

# What does it take to embed an exclamative?

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# Object of study

## Embedded *wh*-exclamatives in English

- (1) It's amazing how very pretty this baby is.
- (2) I've just found out how very pretty this baby is.

# Object of study

## Wh-exclamatives in Catalan

- (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!'

# My questions

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- What does factivity do for exclamatives?
- How can we derive the additional embedding restrictions of exclamatives in Catalan?

# Main claims

- Embedded exclamatives are nothing but embedded *wh*-clauses which include **non-restrictive** modification and/or which are embedded under **emotive** predicates.

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# 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**.

# Outline

- 1** Introduction: the reason why exclamatives became an interesting object of study and their analysis as clause types.
- 2** The need for a new approach: relevant puzzles that should not be overlooked.
- 3** The proposal: another account that goes against the idea that exclamatives are a clause type.

# Classic puzzles

## Factivity

Exclamatives only embed in factive predicates (Elliott 1974).

### Example

(5) \*I wonder/don't know how very pretty she is.

(6) I know/it's amazing how very pretty she is.

# Classic puzzles

## Extreme degree

Exclamatives indicate extreme degree (Elliott 1974, Zanuttini & Portner 2003).

### Example

- (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.

### Example

- (9) #How tall Bill is! – though he's not extremely tall.

# Classic puzzles

## Asymmetry embedded-matrix

There is an asymmetry between the set of *wh*-words that can introduce matrix and embedded exclamatives (Elliott 1974).

### Example

- (10) It's amazing ...
- ... what/who I saw in the party.
  - ... why she did that.
  - ... how pretty she is.
- (11) a. \*What/who I saw in the party!  
b. \*Why she did that!  
c. How pretty she is!

# Exclamatives as a clause type (Z&P)

## Proposal

Zanuttini & Portner (2003)

- Exclamatives are factive *wh*-clauses with their own sentential force, namely **widening** (a scalar implicature).
- They have the semantics of questions (i.e., they denote sets of alternatives).

# Exclamatives as a clause type (Z&P)

## Coverage of the data

### Factivity

Exclamatives are inherently factive (Grimshaw 1979): they include a factive morpheme (FACT) at Spec,C.

(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 ] ]]]]

# Exclamatives as a clause type (Z&P)

## Coverage of the data

### Extreme degree

FACT + [wh]  $\Rightarrow$  Widening: a conventional scalar implicature that broadens the quantificational domain associated with the *wh*-word.

(14) What things he eats!

(15)  $[[S_{D_1}]] = \{eats(he, poblanos), eats(he, serranos), eats(he, jalapeños)\}$

(16)  $[[S_{D_2}]] = \{eats(he, poblanos), eats(he, serranos), eats(he, jalapeños), eats(he, güeros), eats(he, habaneros)\}$

# Exclamatives as a clause type (Z&P)

## Coverage of the data

### Asymmetry matrix-embedded

Some *wh*-words have an *exclamative-only* (E-ONLY) morpheme, which allows them to introduce matrix exclamatives. To some others this possibility is lexically banned.

(17) How very many books

WH E-ONLY SORTAL

(18) Who

WH+SORTAL

# Exclamatives as a clause type (Z&P)

## Loose ends

- Factivity: are we satisfied with the notion of presupposition applied to a *wh*-clause?

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# Exclamatives as a clause type (Z&P)

## Loose ends

- Factivity: are we satisfied with the notion of presupposition applied to a *wh*-clause?
- Widening: is a conventional scalar implicature a sentential force comparable to an assertion or a question?
- Economy: do we need FACT and E-ONLY?

## Other relevant properties

*so* ≡ *more*?

Exclamative clauses are the only contexts in Catalan where the degree words *tan* ('so') and *més* ('more') are interchangeable.

### Example

- (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!'

# Other relevant properties

*so* ≡ *more*?

## Example

- (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.'

# Other relevant properties

## Embedding constraints

Exclamatives in Catalan do not embed in cognitive and emotive factives.

### Example

- (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.'

## Other relevant properties

### Asymmetry proposed vs. postposed adjectives

The few adjectives that may precede N in Catalan are not introduced by *tan* ('so') or *més* ('more') in exclamatives.

#### Example

- (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!'

## Other relevant properties

*\*I don't know*

The predicate *know* can be negated and still embed an exclamative only if the subject is not the 1st person of the present tense.

### Example

- (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.

# Other relevant properties

## Resolutive predicates and emotive predicates

Not only cognitive factives (*know, find out*) but the whole range of resolutive predicates (cf. Ginzburg 1995) can embed exclamatives in English.

### Example

(28) I told her/remembered/announced how extremely beautiful the baby was.

# Other relevant properties

## Resolutive predicates and emotive predicates

Not only emotive factives (*it's amazing*) but any emotive predicates that take *wh*-clauses can embed exclamatives.

### Example

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

# Antecedents

- The degree approach (Castroviejo 2006): exclamationatives are **degree** constructions; they do not have the semantics of questions; factivity is not the key ingredient in their interpretation.
- The interrogative approach (D'Avis 2002, Abels 2005): *wh*-clauses embedded in **exclamative/surprise** predicates are not exclamationatives, but interrogatives; their exclamationative flavor derives from the semantics of the predicate.

# Proposal

## Plan

- 1 Restrictions of embedding in emotive factives.

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- 2 Modifiers within the *wh*-phrase interpreted non-restrictively and the role of knowledgeability.
- 3 Licensing of DegP in Catalan.

# Proposal

## Subject vs. Object

Factive predicates whose **subject** is a *wh*-clause are marginal in Catalan (and in other null subject languages).

- (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.'

# Proposal

## Subject vs. Object

Emotive predicates whose **object** is a *wh*-clause can embed an exclamative in Catalan.

- (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.'

# Proposal

## Non-restrictive modifiers as expressives

*extremely* in (33) and *beautiful* in (34) are non-restrictive modifiers.

(33) She found out how **extremely** tall Bill is.

(34) I know what a **beautiful** baby she's had.

# Proposal

## Non-restrictive modifiers as expressives

Restrictive vs. non-restrictive modification.

- (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.'

# Proposal

## Non-restrictive modifiers as expressives

Paraphrases of (33).

- (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.

# Proposal

## Non-restrictive modifiers as expressives

Preposed adjectives as non-restrictive modifiers.

- (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.)'

# Proposal

## Non-restrictive modifiers as expressives

I side with Morzycki (t.a.) in treating them as expressives (cf. Potts 2005, 2007).

- Not deniable, because they are commitments.
- Invariably speaker oriented.
- Their content contributes a dimension of meaning that is separate from regular descriptive content.

# Proposal

## Non-restrictive modifiers as expressives

Non-restrictive modifiers are composed in the expressive domain of meaning.

(39) She found out [how extremely tall Bill is.]

- (40) a. Descriptive domain: [[how tall Bill is]]  
b. Expressive domain: [[extremely tall]]

# Proposal

## Non-restrictive modifiers as expressives

The DegP headed by *tan* ('so') / *més* ('more') in Catalan is also a non-restrictive modifier.

- (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!]]

# Proposal

## Non-restrictive modifiers as expressives

Expressive meaning cannot be denied, because it involves speaker commitment.

- (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.

# Proposal

## Non-restrictive modifiers as expressives

- Commitment to expressive meaning involves commitment to descriptive meaning.
- Non-restrictive modification cannot occur when it is not implicated that the speaker is **knowledgeable**.

- (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]]

# Proposal

## Non-restrictive modifiers as expressives

Negation of persons other than the 1st and tenses other than present: implication that that the speaker is knowledgeable.

- (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.

# Proposal

## Non-restrictive modifiers as expressives

When adjectives are interpreted restrictively, knowledgeability is not an issue.

(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.'

# Proposal

## Licensing conditions for the DegP in Catalan

Knowledgeability is not enough to license exclamation in Catalan, though.

(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.

# Proposal

## Licensing conditions for the DegP in Catalan

The DegP headed by *tan* ('so') / *més* ('more') is only licensed when it can be implicated that the speaker is emotional.

- (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!'

# Proposal

## Consequences

- 1 Technically, there is no such thing as an embedded exclamation.

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## Consequences

- 1 Technically, there is no such thing as an embedded exclamative.
- 2 The *exclamative flavor* in an embedded *wh*-clause has two sources:
  - The embedding emotive predicate.
  - The non-restrictive interpretation of modifiers.

# Conclusions

## Explaining the classic puzzles

### Factivity

Factivity does not play a direct role in the interpretation of exclamatives. It makes sure that the speaker is knowledgeable, which allows him/her to introduce expressive meaning by means of non-restrictive modification.

# Conclusions

## Explaining the classic puzzles

### Extreme degree

The indication of extreme (or rather *high*) degree is inferred from the emotive component of embedded exclamatives, which either derives from the meaning of the predicate or from the introduction of non-restrictive modification.

# Conclusions

## Explaining the classic puzzles

### Asymmetry embedded-matrix

The occurrence of non-restrictive modifiers is syntactically constrained; only those *wh*-phrases that may incorporate them can stand as matrix exclamatives.

# Conclusions

## Interesting predictions

### Economy

We do not need additional features and we simplify two clause types (i.e., *wh*-interrogatives and *wh*-exclamatives) into one, namely, *wh*-clauses.

# Conclusions

## Interesting predictions

### Coverage of the data

This approach accounts for a larger set of facts and provides a better understanding of the difference between interrogatives and exclamatives.

# Conclusions

## Prospective research

### Link descriptive-expressive

How can we formalize the dependency between emotive content and the licensing of DegP in exclamatives in Catalan?, what is the link between **descriptive** and **expressive** meaning?

# Conclusions

## Prospective research

### Properties of emotive factives

How can we explain the variety of restrictions of *wh*-clauses embedded in *emotive* factives?

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

# Conclusions

## Prospective research

### Force

How do we redefine the concept of **force** and **clause type** given these assumptions?

Danke vielmals!

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