

## A semantic analysis of unexpectedness intonation

In this talk I discuss the semantics and discourse contribution of *unexpectedness intonation* (henceforth UI), i.e., the intonation that accompanies declaratives and *wh*-exclamatives and which has traditionally not been taken into consideration by semanticists when dealing with exclamative constructions. In particular, I propose an analysis that considers UI as a function that takes as argument at-issue meaning and returns expressive meaning, and I provide a principled explanation for the different restrictions it imposes depending on the type of argument it takes as input.

Characteristically *wh*-exclamatives are *wh*-clauses that cannot make questions ((1)) but cannot perform assertions, either, which we see because they are infelicitous answers ((2)).

- (1) a. A: How tall is Bill? B: 2 meters tall.  
b. A: How tall Bill is! B: #2 meters tall.
- (2) A: How tall is Bill? B1: Very tall. B2: #How tall he is!

Furthermore, only a subset of the inventory of *wh*-words can introduce a *wh*-exclamative. In particular, only those that involve degree quantification can (cf. Castroviejo 2006, Rett t.a.):

- (3) a. How tall Bill is!  
b. #Who we saw at that party!  
c. #Where you went on vacation!

Intuitively, *wh*-exclamatives express a sense of unexpectedness, which has been encoded in different ways depending on the proposal, the most influential being that of Zanuttini & Portner (2003). Under their analysis, *wh*-exclamatives have the semantics of questions (i.e., a set of alternatives), but the presence of a factive morpheme generates a scalar implicature called *widening*. This amounts to saying that the actual proposition lies at the extreme end of a contextually given set that includes the non-standard answers to the question.

In contrast, D’Avis (2002) first mentions in a semantics paper that the difference between *wie*-interrogatives and *wie*-exclamatives in German lies exclusively in intonation. Castroviejo (2008) takes his lead to propose a semantic analysis of intonation for *wh*-exclamatives. In particular, she claims that intonation is a downward monotonic function that involves unexpectedness and that must take as input a set of propositions that are naturally ordered by the inclusive relation. This makes it possible to state that (i) there is a strongest true proposition that is unexpected, (ii) the expected alternatives are (weak) true propositions, and (iii) for any false proposition *p*, it is the case that *p* is also unexpected. Take (3a) and imagine Bill is 2m tall. This implies that he is also 1.80m tall. Moreover, it is false and also unexpected that Bill is 2.40m tall. This constraint is reminiscent of the restriction that evaluative adverbs like *surprisingly* exhibit when they merge with an adjective (e.g., *surprisingly tall*). Crucially, these adverbs cannot combine with non-gradable adjectives, because the semantics of the former requires that the actual degree of ADJ-ness be surprising and that it be surprising were it higher (Katz 2005, Nouwen 2005).

On the other hand, we have declarative constructions that also convey unexpectedness when uttered with a particular intonation pattern (henceforth *declarative exclamatives*). They have been considered exclamations but not exclamatives, because they have the shape of declarative clauses and do not show the constraints of *wh*-exclamatives (e.g., Rett t.a.). Note that declarative exclamatives can answer a question, just like regular declarative clauses ((4)) and no degree component is involved.

- (4) A: What’s going on? B1: Syd got the fellowship. B2: Syd got the fellowship!

What I assume here is that both *wh*- and declarative exclamatives include UI, which is viewed as an essential part of the meaning of exclamative constructions and which has the same semantic contribution in both clause types. That is, I propose to shift the perspective and analyze *wh*-exclamatives starting from the analysis of declarative exclamatives. Hence, I follow Rett (t.a.)’s claims according to which declarative and *wh*-exclamatives have the same force, even though I identify force with UI, and I give an explanation as for why the force operator has “different domains” depending on what argument it takes. The questions I address are the following: (a) How is UI semantically composed with its argument? (b) What discourse effects does UI have? (c) How do we explain the different constraints UI exhibits?

