

# What does it take to embed an exclamative?

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**Goals:** Discuss the properties of embedded exclamatives and sketch a proposal that accounts for their restrictions of appearance from a cross-linguistic point of view.

## Main claims

- Embedded exclamatives are nothing but embedded *wh*-clauses which include non-restrictive modification and/or which are embedded under emotive predicates.
- Factive predicates provide a context in which the speaker is knowledgeable, which allows him/her to introduce expressive meaning.
- The additional restrictions that *wh*-exclamatives in Catalan exhibit have to do with the specific embeddability conditions of subject *wh*-clauses and the licensing of their degree head.

## 1 Introduction

- (1) It's amazing how very pretty this baby is.
- (2) I've just found out how very pretty this baby is.
- (3) Quina nena tan/més bonica que he vist!  
what little girl so/more pretty that AUX.I seen  
'What a beautiful little girl I have seen!'
- (4) Que bonica que és aquesta nena!  
how pretty that is this little girl  
'How pretty this little girl is!'

## 2 First steps

- (5) \*I wonder/don't know how very pretty she is.
- (6) I know/it's amazing how very pretty she is.
- (7) It's amazing how very/extremely/incredibly long he can stay under water.
- (8) #It's amazing how fairly/relatively/reasonably long he can stay under water.
- (9) #How tall Bill is! – though he's not extremely tall.

- (10) It's amazing ...  
 a. ... what/who I saw in the party.  
 b. ... why she did that.  
 c. ... how pretty she is.
- (11) a. \*What/who I saw in the party!  
 b. \*Why she did that!  
 c. How pretty she is!
- (12) Che alto che l ze! (Paduan)  
 'How tall he is!'
- (13) [<sub>CP</sub> che alto [[<sub>C</sub> Ø] [<sub>CP</sub> FACT [ [<sub>C</sub> che] [<sub>IP</sub> l ze ] ]]]]
- (14) What things he eats!
- (15)  $\llbracket S_{D_1} \rrbracket = \{\text{eats}(\text{he}, \text{poblanos}), \text{eats}(\text{he}, \text{serranos}), \text{eats}(\text{he}, \text{jalapeños})\}$
- (16)  $\llbracket S_{D_2} \rrbracket = \{\text{eats}(\text{he}, \text{poblanos}), \text{eats}(\text{he}, \text{serranos}), \text{eats}(\text{he}, \text{jalapeños}), \text{eats}(\text{he}, \text{güeros}), \text{eats}(\text{he}, \text{habaneros})\}$
- (17) How very many books  
 WH E-ONLY SORTAL
- (18) Who  
 WH+SORTAL

### 3 Other relevant properties

- (19) Quina nena *tan/més* bonica que he vist!  
 'What a pretty little girl I've seen!'
- (20) Aquesta nena és *tan/més* bonica!  
 'This little girl is so pretty!'
- (21) En Pau és *més* alt que en Marc.  
 'Pau is taller than Marc.'
- (22) En Pau és *tan* alt com en Marc.  
 'Pau is as tall as Marc.'
- (23) ??Vaig descobrir quin pastís tan bo que havia fet la mare quan el vaig tastar.  
 'I discovered what a nice cake my mother made when I tried it.'
- (24) ??És increïble quin pastís tan bo que ha fet la mare.  
 'It's incredible what a nice cake my mother made.'
- (25) Quin (**\*tan/més**) **fantàstic** *dia d'estiu* que hem tingut!  
 'What a fantastic summer day we've had!'
- (26) Quin *dia d'estiu* **(tan/més) fantàstic** que hem tingut!  
 'What a fantastic summer day we've had!'
- (27) a. \*I don't know how very pretty she is.  
 b. She doesn't know how very pretty she is.  
 c. I didn't know how very pretty she was.
- (28) I told her/remembered/announced how extremely beautiful the baby was.

- (29) You wouldn't believe how extremely beautiful the baby was.

## 4 An old new perspective

- (30) a. ??És sorprenent què ha passat.  
'It's surprising what happened.'  
b. ??És increïble per què ho ha fet.  
'It's incredible why s/he did it.'
- (31) No et creuries mai quina nena tan/més bonica que he conegut.  
'You would never believe what a beautiful little girl I've met.'
- (32) No et creuries mai què ha passat.  
'You would never believe what happened.'
- (33) She found out how extremely tall Bill is.
- (34) I know what a beautiful baby she's had.
- (35) Every *unsuitable* word was deleted. (Larson & Marusic 2004)  
a. Restr.: 'Every word that was unsuitable was deleted.'  
b. Nonrestr.: 'Every word was deleted; they were unsuitable.'
- (36) #She finally knew the answer to the question: how extremely tall is Bill?
- (37) She finally knew the answer to the question: how tall is Bill? & the speaker believes that Bill is extremely tall.
- (38) Los *sofisticados* amigos de María. (Mackenzie 2004)  
'Mary's sophisticated friends.'  
a. \*Restr.: 'Just those friends of María who are sophisticated.'  
b. Nonrestr.: 'María's friends in general (who all happen to be sophisticated).'
- (39) She found out [how extremely tall Bill is.]
- (40) a. Descriptive domain: [how tall Bill is]  
b. Expressive domain: [extremely tall]
- (41) No et creuries mai [quin cotxe tan/més bonic s'ha comprat].  
'You would never believe what a beautiful car s/he bought.'
- (42) a. Descriptive domain: [quin cotxe s'ha comprat]  
b. Expressive domain: [un cotxe tan/més bonic!]
- (43) a. I know how extremely tall Bill is, # but I'm not emotional about his tallness.  
b. She doesn't know how very tall Bill is, # but I don't think he's extremely tall.
- (44) a. #I don't know how extremely tall Bill is.  
b. #I wonder how extremely tall Bill is.  
c. #How extremely tall is Bill?
- (45) #Descriptive domain: [how extremely tall Bill is]
- (46) Maria doesn't know how extremely tall Bill is.  
a. [Maria doesn't know how tall Bill is]  
b. The speaker knows how tall Bill is & s/he thinks Bill is extremely tall.

- (47) I don't know what [famous actor] died on January 23.
- (48) Em pregunto quin [actor famós] ha rebut el premi.  
'I wonder what famous actor obtained the award.'
- (49) \*Ja sé quin noi tan/més alt has conegut.  
'I know what a tall boy you've met.'
- (50) a. \*En Pau és tan alt.  
'Pau is so tall.' ⇒ unacceptable.  
b. En Pau és més alt.  
'Pau is taller.' ⇒ does not involve high degree.
- (51) No et creuries mai quin noi tan/més alt he conegut.  
'You would never believe what a tall boy I've met.'
- (52) a. En Pau és tan alt!  
'Pau is so tall!'  
b. En Pau és més alt!  
'Pau is so tall!'

## 5 Conclusions

- (53) a. \*It's amazing what car you bought.  
b. \*It's amazing whether you bought a car.  
c. ?És increïble qui ha vingut.  
'It's amazing who came.'

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