

Wh-exclamatives in Catalan

Elena Castroviejo Miró

Keywords: attitude toward degrees, degree phrase, degree operator, exclamation, fact, result clause construction, polarity sensitivity, *wh*-movement.

The thesis *Wh-exclamatives in Catalan* is a research that intends to shed light on the characterization of exclamatives, a type of clause that has not been paid as much attention as other types of clause such as interrogatives or declaratives. This is a theoretical study that falls within the framework of generative grammar. As such, it highlights the main problems that the previous literature has noted, it considers new puzzles that stem from the data from Catalan, it provides an explanatory analysis for most of them, and it presents relevant lines for future research.

My working hypothesis is that exclamatives are a kind of degree construction that resembles comparative clauses and result clause constructions. However, exclamatives and the other degree constructions differ in at least one relevant property: exclamatives do not make the same discourse contribution as declaratives.

This work limits its scope to two instances of *wh*-exclamatives in Catalan, namely exclamatives whose *wh*-word is the degree operator *que* ('how') (as in (1)) and exclamatives introduced by the *wh*-word *quin* ('what'), which is a determiner (cf. (2)).

- (1) **Que** *alt que és en Pau!*
'How tall Pau is!'
- (2) **Quin** *pastís tan bo que ha preparat en Ferran!*
'What a nice cake Ferran made!'

In (1), the *wh*-phrase *que alt* is a degree phrase which moves towards the left periphery of the clause, whereas in (2), the *wh*-phrase *quin pastís tan bo* is a determiner phrase. Even if the moved phrases have different heads, they both contain a degree phrase. I propose that *que* in (1) is the *wh*-counterpart of *tan* ('so') in (2). The inclusion of [+wh] in its feature makeup causes the movement of the phrase headed by *que* to the clause periphery.

The facts that make exclamatives an attractive object of study are numerous and concern their syntax, their semantics and their pragmatics. From a syntactic viewpoint it is interesting to ask oneself why exclamatives allow the presence of the complementizer *que* ('that') between the *wh*-phrase and the verb and what is the reason why a *wh*-word such as *qui* ('who') cannot introduce an exclamation. With regard to semantics, there is a need to define and formalize the essence of an exclamation: is it surprise? Unexpectedness? Extreme degree? And with respect to pragmatics, we need to explain the reason why an exclamation does not make a good answer to a question (i.e., why it cannot be used assertorically).

The syntactic analysis contains two basic ideas. On the one hand, I assume that the *wh*-phrase lands in Spec,C, which makes sense if we understand that the complementizer *que* occupies C⁰. On the other hand, I propose that it is required that the *wh*-phrase include a degree phrase introduced by *tan* or *que*.

Semantically, I analyze *tan* as a degree operator that establishes a \geq relation between two degrees, a reference degree and a standard degree. The reference degree is the degree of ADJ-ness of the individual that is the argument of the gradable adjective interpreted as a measure function of type $\langle e,d \rangle$. The standard degree is taken from context and it is high.

Finally, from the point of view of pragmatics, I propose that an exclamation contains two kinds of meaning: a verbally expressed meaning (the descriptive content of the clause) and the meaning that is contributed to discourse. The descriptive

meaning is taken for granted by the speaker, who treats it as a fact. What he/she wants to contribute to discourse is information that is not verbally encoded: his/her attitude towards a degree.