuto ingoiare è questo
23. \* il tempo che posso dedicarti è questo
24. \* l'attenzione che mi hanno prestato è questa
25. gli onori che gli hanno reso sono questi
26. ? i debiti che ha fatto sono questi
27. i progressi che ha fatto sono questi
28. l'iniziativa che ha preso è questa

#### 5.5. Relevance of the determiner: three types of idiomatic NPs.

I have tentatively classified four types of A' movement as quantificational, opposing them to non-quantificational movement. This move seems to be empirically justified, since they individuate a borderline between two classes of idiomatic expressions: roughly, the idiom chunks in (1) through (22) refuse quantificational movement; all the others accept it. (But notice that the idiom chunks in (20-22) have an intermediate status). The reader is referred to the Table 2 above.

Of most interest is the fact that the idiom chunks allowing quantificational movement are a proper subset of those allowing non-quantificational movement. The complementary set includes the idiom chunks in (18-19), and to some degree also those in (20-22).

These data are consistent with the prediction mentioned in § 4.5: when an idiomatic NP cannot undergo non-quantificational movement, all other types of movement are excluded as well.

I would like to point out a special property of the NPs in the third class. In all and only the idiomatic NPs belonging to this class, the

determiner is not fixed; this also correlates to some degree with the possibility of modifying the NP. (As a matter of fact, the idiomatic expressions in (20-22) enjoy these properties to some extent).

It is natural to assume that an invariable determiner is void of quantificational force.<sup>23</sup> A generalization emerges: quantificational movement may only move the idiomatic NPs that are internally quantified (i.e. whose determiner is not fixed).<sup>24</sup>

Many of the idiomatic NPs lack an overt determiner. But the distribution of the 'zero determiner' in idiomatic expressions is not the same as in the domain of referential arguments. For the latter, the zero determiner is allowed only if the head Noun has cumulative reference, i.e. it is a mass or plural noun; the zero determiner is a phonetically empty D° category that receives a default existential interpretation at LF (Longobardi 1992). Among the idiomatic expressions in the sample, on the contrary, the 'zero determiner' sometimes cooccurs with a singular count noun (16, 17, 19?). In these cases, the zero determiner is invariable, i.e. it cannot alternate with "visible" determiners. I will assume that in these cases there is no determiner at all, not even a phonetically empty one. This would explain why the constraint on the cumulativity of the head noun is not met. Notice that in the idiomatic NPs where the zero determiner is not fixed, the constraint on the cumulativity of the head Noun is respected, e.g. in (26) or (27).

To conclude this part of the discussion, let me point out a possible characterization of the distinction between variable and fixed determiners.

Higginbotham (1985, 1987) proposes that every predicative category has an "open position" corresponding to a slot in its thematic grid. This position can be conceived as a (restricted) variable ranging over the Universe of Discourse. Common nouns too have such an open position, and they denote a set of entities (cf. also Grimshaw 1990). Modification obtains when the open position of a predicative position (the modifier) is theta-identified with that of the modified nominal projection: as a result, the denotations of the two categories are intersected.

The function of the determiner is that of binding the open position of the nominal projection, producing a saturated category which can no longer act as a predicate. This implies Longobardi's (1992:13) hypothesis that the referential force of the NP is a property of its determiner.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Like the definite article introducing some proper names: cf. Longobardi (1992).

<sup>24</sup> Possibly, the variability of the determiner in itself implies that the NP must move at LF by the rule of Quantifier Raising (cf. May 1985), which should be conceived as a kind of quantificational movement. However, there are good reasons to believe that the NPs introduced by a weak determiner are indefinites in the sense of Heim (1982), and hence do not obligatorily undergo QR (cf. Heim 1987, Reinhart 1987, Diesing 1992).

<sup>25</sup> Of course, determiners do not always saturate the NP, since they also occur in predicative NPs: cf. Higginbotham (1987), Stowell (1989), Bianchi (1992) for various approaches to this problem.

I propose that the impossibility of modification and the invariability of the determiner in the idiom chunks in (1-22) derives from the lack of an open position in the nominal projection. A contentful determiner, endowed with quantificational force, would have no open position to bind, and it would produce a case of vacuous quantification, violating the Full Interpretation Principle (cf. Chomsky 1991:438). Also, there is no open position which the modifier can be theta-identified with: therefore, modification is impossible, (apart from completely "frozen" modifiers which are probably not interpreted by means of compositional rules).<sup>26</sup>

This analysis relates some properties of the idiom chunks to their internal thematic structure.

### 6. Impossible movement.

Concluding this discussion, I will consider some few types of movement which are uniformly excluded for all idiomatic NPs: *tough*-movement in (38), clefting in (39), and questioning by means of the "bare" wh-phrase *che cosa* 'what' in (40).

- (38) 1. \* la corda è difficile da tagliare  
 2. \* il naso è difficile da ficcare negli affari altrui  
 3. \* l'animo è difficile da mettersi in pace  
 4. \* il moccolo è difficile da reggere  
 5. \* le uova sono difficili da rompere nel paniero  
 6. \* il gomito è difficile da alzare  
 7. \* il lunario è difficile da sbarcare  
 8. \* le cuoia sono difficili da tirare  
 9. \* sette camicie sono difficili da sudare  
 10. \* (i) patti (col diavolo) sono difficili da fare (col diavolo)  
 11. ?\* (gli) affari d'oro sono difficili da fare  
 12. \* (il) veleno è difficile da sputare  
 13. \* (le) grane sono difficili da piantare  
 14. \* (le) sentenze sono difficili da sputare  
 15. \* (l) acqua è difficile da fare da tutte le parti  
 16. \* (il) fagotto è difficile da fare  
 17. \* (la) mente locale è difficile da fare  
 18. ?? gli onori di casa sono difficili da fare  
 19. \* (la) giustizia è difficile da fare  
 20. \* una bella lezione è difficile da dare a Gianni  
 21. \* il buon esempio è difficile da dare a Gianni  
 22. ?? un boccone amaro è difficile da ingoiare

<sup>26</sup> If weak determiners are analysed as "cardinal adjectives" and not quantifiers, they have to be theta-identified with the nominal projection they modify.

23. \* molto tempo è difficile da dedicare a questo progetto
24. \* molta attenzione è difficile da prestare ai suoi discorsi
25. \* grandi onori sono difficili da rendere a una persona modesta
26. ?? i debiti sono difficili da fare
27. ?? i progressi sono difficili da fare
28. ?? l'iniziativa è difficile da prendere in queste circostanze

- (39)
1. \* è la corda che ha tagliato
  2. \* è il naso che ha ficcato nei miei affari
  3. \* è l'animo che si è messo in pace
  4. \* è il moccolo che ha rotto per tutta la sera
  5. \* sono le uova che mi ha rotto nel panierone
  6. \* è il gomito che alza troppo spesso
  7. \* è il lunario che cerca di sbarcare
  8. \* sono le cuoia che ha tirato
  9. \* sono sette camicie che ho sudato
  10. \* sono patiti (col diavolo) che ha fatto (col diavolo)
  11. \* sono affari d'oro che ha fatto
  12. \* è veleno che spunta
  13. \* sono grane che sta piantando
  14. \* sono sentenze che spunta continuamente
  15. \* è acqua che fa da tutte le parti
  16. \* è fagotto che ha fatto
  17. \* è mente locale che ha fatto sulla situazione
  18. \* sono gli onori di casa che ha fatto
  19. \* è giustizia che hanno fatto
  20. ?? è una bella lezione che devono dargli
  21. ?? è il buon esempio che dovrete dargli
  22. \* è un boccone amaro che ho dovuto ingoiare
  23. \* è molto tempo che dovrete dedicargli
  24. \* è grande attenzione che devi prestare ai suoi consigli
  25. \* sono grandi onori che gli hanno reso
  26. \* sono debiti enormi che ha fatto
  27. \* sono progressi incredibili che ha fatto
  28. \* è l'iniziativa che ha preso senza consultarmi

- (40)
1. \* che cosa ha tagliato? - La corda
  2. \* che cosa ha ficcato nei tuoi affari? - Il naso
  3. \* che cosa ti sei messo in pace? - L'animo
  4. \* che cosa stai reggendo? - Il moccolo
  5. \* che cosa ti ha rotto nel panierone? - Le uova
  6. \* che cosa alza troppo spesso? - Il gomito
  7. \* che cosa fa fatica a sbarcare? - Il lunario
  8. \* che cosa ha tirato ieri sera? - Le cuoia
  9. \* che cosa ha sudato? - Sette camicie
  10. ?? che cosa ha fatto? - Patiti col diavolo

11. \* che cosa ha fatto quest'anno? - Affari d'oro
12. \* che cosa spunta? - Veleno
13. \* che cosa sta piantando? - Un sacco di grane
14. \* che cosa spunta? - Sentenze
15. \* che cosa fa da tutte le parti? - Acqua
16. \* che cosa ha fatto? - Fagotto
17. \* che cosa ha fatto? - Mente locale
19. \* che cosa hanno fatto? - Giustizia
20. \* che cosa gli hanno dato? - Una bella lezione
21. \* che cosa gli hanno dato? - Il buon esempio
22. \* che cosa hai dovuto ingoiare? - Un boccone amaro
23. \* che cosa ti ha dedicato? - Molto tempo
24. \* che cosa ti ha prestato? - Molta attenzione
25. \* che cosa gli avete reso? - Grandissimi onori
26. \* che cosa ha fatto? - Dei debiti enormi
27. \* che cosa sta facendo? - Progressi sorprendenti
28. \* che cosa ha preso? - L'iniziativa

The impossibility of *tough*-movement is usually derived from the adjacency requirement holding at D-structure, by which the idiomatic NP must be contiguous to the remaining part of the expression in the base (Chomsky 1980:149-153, and more recently Cinque 1990:129-131). In fact, in *tough*-movement the surface subject is generated outside the infinitival clause; the object position of the infinitival verb is an empty category bound by a null operator; the latter is then coindexed with the subject:

- (41) ..... [AP NP<sub>i</sub> [A' A° [CP OP<sub>i</sub> .....V<sub>inf</sub> e<sub>i</sub> ] ]

Hence, the idiomatic NP in (38) is not adjacent to the verb at D-structure.

The adjacency requirement could also explain the data in (39) if we assume Chomsky's (1977) analysis of cleft sentences: the NP is generated in a topic position, and the clefted sentence contains a null operator binding the object position:

- (42) expletive copula [TopP NP<sub>i</sub> [CP OP<sub>i</sub> | .....t<sub>i</sub> ..... ] ] ]

But the adjacency requirement is problematic for another reason. Consider left dislocation of the idiomatic NPs in (43). Here too, the NP is generated in a peripheral position, and it is obligatorily resumed by a clitic pronoun (except for the cases discussed in § 5.2). Therefore, the structure violates the adjacency requirement at D-structure; nevertheless, the idiomatic interpretation is available even for some of the idiomatic expressions between (1) and (17) which resist all types of movement (cf. also paradigm (6)):



- (43)
1. ? la corda, l'ha già tagliata da un pezzo.
  2. ?? il naso, lo ficca spesso in cose che non lo riguardano.
  3. l'animo, se l'è messo in pace da un pezzo.
  4. ?? il moccolo, glielo reggeva suo cugino.
  5. \* le uova (nel paniero), me le rompe sempre (nel paniero).
  6. ? il gomito, purtroppo, lo alza spesso.
  7. ?? il lunario, lo sbarca alla bell'e meglio.
  8. ? le cuoia, le ha tirate da un pezzo.
  9. ?? sette camicie, non le ha sudate di certo.
  10. ??\* patii (col diavolo), non credo che li farebbe.
  11. ? affari d'oro, ne ha fatti parecchi.
  12. ??\* veleno, ne sputa sempre su tutti.
  13. ? di grane, non ne pianta mai.
  14. ?? di sentenze, ne sputa spesso.
  15. ?? acqua, ne faceva da tutte le parti.
  16. \* lagotto, l'ha fatto senza pensarci due volte.
  17. ??\* mente locale, non l'ho ancora fatta.
  18. gli onori di casa, oggi, li ha fatti Lucia.
  19. ? giustizia, l'ha fatta solo lui.
  20. una bella lezione, gliela dovrebbero dare.
  21. il buon esempio, gliel'ha dato suo padre.
  22. un boccone amaro, ho dovuto ingoiarlo anch'io.
  23. di tempo, purtroppo, posso dedicatene ben poco.
  24. di attenzione, me ne hanno prestata ben poca.
  25. ? grandi onori, ne hanno resi solo al comandante.
  26. di debiti, non ne ha più fatti.
  27. di progressi, ne ha fatti.
  28. l'iniziativa, l'ha presa il comitato.

Presumably, the relation between the NP and the resumptive pronoun is not one of movement. The pronoun is coindexed with the left dislocated NP at LF by a semantic rule of predication (Chomsky 1977:94).<sup>27</sup>

Having rejected the D-structure adjacency requirement, I will sketch some hypotheses about the data in (38-40).

As for *tough*-movement, consider the thematic status of the subject. In (44a), the adjective *difficile* assigns a theta-role to the sentential subject. In (44b), instead, the complex adjective including the infinitival clause compositionally assigns a theta-role to the subject. In fact, the infinitival clause is not optional, and it modifies the selectional restrictions of the adjectival head (cf. (44c)):

- (44) a. è difficile | spostare questo tavolo |  
it is difficult to move this table

<sup>27</sup> I will assume that this semantic relation prevents the base object position from being deleted at LF in (1-17).

- b. questo tavolo è [difficile da spostare]  
this table is difficult to move  
c. \* questo tavolo è difficile  
this table is difficult

Possibly, the non-referential theta-role assigned by the verb in an idiomatic expression cannot combine with the theta-grid of the adjectival head to be then assigned compositionally to the subject position.

As for cleft sentences, Grewendorf & Poletto (1989:133) observe that the clefted constituent receives a contrastive focus whereby its referent is "picked out" of a relevant set of entities. This type of interpretation is of course unavailable for non-referential NPs. Moreover, the clefted sentence with an existential operator binding the gap constitutes a presupposition; but when an idiom chunk is clefted such a presupposition is uninterpretable, because the residue of the idiomatic expression in the clefted sentence is not semantically complete.

Finally, the bare Wh-phrase *che cosa* cannot substitute for an idiomatic NP (abstracting for an echo-question interpretation). When the idiomatic verb is *fare* ('to do'), a generic pro-VP interpretation arises, as in *Che cosa hai fatto?* 'What did you do?', and the verb *fare* must be repeated in the answer. This shows, I think, that a syntactic category larger than the idiomatic NP has been questioned.

The impossibility of this type of interrogation could derive from the fact that the bare wh-phrase does not realize the lexical content of the idiomatic NP, and the idiomatic interpretation cannot be recovered. None of the lexical components of an idiomatic expression can be missing, even in type III expressions, where quantificational movement is allowed.<sup>28</sup>

## 7. Provisional conclusions.

The data examined in this paper reveal the following typology of lexically selected noun phrases:

<sup>28</sup> Notice that in questions too the existential closure of the interrogative clause is presupposed:  
(i) what did you buy?  
(ii) (Ex)(you bought x)

The above reasoning implies that it is possible to question an idiomatic NP only when the lexical part of the wh-phrase can be reconstructed in the base position at LF. Chomsky (1992:29-30) gives an extremely interesting piece of evidence supporting this view.

Table 4

	I	II	III	arguments
left dislocation	+	+	+	+
non-quantificational movement	-	+	+	+
(restricted) quantificational movement	-	-	+	+
bare wh-phrase	-	-	-	+
clefting	-	-	-	+
tough-movement	-	-	-	+

This classification suggests a typology of syntactic movement. The generalization emerges that the possibility of some restricted types of quantificational movement (those discussed in § 5) implies the possibility of non-quantificational movement. However, some types of movement are excluded for all idiom chunks.

In the course of the discussion, I outlined some properties of the three classes of idiomatic NPs which could be conceived as well-formedness conditions on the various types of movement:

- non-quantificational movement requires that the moved element receive a theta-role;
- quantificational movement has the further requirement that the moved element have an internal open position;
- tough*-movement, clefting and the bare *what* operator can only be related to a base position that receives a referential thematic role: maybe the availability of a referential index on the moved category constitutes a well-formedness condition for them. For the moment I cannot develop this point.

I hope that this paper will provide a useful corpus of data for future research on idiomatic expressions. It seems to me that this preliminary research highlights the necessity of a deeper understanding of the relationship between semantic compositionality and syntactic structure, as it is realized by the principles of Theta Theory. For the moment, the mere possibility of classifying the syntactic behaviour of a sample of idiom chunks suggests that in the future it will be possible to explain it on principled grounds.

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