An exceptional exclamative sentence type in Romance

Xavier Villalba*

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Dept. de Filologia Catalana, Edifici B, 08193 Bellaterra, Barcelona, Spain

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Abstract

The main hypothesis of this paper is that certain exclamative constructions in Catalan (que-exclamatives) involve a null degree operator. It is shown that, when this analysis combines with Kayne’s (Kayne, R., 2002. On some prepositions that look DP-internal: English of and French de. Ms, New York University) insights concerning English preposition of and its French counterpart de, a principled and unified explanation follows not only for que-exclamatives but for the related com-exclamatives as well. Empirical and theoretical arguments are provided for deriving the presence of the marker de (‘of’) as a VP-external preposition from the existence of a quantificational structure, and that of the partitive clitic en/ne from the necessity of providing the null degree operator with a content. © 2002 Elsevier Science B.V. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

Among non-declarative sentence types, exclamatives have received considerably less attention than interrogatives in Romance linguistics, and very often even the
otherwise highly detailed descriptive grammars tend to get rid of them with a cur-
sory comment in the chapter devoted to the interrogative sentence type. Fortunately,
since the pioneering studies in the late seventies and the eighties (Milner, 1978 and
Gérard-Naef, 1980 for French; Bosque, 1984 for Spanish; Radford, 1982 for Italian,
among others), our current understanding of the exclamative type in Romance has
been broadened considerably thanks to the works by Benincá (1995, 1996), and
Zanuttini and Portner (2000, 2001). The main goal of the present paper is to con-
tribute to this effort, bringing new data to the fore, namely those of an exclamative
construction in Catalan (henceforth *que*-exclamative) which shows noteworthy syn-
tactic features without strict parallel—to my knowledge—in the Romance pan-
orama. The following data illustrate the point:

(1) a. ¡Ai, filla, que en vas, d’equivocada! (Solà, 1990: ex. 18f)
   alas daughter that of.it go of-mistaken
   ‘Oh, dear, how wrong you are!’

   b. ¡Que n’és, de car! (Solà, 1999: ex. 2)
   that of.it-is of expensive
   ‘How expensive it is!’

Despite the lack of (overt) *wh*-element, sentences in (1) are systematically interpreted
by native speakers as virtually synonymous of the typical *wh*-exclamatives in (2):

(2) a. Ai, filla, que equivocada que vas!
   alas daughter how mistaken that go
   ‘Oh, dear, how wrong you are!’

   b. Que car que és!
   how expensive that is
   ‘How expensive it is!’

This clearly perceived synonymy gives rise to interesting theoretical and empirical
questions. First of all, it must be substantiated whether *que*-exclamatives should be
considered proper exclamative sentences or rather a non-exclamative sentence type
conveying the illocutionary force of an exclamation, such as the following sentence:

(3) Aquest vi és carissim!
   this wine is very.expensive
   ‘This wine is very expensive.’

As Zanuttini and Portner (2001) point out, failure to properly distinguish the
illocutionary force of a sentence from its type has blurred the typology of construc-
tions displaying the exclamative type. Hence, our first goal will consist in confirming
the speakers’ intuition that *que*-exclamatives are fully-fledged exclamative sentences.
This task will be carried out in Section 1.
Once this point will be properly settled, the attention will shift to the syntactic features that make *que*-exclamatives interesting for anyone attempting a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying the expression of the exclamative type in Romance, namely (i) the introduction of the sentence by means of complementizer *que* ‘that’, (ii) the presence of the partitive clitic *en/ne*, and (iii) the introduction of the adjective by means of the marker *de* (‘of’). Since *que*-exclamatives are very partially described in Catalan grammatical literature (but see Villalba, 2001, 2002), a finer-grained characterization of the construction will be provided with the intention of broadening and refining the typology of Romance exclamative sentences. The development of this descriptive effort will occupy Section 2.

Finally, an analysis of *que*-exclamatives will be offered deriving the exclamative character of the construction from the presence of a null degree operator. Crucially, the proposal will benefit from Kayne’s (2000, 2002) insights concerning English preposition *of* and its French counterpart *de* ‘of’ as heads merging outside the VP. The combination of both aspects will offer a proper explanation for otherwise intractable syntactic properties.

2. Tests for the exclamative type

Part of the scarce literature on exclamatives (Elliott, 1974; Grimshaw, 1979; Bosque, 1984; Zanuttini and Portner, 2000, 2001) has dedicated much effort to establish a series of standard tests to properly identify exclamative sentences, especially in contrast with interrogative ones. In this section, three of these standard tests will be contemplated to show that Catalan *que*-exclamatives in (1) belong to the exclamative sentence type in all the relevant respects.

2.1. Factivity

Elliott (1974) observed that exclamative clauses are inherently factive, so that they can only be embedded under factive predicates (see also Grimshaw, 1979). Henceforth, since the addition of the modifier *very* forces the exclamative reading, the following contrast arises:

\[(4)\]
\[\begin{array}{ll}
a. & \text{It’s amazing how very expensive this wine is.} \\
 b. & *\text{I asked how very expensive this wine was.}
\end{array}\]

In (4)b, the semantics of the exclamative construction, which presupposes the truth of the proposition it denotes, is at odds with that of the predicate, which presupposes ignorance concerning the validity of the proposition denoted by its complement. This conflict leads to the contrast between (4)a and (4)b.

Unfortunately, this test cannot be applied to *que*-exclamatives, which only appear in root contexts (see Section 2.5 below). Yet, the inherently factive character of the
construction reveals itself clearly under appropriate conditions, as in the following dialogue:

(5)  
A: La Maria té un màster de Harvard.
    the Maria has a master of Harvard
    ‘Maria obtained a master degree from Harvard.’
B: Caram, que n’és d’intèligent! #Si és que ho és.
    boy that of.it-is of-intelligent if is that it is
    ‘Oh, boy, how intelligent she is! #If she is intelligent at all.’

As the translation shows, the state of ignorance introduced by the continuation in B’s response is incompatible with the presupposition carried by the exclamative construction that Mary is intelligent, rendering B’s response infelicitous. It is thus clear that que-exclamatives are inherently factive, just as standard wh-exclamatives:

(6)  
A: La Maria té un màster de Harvard.
    the Maria has a master of Harvard
    ‘Maria obtained a master degree from Harvard.’
B: Caram, que intel·ligent que és! #Si és que ho és.
    boy how intelligent that is if is that it is
    ‘Oh, boy, how intelligent she is! #If she is intelligent at all.’

2.2. Extreme degree interpretation

Catalan que-exclamatives express a degree quantification over the scale denoted by the adjective, so that this construction is incompatible with non-gradable adjectives, as becomes apparent in the following paradigm, where the equivalent wh-exclamative is added for convenience:

(7)  
a. *Aquest gat és molt persa/quadrúpede.
    this cat is very Persian/four-legged
b. *Que n’és de persa/quadrúpede, aquest gat!
    that of.it is of Persian/four-legged this cat
c. *Que persa/quadrúpede que és aquest gat!
    how Persian/four-legged that is this cat

Neither persa (‘Persian’) nor quadrúpede (‘four-legged’) are gradable adjectives, so we can attribute the illformedness of all the cases in (7) to a case of vacuous quantification (more on this in Section 3).

Yet, Zanuttini and Portner (2001) claim that, in addition to this literal meaning, exclamatives convey a scalar implicature of highest degree [which they characterize
in terms of the semantic notion of ‘widening’, borrowed from Kadmon and Landman (1993)]. Their semantic description extends to *que*-exclamatives straightforwardly, so that the sentence in (8)a can be paraphrased as in (8)b:

(8) a. Quen’é de car aquest vi!
    that of it is of expensive this wine
    ‘How expensive this wine is!’

b. This wine is extremely expensive./This wine is more expensive than I expected.

Here, the property denoted by the adjective is quantified over a scale, but unlike in normal degree quantification the point is placed somewhere higher than the maximum of the standard scale. Confirmation for this fact follows from the restriction over the modifiers accompanying the adjective in *que*-exclamatives noted by Elliott (1974) for *wh*-exclamatives. Compare the behavior of *normalment* ‘normally’ and *ordinàriament* ‘ordinarily’ on the one hand with that of *extremament* ‘extremely’ and *rematadament* ‘completely’ on the other: 2

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1 Zanuttini and Portner (2001: 11) argue that the highest degree meaning associated with exclamatives must be considered a conventional scalar implicature under Grice’s (1989) typology of implicatures, for it cannot be canceled (ia) nor is detachable (ib)—the intensive version has an equivalent content, but it lacks the implicature (Zanuttini and Portner, 2001: ex. 13):

(i) a. ??How very cute he is!—though he’s not extremely cute.
    b. He’s quite cute!—though not extremely cute.

Furthermore, Paul Portner (p.c.) correctly points out to me that the implicature at issue can hardly be computable from the interaction of Grice’s Cooperative Principle with any conversational maxim, unlike typical scalar conversational implicatures, which arise from apparent violations of the Maxim of Quantity.

Yet, this characterization is controversial, for strong doubts exist concerning the detachability of the implicature under question. Consider the following hidden exclamative construction in Catalan (on hidden exclamatives in Spanish, see Section 2.4 below):

(ii) Té uns collons!
    has a.pl balls
    ‘(S)he is so cheeky.’

Interestingly, this sentence conveys an implicature of highest degree exactly as exclamatives do, as the impossibility of cancellation shows:

(iii) Té uns collons! #Encara que no excessius.
    has many balls though that not excessive
    ‘(S)he is SO cheeky, even though not that much.’

Yet, since this implicature is not tied to the exclamative form of the sentence, one must conclude that it cannot be a conventional implicature, in any event. The issue merits a more detailed discussion than the one offered here.

2 The sentences in (9)a become acceptable under an interpretation in which we quantify over the degree of normality/ordinariness of someone’s foolishness rather than over the degree of foolishness itself, namely ‘I am surprised by the extreme degree of normalcy/ordinariness of your foolishness.’
1.3. The question/answer test

As noted in Zanuttini and Portner (2001), exclamatives cannot enter in question/answer pairs. On the one hand, unlike interrogatives, they cannot introduce a true question, as they show in the following examples [their examples (18)–(19)]:

(10) How tall is he? Seven feet or eight feet?
(11) How tall he is! #Seven feet or eight feet?

These examples show that exclamatives cannot fulfill the prototypical function of interrogatives, namely asking for information. Moreover, the test becomes sharper when the scalar nature of the adjective is taken into account, for whereas interrogatives can only question over the unmarked side of the scale, exclamatives can range over any edge of the scale:

(12) How tall/*short is he?
(13) How tall/short he is!

This behavior extends to que-exclamatives in Catalan straightforwardly:

(14) a. A: Quant fa d’alt? B: Dos metres o dos metres i trenta centímetres?
   ‘A: How tall is he?’ B: Six or seven feet?’
 b. A: Que n’és d’alt! B: #Dos metres o dos metres i trenta centímetres?
   ‘A: How tall he is!’ B: #Six or seven feet?’

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3 I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out to me the relevance of this test.
4 Zanuttini and Portner (2001) consider also examples like the following:

(i) a. A: How tall is he? B: Seven feet.
   b. A: How tall he is! B: #Seven feet.

However, communicative exchanges like (ib) are easily accommodated as exclamation/confirmation pairs, which leads to some confusion. Therefore, I have dismissed them in the discussion for the ease of exposition.
(15)  a. Com és d’alt/*de baix?
    ‘How tall/*short is he?’
  b. Que n’és d’alt/de baix!
    ‘How tall/short he is!’

On the other hand, exclamatives, unlike declaratives, cannot serve as an answer to a true question (Zanuttini and Portner, 2001: ex. 20):

(16)  A: How tall is Tony’s child?  B: #How very tall he is!

Again, the inherently presupposed nature of exclamatives is at odds with their conveying a new piece of information, and this infelicity extends to similar cases of que-exclamatives as well:

(17)  A: Com és d’alt el fill d’en Toni?  B: #Que n’és d’alt!
    ‘A: How tall is Toni’s child?  B: #How tall he is!’

Taken as a whole, the evidence reviewed in this section strongly supports considering que-exclamatives as true representatives of the exclamative sentence type.

3. A previous analysis of que-exclamatives

Even though they are extremely vigorous in Catalan, traditional grammarians have paid little attention to que-exclamatives. Indeed, very scarce comments can be gleaned among the few works that even mention them. This section is devoted to filling this gap by means of a detailed description of their basic syntactic properties.

As outlined in the introduction, three major features make que-exclamatives worth studying: the introduction of the sentence by means of complementizer que ‘that’, the presence of the partitive clitic en/ne, and the introduction of the adjective by means of the marker de ‘of’. Since Catalan is a unique language in requiring the introduction of right-dislocated adjectives by means of a marker de—formally identical to the preposition de ‘of’—, the latter pair of features has traditionally been derived from the claim that the modified adjective is right-dislocated, so that the que-exclamative in (18)a should be analyzed on a pair with the right-dislocation structure in (18)b (e.g. López del Castillo, 1999: 37–38; Solà, 1999: 232–233; Todolí, 2002: 1415; Wheeler et al., 1999: 498):

(18)  a. Que n’ets de ximple!
    that of it are of foolish
    ‘How foolish you are!’
Prima facie, this line of analysis would straightforwardly explain both the insertion of the marker *de* and the presence of the partitive clitic *en/ne*, which would be the pronominal correlate of the adjective in the core sentence.

However, in the subsequent paragraphs, I will show that, against the traditional view, compelling empirical evidence exists for treating the adjective as non-dislocated. In order to attain this goal, a two-sided strategy will be pursued. On the one hand, emphasis will be put on a comparison of the properties of the adjective in *que*-exclamatives with respect to that of a real right-dislocated one. On the other hand, the properties of the adjective in *que*-exclamatives will be compared with those of the adjective in the following exclamative construction, which I will label *com*-exclamative for the sake of reference:5

(19) Com ès de car aquest vi!
how is of expensive this wine
‘How expensive this wine is!’

5 This construction is also found in Spanish (see Torrego, 1994; Alonso-Cortés, 1999):

(i) ¡Cómo es de caro!
how is of expensive
‘How expensive it is!’

In Italian and French this task is fulfilled by *come/quanto* ‘how (much)’ and *comme/combien* ‘how (much)’, respectively (the Italian examples come from Benincà, 1995 and the French ones from Gérard-Naef, 1980):

(ii) a. Come sarà stanco!
how will.be tired
‘How tired (s)he will be!’

b. Quanto sarà stanco!
how.much will.be tired
‘How tired (s)he will be!’

(iii) a. Comme la vie est singulière, changeante!
how the live is singular changeful
‘How singular, changeful the life is!’

b. Combien seraient puissants leurs voeux…!
how will.be increasing their voices
‘How intensifying their voices will be…!’

Benincà points out that (iia) is the normal form in Tuscany and part of Italian central regions, and the form of the standard language, whereas (iib) pertains to Southern Italy and part of the central regions.
Crucially for our purposes, traditional grammarians have not argued for the right-dislocated status of the adjective *car* ‘expensive’ in *com*-exclamatives, regardless of the fact that it is introduced by *de* as well. From the comparison, it will become evident that no right-dislocation of the adjective is involved in either construction, so that, attractive as it might seem at first sight, the traditional approach cannot withstand a closer scrutiny. Since this point is crucial for an accurate description of the exclamative construction at hand, I will concentrate on it in Sections 2.1–2.4, leaving the issue of the complementizer *que* ‘that’ to Section 2.5.

3.1. Informativeness

Right-dislocates are known to require highly salient reference in the immediate discourse to be licensed (see Vallduví, 1990; Villalba, 2000: ch. 3):

(20)  
A: La Maria és molt ingènua.  
the Maria is very naïve  
B: Ai fill, tu sí que ho ets, d’ingenu!  
oh son you yes that it-are of-naïve

This requirement for high discourse availability is at the roots of the optionality of the right-dislocate (but see Grosz and Ziv, 1998; Villalba, 2000: ch. 3 for qualification), and the infelicity of right-dislocates in out-of-the-blue contexts:

(21)  
A: La Maria és molt ingènua.  
the Maria is very naïve  
‘Mary is very naïve.’  
B: Ai fill, tu sí que ho ets i molt(, d’ingenu)!  
oh son you yes that it-are and much of-naïve  
‘Man, you are (naïve), certainly.’

[You enter home exultant saying that Prime Minister Aznar has promised that unemployment will disappear in two years]

(22)  
#Ai fill, sí que ho ets, d’ingenu!  
oh son yes that it-are of-naïve  
‘Man, you are (naïve), certainly.’

In contrast with real right-dislocates, the adjective in *que*-exclamatives is obligatory and may appear in out-of-the-blue contexts like the one provided in (22), in free alternation with *wh*- and, more important, *com*-exclamatives:

(23)  
a. *Que n’és!  
that of.it-is
b. *Com és!\(^6\)
   how is

[You enter home exultant saying that Prime Minister Aznar has promised that unemployment will disappear in two years]

(24) a. Ai fill, que n’ets d’ingenu!
oh son that of.it-are of-naïve
‘Man, how naïve you are!’
b. Ai fill, que ingenu que ets!
oh son how naïve that are
‘Man, how naïve you are!’
c. Ai fill, com ets d’ingenu!
oh son how are of naïve
‘Man, how naïve you are!’

The contrast directly argues against a unified analysis in terms of right-dislocation of the adjective.

To make the argument even more compelling, consider the fact that right-dislocates, unlike left-dislocates, cannot enter in contrast relations (see Villalba, 2000, from which the following example is borrowed):

(25) Hi havia un home i una dona.
‘There was a man and a woman.’
\(\#Li\) van regalar un cotxe, a ells, però \(\#li\) van comprar un vestit, a ella.
to-him/her gave a car to him but to him/her bought a dress to her
‘They gave him a car but they bought her a dress.’

Crucially, the adjective in que-exclamatives can:

(26) A: L’Albert va morir atropellat. Quina llàstima, un noi tan eficient!
the-Albert died knocked over what pity a boy so efficient
‘Albert was knocked over to death. What a pity, so efficient a fellow.’
B: Pobre nano! Que n’era d’eficient i que n’era de matusser també a vegades!
poor fellow that of.it-was of efficient and that of.it-was of ham-handed too to times
‘Poor fellow! How efficient he was and how ham-handed he was also sometimes!’

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\(^6\) This sentence is grammatical under the irrelevant interpretation that takes the exclamation as referring to the manner in which someone behaves, namely ‘The way (s)he is!’.
The sharply disparate behavior of (25) and (26) can hardly be explained if we maintain that the adjective is right-dislocated in both constructions.

To sum up, the bulk of empirical facts reviewed in this paragraph clearly argues against the claim that the adjective is right-dislocated in que-exclamatives, as far as its informative status is concerned.

3.2. *The position of the adjective*

It is a well-known fact that neutral focus, associated with main stress, marks the limit of the core sentence (see Vallduví, 1990; Sola, 1990, 1994). This boundary may be made even more precise with the concourse of postfocal tags (the effects of focus projection are dismissed, since they play no role in the discussion):

(27) Ahir va comprar [focus el llibre], [tag collons/tu]!
yesterday bought the book balls/you
‘Yesterday (s)he bought the book, shit/you!’

Note that these tags cannot precede the focus constituent:

(28) *Ahir va comprar [tag collons/tu] [focus el llibre]!
yesterday bought balls/you the book

Moreover the material after these tags is typically right-dislocated: 7

(29) El va comprar [focus ahir], [tag collons/tu], [RD el llibre]!
him bought yesterday balls/you the book
‘(S)he bought it yesterday, shit/you, the book!’

Once we agree that postfocal tags count as a reliable landmark for separating focus and right-dislocates, consider now the behavior of the adjective in que- and com-exclamatives:

(30) a. *Que n’és, collons/tu, de car, aquest vi!
that of.it-is balls/you of expensive this wine
a’. Que n’és de car, collons/tu, aquest vi!
so/that of.it-is of expensive balls/you this wine
‘How expensive this wine is, shit/you!’

7 The tag may also surface after the right-dislocate without any change in meaning:

(i) El va comprar [focus ahir], [RD el llibre], [tag collons/tu]!
him bought yesterday the book balls/you
‘(S)he bought it yesterday, the book, shit/you!’

This scarce note is far from exhausting the description of the role and distribution of postfocal tags, whose complexity has required the omission of details that do not affect the discussion.
b. *Com és, collons/tu, de car, aquest vi!
   how is balls/you of expensive this wine
b’. Com és de car, collons/tu, aquest vi!
   how is of expensive balls/you this wine
   ‘How expensive this wine is, shit/you!’

The data are conclusive: the adjective must precede the postfocal tag, which strongly suggests that the adjective *car* (‘expensive’) cannot be considered a right-dislocate either in *que-* or *com-*exclamatives.

This conclusion also receives empirical support when the interaction of the adjective is considered with respect to clear right-dislocates. It is a well-known fact that right-dislocates may surface in virtually any word order (see Vallduví, 1990; Villalba, 2000):

(31) a. $N_1'nhi_2$ vaig parlar ahir, *[amb en Pere]$_2$, *[del llibre]$_1$. of.it-LOC talked yesterday with the Pere of.the book
   ‘I talked with Pere about the book YESTERDAY.’
b. $N_1'nhi_2$ vaig parlar ahir, *[del llibre]$_1$, *[amb en Pere]$_2$. of.it-LOC talked yesterday of.the book with the Pere
   ‘I talked with Pere about the book YESTERDAY.’

However, the alleged right-dislocated adjective in exclamatives cannot permute with real right-dislocates. Consider the sentences in (32), where the adjective interacts with a clear PP dislocate (as the presence of the resumptive locative clitic *hi* makes clear):

(32) a. Ai fill, que n’hi van de cansats *[RD a l’escola]!
   alas son that of.it-LOC go of tired to the-school
   ‘Man, how tired they attend school!’
b. *Ai fill, que n’hi van *[RD a l’escola] de cansats!
   alas son that of.it-LOC go to the-school of tired

Again, *com*-exclamatives pattern similarly to *que*-exclamatives:

(33) a. Ai fill, com hi van de cansats *[RD a l’escola]!
   alas son how LOC go of tired to the-school
   ‘Oh son, how tired they attend school!’
b. *Ai fill, com hi van *[RD a l’escola] de cansats!
   alas son how LOC go to the-school of tired

The conclusion we can draw from the comparison between the sentences in (31) and those in (32)/(33) is that the adjective is not a right-dislocate in neither *que-* nor *com-*exclamatives.
3.3. Patterns of pronominalization

A second distinctive feature of que-exclamatives is the presence of a partitive clitic en/ne that Solà (1990, 1994, 1999) and Todolí (2002) explicitly consider the clitic correlate of the allegedly right-dislocated adjective. Yet, it has extensively been discussed so far that such an approach cannot be sustained on empirical grounds, as long as the properties of the adjective are taken into account. Furthermore, in this paragraph it will become apparent that the partitive clitic present in que-exclamatives is not fulfilling the same role that a resumptive clitic in right-dislocation structures.

As a point of departure, it must be mentioned that right-dislocated adjectives in Catalan are typically resumed by ho when selected by the copulative verb ser (‘be’)—in free alternation with en/ne in some cases (see Solà, 1994: ex 40):

(34) A: És interessant, aquest llibre?
   is interesting this book
   ‘Is this book interesting?’
   B: No. No ho és particularment, d’interessant.
   not not it is particularly of-interesting
   ‘No. It is not particularly interesting.’

(35) A: En Pere sembla simpàtic.
   the Pere seems friendly
   ‘Pere seems friendly.’
   B: Doncs, no ho/n’és gaire, de simpàtic.
   well not it/of.it-is any of-friendly
   ‘Well, he isn’t ANY friendly.’

Consequently, were the adjectives in the exclamative construction right-dislocated, a similar behavior would be expected. Nevertheless, the prediction reveals itself as incorrect:

(36) a. *Que ho és de car aquest vi!
    that it-is of expensive this wine
 b. *Que ho és d’intel·ligent la Maria!
    that it-is of intelligent the Maria

Consequently, this sharp empirical pattern concerning pronominalization strongly argues against equating the role of the partitive clitic in que-exclamatives with that of clitics in right-dislocation structures. Therefore, we are reinforced in the conclusion that the adjective in que-exclamatives cannot be considered in any event as a right-dislocate.
3.4. Crosslinguistic evidence

Consider the case of Spanish, which, in spite of not inserting, unlike Catalan, a marker *de* preceding dislocated adjectives (37)a nevertheless does have *com*-exclamatives (37)b (see fn. 5):

(37)  

a. Juan lo ha sido siempre, (*de) descuidado.  
    Juan it has been always of careless  
    ‘Juan has ALWAYS been careless.’

b. ¡Cómo es *(de) caro!  
    how is of expensive  
    ‘How expensive it is!’

The dissociation between the presence of *de* and right-dislocation is reinforced by the behavior of so-called hidden exclamatives (examples from Masullo, 1999, who offers an extensive description of this construction in Spanish):

(38)  

a. ¡Marta es de buena!  
    Marta is of good  
    ‘Marta is so good!’

b. ¡El chico es de travieso!  
    the boy is of naughty  
    ‘The boy is so naughty!’

This construction satisfies all the tests for the exclamative type. First of all, it carries both the factivity character and the scalar implicature associated with overt exclamatives, as the cancellation test makes apparent:8

(39)  

a. ¡Marta es de buena! #Si es que lo es.  
    Marta is of good if is that it is  
    ‘Marta is so good. If at all.’

b. ¡Marta es de buena! #Aunque no demasiado.  
    Marta is of good but not much  
    ‘Marta is so good. Even though not that much.’

Secondly, this construction cannot enter in question/answer pairs:

(40)  

a. A: ¡Marta es de alta! B: #Metro ochenta.  
    ‘A: How tall Marta is!’ B: #Six feet.’

b. A: ¿Se portó Marta bien? ¿Fue buena? B: #¡Marta fue de buena!  
    ‘A: Did Marta behave herself? B: #How good Marta was!’

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8 As noted in fn. 1, the very existence of this construction challenges the claim made in Zanuttini and Portner (2001) that the scalar implicature associated with exclamatives is a conventional one deriving from their form and not a conversational one deriving from their content.
Obviously, in this case the association of the marker *de* cannot be established with an allegedly right-dislocated adjective, which will give support to a different line of analysis in Section 3.1 below.9

3.5. The complementizer

The remaining feature of *que*-exclamatives to be described concerns the presence of *que* `that`:10

(41)  

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Que n’é s de ximple aquest paio!</td>
<td>b. *N’é s de ximple aquest paio!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>that of.it-is of foolish this guy</td>
<td>of.it-is of foolish this guy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘How foolish this guy is!’</td>
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Traditional grammars have considered that this element is the same adjective modifier appearing on standard *wh*-exclamatives:

(42)  

<p>| | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. <em>Que</em> car que és!</td>
<td>b. <em>Que</em> ximple que és!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how expensive that is</td>
<td>how foolish that is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘How expensive it is!’</td>
<td>‘How foolish (s)he is!’</td>
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However, against this approach, several arguments may be adduced. Firstly, the *que* in *que*-exclamatives is impossible in embedded contexts, in clear contrast with exclamative structures involving a fronted *wh*-element:11

---

9 A similar conclusion arises from the following intensive construction:

(i)  

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iÉs feo/caro/malo de cojones!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is ugly/expensive/bad of balls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It is extremely ugly/expensive/bad.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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I leave the analysis of this structure for a future work.

10 The sentence in (41)b becomes marginally possible if a marked suspended intonation is added, which suggests that a different construction would be involved, probably a kind of hidden exclamative. As long as no special intonation intervenes, suppression of *que* `that’ renders (41)b ungrammatical altogether.

11 The only case of embedded *que*-exclamatives commonly reported in Catalan grammatical literature is under the verb *mirar* `watch’:

(i)  

<p>| | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iMira que n’arriba a ser, de talós!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watch that of.it-arrives to be of stupid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Note how stupid (s)he was.’</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
(43)  

a. *És increïble que n’és de car aquest vi.
   is incredible that not of.it-is of expensive this wine

b. És increïble que car que és aquest vi.
   is incredible how expensive is this wine
   ‘It’s incredible how expensive this wine is.’

c. És increïble com és de car aquest vi.
   is incredible how is of expensive this wine
   ‘It’s incredible how expensive this wine is.’

Were *que a wh-element, this contrast would remain without explanation.

Note furthermore that this behavior has an exact parallel in the interrogative *que
‘that’ typical of several Catalan dialects, which is standardly analyzed as a com-
plementizer:

(44)  

a. Que vindràs demà?
   that will.come tomorrow
   ‘Will you come tomorrow?’

b. Va preguntar *que/si vindria demà.
   asked that/whether would.come tomorrow
   ‘(S)he asked whether (s)he will come tomorrow.’

An immediate double reward follows from this line of analysis. Firstly, it allows us
to discard the anomaly of a unique unstressed wh-element in the paradigm, since
that is unstressed, regardless of the fact that Catalan has no unstressed interrogative
or exclamative wh-word in isolation. Furthermore, treating that as a complementizer
allows a more regular and coherent pattern in Catalan left-periphery, for many
other instances of intensive constructions in Catalan share the structure ‘operator-
que’, and cannot elide the complementizer:

(45)  

a. Prou *(que) ho sap!
   enough that it knows
   ‘Sure (s)he knows it!’

b. Poc *(que) vindrà!
   little that will.come
   ‘(S)he won’t come!’

Yet, it is dubious that (i) represents a genuine instance of subordination. Rather, the imperative form of
the verb mirar ‘watch’ in this case has lost its original lexical meaning and works rather as a discourse
element fulfilling a phatic function. Note that any other verb form is banned besides the imperative:

(ii)   *Vaig mirar que n’arribava a ser, de taló!
   watched that of.it.arrived to be of stupid
   ‘I noted how stupid (s)he was.’

Henceforth, I will consider that sentences like (i) do not undermine the assertion in the text that *que-
exclamatives are a root phenomenon.
With this evidence in mind, it can be concluded that que-exclamatives are headed by a complementizer, a move which will turn relevant for the analysis in Section 3.3 below.

4. A new analysis

All the evidence reviewed in Section 2 pointed to the same direction, namely that the adjective in the exclamative construction under discussion is not a right-dislocate. Notwithstanding, this empirically well-sustained position poses two immediate issues:

A) Why does the adjective appear preceded by the marker de (‘of’)?
B) What is the source of the partitive clitic en/ne?

Let us firstly consider the issue of marker de.

4.1. The marker de

4.1.1. The marker de and quantification

One strong argument often adduced for considering that que-exclamatives involved a right-dislocated adjective was the presence of de preceding the adjective. Once it is assumed, after the evidence presented in Section 2, that this analysis is untenable, a new solution is called for. Prima facie, this empirical problem is aggravated by the fact that Catalan has marker de in degree modification structures with nouns, but not with adjectives:

(46) a. No té gens *(de) por/pa.
   not has any of fear/bread
   ‘(S)he doesn’t have any fear/bread.’
   b. Deixa’m un xic *(de) sal/sucre.
      lend-me a bit of salt/sugar
      ‘Lend me a bit of salt/sugar.’

(47) a. Ets molt *(d’)intel·ligent.
    are very of intelligent
    ‘You are very intelligent.’
   b. Ets massa *(d’)intel·ligent.
      are too much of intelligent
      ‘You are too much intelligent.’

Yet, in spite of this evidence, several constructions in Catalan show that the presence of marker de preceding an adjective is habitual in quantificational structures, which bolsters the idea of abandoning the correlation between marker de and
right-dislocation. Consider first measure constructions (see Gutiérrez-Rexach, 1999, for the equivalent construction in Spanish):

\[(48) \quad \begin{align*}
  \text{a.} & \quad \text{Aquest llit fa dos metres} \ de \ llarg. \\
  & \quad \text{this bed makes two meters of long} \\
  & \quad \text{‘This bed is two meters long.’} \\
  \text{b.} & \quad \text{Aquest llit deu fer vint quilos} \ de \ pes. \\
  & \quad \text{this bed must make twenty kilos of weight} \\
  & \quad \text{‘This bed must weigh twenty quilos.’}
\end{align*}\]

Interestingly, these constructions pattern with *que*- and *com*-exclamatives with respect to *wh*-splitting:

\[(49) \quad \begin{align*}
  \text{a.} & \quad \text{Quant fa} \ de \ llarg aquest llit? \\
  & \quad \text{how much makes of long this bed} \\
  & \quad \text{‘How long is this bed?’} \\
  \text{b.} & \quad \text{Quant deu fer} \ de \ pes aquest llit? \\
  & \quad \text{how much must make of weight} \\
  & \quad \text{‘How much must this bed weigh?’}
\end{align*}\]

As discussed in Section 3.1.2 below, this pattern will call for a solution along Kayne’s (2002) idea that the marker *de* is merged outside the VP in similar English and French cases.

Another interesting case is provided by concessive-conditionals, whose structure Quer (1998: 239) explicitly relates to that of *com*-exclamatives (I respect Quer’s glosses and translations, but italics are added to the marker *de* for the sake of easiness):

\[(50) \quad \begin{align*}
  \text{a.} & \quad \text{El posi com el posi} \ de \ fàcil, estic segur que no aprovaran.} \\
  & \quad \text{it put.SUB.1SG how it put.SUB.1SG of easy be-1SG sure that not} \\
  & \quad \text{pass.FUT.3PL} \\
  & \quad \text{‘However easy I might put it, I am sure they will not pass.’} \\
  \text{b.} & \quad \text{Vingui com vingui} \ de \ cansat, anirem a ballar.} \\
  & \quad \text{come.SUB.3SG how come.SUB.3SG of tired go-out.FUT.1PL to to} \\
  & \quad \text{dance} \\
  & \quad \text{‘However tired he might arrive, we will go out to dance.’}
\end{align*}\]

Interestingly, this construction fits the interpretation in terms of a tripartite quantificational structure commonly associated to condicionals (see e.g. König, 1986):

\[\text{12 As far as I know, it was Bartra (1986) who firstly suggested a close relationship between quantification, marker *de* and the partitive clitic *en/ne*.}\]
a. Mengielquemengi, noesmorira `.
   ‘Whatever (s)he eats, (s)he won’t die.’

b. \( \forall y [\text{eat}’(x,y)] \rightarrow \neg [\text{die}’(x)] \)

When this proposal combines with the standard assumption, stemming from Cresswell (1976), that gradable adjectives denote a relation between individuals and degrees (see Section 3.1.3 below for a more developed analysis), a sentence like (50)b receives the following (simplified) logical translation (\( d \) stands for the degree variable):

\[
\forall_d [\text{arrive}’(x) \land \text{tired}’(x,d)] \rightarrow [\text{go-out-to-dance}’(y)]
\]

This representation attempts to capture the universal meaning involved in the protasis, which is explicitly conveyed in English *however* or Spanish *comoquiera* ‘however’ (but see Quer, 1998, for arguments favoring an analysis in terms of free choice items instead of universal quantifiers). Evidence supporting this move follows from the fact that (parametric) conditional concessives legitimate donkey anaphors, as in the following example, where the inherently quantificational nature of concessive conditionals is expressed à la Lewis, namely involving unselective binding of both the individual and degree variables (I leave aside event variables):

\[
\forall_{x,y,d} [\text{put}’(x,y) \land \text{easy}’(y,d)] \rightarrow [\text{check-with-benevolence}’(x,y)]
\]

Even though indirect, this fact suggests that the relevant connection to be established in the case of marker *de* ‘of’ is with quantification structures, rather than with dislocation ones.

When we extend our playground to other Romance languages, instances of quantificational *de* abound as well. An interesting akin Romance language is Rumanian, which must insert a marker *de* between the degree modifier and the adjective (after Corver, 2000):

\[
\text{(54) a. } \text{Ion e extrem } *\text{(de)} \text{ înalt}
  \text{Ion is extreme of tall}
  \text{‘Ion is extremely tall.’}
\]

\[
\text{b. } \text{Maria e enorm } *\text{(de)} \text{ fericită.}
  \text{Maria is enormous of happy}
  \text{‘Maria is enormously happy.’}
\]

Furthermore, Rumanian behaves like Catalan and Spanish regarding *com*-exclamatives, which involve *de* obligatorily:
In sum, even though partial, the crosslinguistic perspective clearly points toward a strong relationship between the presence of marker *de* and quantificational structures, a property that will become paramount in the analysis developed in Section 3.1.3.

4.1.2. VP-external *de*

Kayne (2002) offers a detailed study of quantified nominal phrases involving *of* and *de* in English and French respectively:

(56) a. John has bought lots of books this year.
    b. Jean a acheté beaucoup/peu/trop de livres.
    ‘Jean has bought lots/little/too many books.’

His proposal crucially relies on Case, specifically on the claim that *of/de* appears in order to allow the noun to receive case, because the presence of the quantifier blocks assignment from the verb. His proposal fleshes out in the following way for the French sentence (the English one would receive the same analysis):

(57) ... [VP acheté [livres peu]] → merger of K-*de*
    ... K-*de* [VP acheté [livres peu]] → movement of *livres* to Spec,K-*de*
    ... [KP livres i K-*de* [VP acheté [ti peu]]] → merger of *de*
    ... de [KP livres i K-*de* [VP acheté [ti peu]]] → movement of VP to Spec,de
    ... [deP [VP acheté [ti peu]]] de [KP livres i K-*de* ti ]

Note that the fact that *of/de* is merged outside the DP entails that, despite appearances, *of/de* and the noun do not form a constituent. This move allows Kayne to extend this analysis to quantifier movement in French:

(58) Jean a beaucoup/peu/trop acheté de livres.
    ‘Jean has bought lots/little/too many books.’

According to Kayne, the difference between (56)b and (58) consists in that the latter sentence involves a further step:

---

13 Kayne (2002) considers that the head responsible for Case assignment is not *of/de* itself but a Case agreement head, K-*of/de*, which is phonologically null in English or French, but overtly realized in languages like German:

(i) mit de-*m* Mann
    with the-DAT man
(59) \[ \ldots [t_i \text{ peu}]_k \text{ [dep} [\text{VP acheté} t_k ]_j \text{ de} [\text{KP livres}, \text{K-de} t_j]] \]

As he himself remarks (2002: 23):

That remnant movement must come into play here follows from the fact that in the derivation (199)/(200) \([=\text{our (57)/(59)}]\) movement of \textit{livres} to Spec,\textit{K-de} takes place prior to movement of the phrase containing \textit{peu}. This in turn reflects the idea that movement to Spec,\textit{K-de} is a Case-licensing form of movement, that movement of (the phrase containing) \textit{peu} is a scrambling or focus or quantifier type of movement, and that Case-licensing heads enter the derivation prior to the heads that license scrambling or focus or quantifier movement.

Crucially for our purposes, this line of reasoning has a strict parallel in Catalan \textit{que}-exclamatives considered in Sections 1 and 2. The next paragraph will develop this resemblance in detail.

4.1.3. Extending the analysis: the null degree operator

Let us take as a point of departure that \textit{que}-exclamatives involve a degree modification similar to that of French \textit{peu de livres} ‘few books’, with the difference that the modifier is a null degree operator (DegOp). Two important points must be considered regarding this assumption. First, the fact that \textit{que}-exclamatives display island effects, just as \textit{com}- and \textit{wh}-exclamatives do, clearly suggests that some kind of A'-movement is involved. Consider for instance their sensibility to the Coordinate Structure Constraint:

(60) a. \textit{*Que n’és de ximple en Pere i una mica intel·ligent la Maria!}  
that of.it-is of foolish the Pere and a bit intelligent the Maria
b. \textit{*Com és de ximple en Pere i una mica intel·ligent la Maria!}  
how is of foolish the Pere and a bit intelligent the Maria
c. \textit{*Que ximple que és en Pere i una mica intel·ligent la Maria!}  
how foolish that is the Pere and a bit intelligent the Maria

As expected, the sentences become grammatical when the extraction applies across-the-board:

(61) a. \textit{Que n’és de ximple en Pere i d’intel·ligent la Maria!}  
that of.it-is of foolish the Pere and of-intelligent the Maria
   ‘How foolish Pere is and how intelligent Maria.’
b. \textit{Com és de ximple en Pere i d’intel·ligent la Maria!}  
how is of foolish the Pere and of-intelligent the Maria
   ‘How foolish Pere is and how intelligent Maria.’
c. \textit{Que ximple que és en Pere i d’intel·ligent la Maria!}  
how foolish that is the Pere and of-intelligent the Maria
   ‘How foolish Pere is and how intelligent Maria.’
It seems, thus, quite apparent that movement of a null operator is involved in *que*-exclamatives. Yet, the motivation for this movement is still to be established. One obvious possibility is feature checking: the null DegOp must check its [exclamative] feature against the relevant head in the left periphery. This is the position taken up by Masullo (1999) for Spanish hidden exclamatives (see Section 2.5). Another interesting possibility would be that the movement of the null DegOp is triggered to bind the degree variable introduced by the adjective [an idea that has been formulated in several ways since Cresswell (1976); see Zwarts (1992) or Gutiérrez-Rexach (1999) for two different approaches]. Henceforth, the logical representation of gradable adjectives will be as follows, where a degree variable (d) is introduced besides the individual one (x):

\[
foolish \rightarrow \lambda x \lambda d. foolish'(x)(d)
\]

This logical representation captures Cresswell’s original proposal that predicates denoting properties are relations between individuals and degrees—which in turn are conceived as sets of individuals defined with respect to a property. This line of analysis offers us a straightforward explanation for the restriction noted in Section 1.2 that only gradable adjectives are allowed in *que*-exclamatives [I repeat the examples in (7) for the sake of reference]:

\[
\begin{align*}
(63) & \quad a. \quad *\text{Aquest gat és molt persa/quadrúpede.} \\
& \text{this cat is very Persian/four-legged} \\
& b. \quad *\text{Que n’és de persa/quadrúpede, aquest gat!} \\
& \text{that of.it is of Persian/four-legged this cat} \\
& c. \quad *\text{Que persa/quadrúpede que és aquest gat!} \\
& \text{how Persian/four-legged that is this cat}
\end{align*}
\]

Since neither *persa* nor *quadriápede* are gradable adjectives, and consequently do not introduce a degree variable, it can be considered that the illformedness of these sentences is due to whatever general principle is responsible to avoid vacuous quantification.\footnote{Moreover, the logical semantics proposed for gradable adjectives allows for a transparent relation to syntactic structure, for the introduction of the degree variable corresponds with the presence of a DegP in syntax (see Gutiérrez-Rexach, 1999; Matushansky, 2001).}

This line of analysis receives strong empirical confirmation when the interaction of exclamatives with excess quantifiers is considered. As shown in (64), the excess quantifier *massa* ‘too much’ turns the gradable adjective non-gradable and it is, hence, incompatible with the degree word *molt* ‘very’, in contrast with the degree quantifier *poc* ‘little’:

\[
\begin{align*}
(64) & \quad \text{un llibre molt *massa/poc interessant} \\
& \text{‘a very *too much/little interesting book’}
\end{align*}
\]
‘little’ bind the degree variable of the adjective, but unlike the latter, the former
doesn’t contribute the structure with another degree variable, for its lexical seman-
tics excludes such a possibility. As Bosque (1993: 6) observes, “the concept of excess
does not merely represent a degree more on the degree scale, but it is, instead, a
concept external to the scale.” Accordingly, excess quantifiers cannot enter in
quantificational scales nor in comparative structures (see Bosque, 1993):

(65) a. molt/*massa o almenys força interessant
    ‘very/*too much or, at least, quite interesting’
b. Aquest llibre és *massa/més interessant que aquell altre.
    ‘This book is *too much/more interesting than that one.’

Consequently, although its meaning is one of excess, which makes it a priori
semantically well suited for combination with an exclamative construction, the
analysis defended in the text correctly predicts that excess quantifiers must be
incompatible with que- and com- exlamatives, for it would violate the prohibition
against vacuous quantification:

(66) a. Que n’és de *massa/poc interessant aquest llibre!
    that of.it is of too.much/little interesting this book
    ‘How *too much/little interesting this book is!’
b. Com és de *massa/poc interessant aquest llibre!
    how is of too.much/little interesting this book
    ‘How *too much/little interesting this book is!’

It can be concluded, then, that the presence of a null degree operator in que-
exclamatives is well-sustained on empirical and theoretical grounds.15

15 Another piece of evidence favoring the analysis defended in the text can be drawn from the fact that
que-exclamatives are always more degraded than com- and wh-exclamatives with respect to extraction
from within a clause [partially similar effects are described for Spanish exclamatives by Gutiérrez-Rexach
(1999) and Torrego (1988)]:

(i) a. *Que van trobar que n’era d’intel.ligent, la Maria!
    that found that of.it was of.intelligent the Maria
b. ??Com van trobar que era d’intel.ligent, la Maria!
    how found that was of.intelligent the Maria
    ‘How intelligent did they find that Maria was?’
c. Que intel.ligent que van trobar que era, la Maria!
    how intelligent that found that was the Maria
    ‘How intelligent did they find that Maria was!’

The contrast follows straightforwardly from the proposal in the text if we adopt Stowell’s (1986) sug-
gestion that null operators cannot properly govern their trace, so that they must be in a strictly local
relation with their antecedent. I leave a more detailed study for a future work.
4.1.4. Movement and case

The discussion so far encourages an analysis of que-exclamatives along the lines suggested by Kayne (2002) for French Jean a beaucoup/peu/trop acheté de livres ‘Jean has bought lots of/little/too many books’, so that Que n’est de car! ‘How expensive it is!’ receives the following derivation:

(67) \[ \text{[VP est [car DegOp]] \rightarrow merger of K-de} \]
\[ \text{... K-de [VP est [car DegOp]] \rightarrow movement of car to Spec,K-de} \]
\[ \text{... [KP car_i K-de [VP est [ti DegOp]]] \rightarrow merger of de} \]
\[ \text{... de [KP car_i K-de [VP est [ti DegOp]]] \rightarrow movement of VP to Spec,de} \]
\[ \text{... [dep [VP est [ti DegOp]], de [KP car_i K-de ti]] \rightarrow merger of que} \]
\[ \text{... que [dep [VP est [ti DegOp]], de [KP car_i K-de ti]] \rightarrow movement of DegOp to Spec,CP} \]
\[ \text{... [CP [ti DegOp] que [dep [VP est tk], de [KP car_i K-de ti]]]} \]

The same derivation applies to com-exclamatives straightforwardly:

(68) \[ \text{[VP est [car com]] \rightarrow merger of K-de} \]
\[ \text{... K-de [VP est [car com]] \rightarrow movement of car to Spec,K-de} \]
\[ \text{... [KP car_i K-de [VP est [ti com]]] \rightarrow merger of de} \]
\[ \text{... de [KP car_i K-de [VP est [ti com]]] \rightarrow movement of VP to Spec,de} \]
\[ \text{... [dep [VP est [ti com]], de [KP car_i K-de ti]] \rightarrow merger of null C} \]
\[ \text{... C [dep [VP est [ti com]], de [KP car_i K-de ti]] \rightarrow movement of com to Spec,CP} \]
\[ \text{... [CP [ti com]], C [dep [VP est tk], de [KP car_i K-de ti]]]} \]

However, as an anonymous reviewer points out to me, an important difference must be contemplated: Kayne (2002) crucially assumes the movement of the NP to the Spec,K-de to be Case-driven, whereas in que- and com-exclamatives it is an adjective that moves to this position. Obviously, under standard assumptions adjectives are not required to have a Case, for they are not arguments. Yet, Kayne (2002) considers the possibility of a more general version of the Case Filter, requiring all [+N] categories to have Case, not just nouns, which is coherent with the fact that in certain languages with Case morphology (e.g. Russian) all the [+N] elements in the DP display Case endings. Moreover, Kayne’s proposal simply generalizes to Case the standard position regarding gender and number agreement, which offers us with more coherent a picture of feature checking, a desirable consequence on theoretical grounds. I will then assume that movement of the adjective in que- and com-exclamatives is Case-driven.

This analysis offers straightforward answers to otherwise intractable phenomena. First, since de and the adjective are assumed not to form a constituent, the analysis in the text correctly predicts the sentence in (69) to be impossible altogether.
Moreover, the proposal in the text gives strong empirical support to the generalization raised in Kayne (2002) that the presence of marker de is a necessary condition for wh-splitting. Consider, for instance, the behavior of interrogatives quant ‘how much’ and com ‘how much’ together with that of que- and com-exclamatives:

(71) a. Que n’és *(de) car aquest vi! that of.it-is of expensive this wine
   ‘How expensive this wine is!’
 b. Com és *(de) car aquest vi! how is of expensive this wine
   ‘How expensive this wine is!’
 c. Quant fa *(de) llarg aquest llit? how.much makes of long this bed
   ‘How much long is this bed?’
 d. Com és *(de) car aquest vi? how.much is of expensive this wine
   ‘How much expensive is this wine?’

Before closing this section, it is important to note that the success of the analysis just proposed must be momentarily restricted to Catalan, for French and Italian exclamatives do allow splitting without de the Italian example comes from Benincà, 1995 and the French one from Gérard-Naef, 1980:16

(72) a. Come sarà stanco!
   how will.be tired
   ‘How tired (s)he will be!’
 b. Comme la vie est singulière, changeante!
   how the live is singular changeful
   ‘How singular, changeful the life is!’

16 I owe Richard Kayne for showing me the relevance of this point and for suggesting valuable comments on which the discussion is built on.
Nevertheless, this contrast between Catalan and Italian/French is not restricted to the case at hand. As studied by Martí (1995), Catalan also contrasts with Italian and French regarding the insertion of the marker *de* in elliptical noun constructions like the following (her exs. 10, 12, and 13):

(73) a. un gat petit → un de petit
   ‘a small cat’ → ‘a small one’

b. un vestito bello → uno bello
   ‘a beautiful dress’ → ‘a beautiful one’

c. un crayon rouge → un rouge
   ‘a red pencil’ → ‘a red one’

This suggests grounding this disparate behavior on the existence of a null version of marker *de* in Italian and French. In any case, even though a profound comparative study of such crosslinguistic differences is still to be done, the analysis defended so far seems quite promising in pursuing this task.

4.2. The partitive clitic

The remaining wrinkle to iron out concerns the contrast between *que*- and *com*-exclamatives regarding the presence of the partitive clitic. Note that *en/ne* is in complementary distribution with overt operators, such as *com* (‘how’), *que* (‘how’) or the emphatic neuter determiner (in substandard Catalan):

(74) a. *Com n’és d’intel·ligent, tu, aquest noi!
   how of.it-is of-intelligent you this boy

b. *Que/*Lo intel·ligent que n’és, tu, aquest noi!
   how/the.neut intelligent that of.it-is you this boy

The idea that I would like to propose is that the illformedness of (74) is due to an instance of illicit clitic-doubling, just as (75), for the partitive clitic correlates with the overt operator:

(75) *A qui el va veure?
   to who him saw

In contrast, the null degree operator must receive its content from the partitive clitic, very much alike to the classical Borer-Jaeggli’s analysis of clitics. Hence, the internal structure of the DegP with a null operator would be as follows, following Ordóñez and Treviño’s (1999) analysis of clitic-doubling:

(76) \[ DegP [DegP OP] [Deg’ [Deg en]] \]
As for its derivation, once the VP moves to the Spec, de, the clitic may incorporate to the verb and the null operator may raise to the higher left-periphery to bind the degree variable of the adjective.\footnote{It is irrelevant for the analysis whether the movement just involves the operator, as in the text, or the whole DegP containing the trace of the partitive clitic.}

\begin{equation}
\text{(77)}\quad \ldots \text{[deP [VP é[s t_i [DegP [DegP OP] [Deg'' [Deg en]]]]]} \text{de [KP car}_i \text{ K-de } t_j \text{]} \rightarrow \text{incorporation of the partitive clitic}
\end{equation}

\begin{equation}
\text{(78) a. Ai, filla, *(que) en vas d’equivocada!}
\end{equation}

\begin{equation}
\text{alas daughter that of it go of-mistaken}
\end{equation}

\begin{equation}
\text{‘Oh, dear, how wrong you are!’}
\end{equation}

The last detail we must consider concerns the form of the clitic: Why should it be the partitive one? One possible answer to this question may be that partitive is the typical default Case when accusative is not available. Note in this respect the contrast between definite and indefinite DPs in postverbal position in languages like Turkish (Erç, 1991), where the difference is morphologically realized, or Romance languages like Italian, French or Catalan, where the difference is linked to a well-defined paradigm of syntactic distinctive features. In this respect, the partitive clitic would be the formal reflex of this Case assignment. A different, but nonetheless compatible, alternative would be consider that the presence of the partitive clitic is necessary to identify the null degree operator as quantificational, a feature systematically associated with the paradigmatic nonspecific clitic en/ne.

Whichever the correct line of analysis is for this specific issue, the extension of Kayne’s (2002) analysis of de/of as VP-external to que- and com-exclamatives together with the assumption that a null degree operator is at stake has turn out desirable on both empirical and theoretical grounds, for it offers a straightforward account of the distinctive features of que- and com-exclamatives while maintaining the exclamative landscape maximally homogeneous.

4.3. The complementizer

We have seen in Section 2.5 that the exclamative construction under scrutiny must be introduced by means of the default complementizer que ‘that’, so that its suppression yields ungrammaticality, in sharp contrast with com-exclamatives:
b. Com (*que) és de car aquest vi!
   how that is of expensive this wine
   ‘How expensive this wine is!’

This contrast immediately raises two questions:

A) Why the complementizer is obligatory in *que* exclamatives?
B) Why the complementizer is impossible in *com* exclamatives?

In order to answer them, I will closely follow Zanuttini and Portner’s (2001) proposal that exclamatives involve CP-recursion [following Rizzi’s (1997) split-CP hypothesis]: one CP hosts the material marking the sentence type as exclamative, and the other hosts a factive operator (FACT), which syntactically realizes the factive character of exclamatives (see Section 2.1). Moreover, following Rizzi’s (1997) insights, they argue the realization of sentence type must occupy the higher CP (Rizzi’s ForceP) in order to allow proper selection matching by a higher predicate, which confines the factive operator to the lower CP. This leads them to the following structure:  

(79) \[ \text{[CP2 EXCL [C2 C2 [CP1 FACT [C1 [IP ... ]]]]]} \]

They argue indeed for a more articulated structure incorporating a third CP layer, which allows them to make a distinction between *wh*-elements that can only be exclamatives—placed in the highest CP—and *wh*-elements that can be both exclamative or interrogative. They ground their distinction on two facts, namely that the former class forces the presence of complementizer *che* ‘that’ (ia) and allow a left-dislocate to its right (ib) (Zanuttini and Portner, 2001: 31):

(i) a. Che alto * *(che) é!
    how tall that is
    ‘How very tall (s)he is!’

   b. Che bel posto, a Giorgio, che (gli) hanno assegnato!
      which nice place to Giorgio that him have assigned
      ‘What a good place they assigned to Giorgio!’

However, since none of these tests works in Catalan (nor correctly captures the behavior of *com*-exclamatives, as Zanuttini and Portner, 2001: fn. 33, themselves acknowledge):

(ii) a. Que car (* que) és aquest vi!
    how expensive that this wine is
    ‘How expensive this wine is!’

   b. *Que cares, a Barcelona, són les sabates!
      how expensive at Barcelona are the shoes

So then, I will dismiss their distinction and treat all *wh*-exclamatives as forming an unitary class in Catalan.
The exclamative type of the sentence is obtained through the movement of the *wh*-element to the highest CP—which will identify exclamative sentences in contrast to factive declarative ones—in connection with the presence of the factive operator in the lower CP—which will distinguish exclamative sentences from interrogative ones.\(^{19}\)

Now the realization of the heads of both complementizers must be considered. Zanuttini and Portner (2001) consider that C1 can be filled by either merge of *che* ‘that’ or movement of the inflected verb, whereas C2 can only be filled by movement of *che* ‘that’ from the lower CP. Consequently, the presence of the complementizer will be contingent to the occurrence of verb-to-C movement, which explains the behavior of *com*-exclamatives with minor adjustments (see footnote 18):

(80) \[ \text{CP}_2 \text{com} \left[ \text{C}_2^\small{\text{0}} \text{és de car aquest vi} \right] \text{FACT} \left[ \text{C}_1^\small{\text{0}} \text{tv} \left[ \text{IP} \ldots \right] \right] \]

Since the verb must raise to C2 to satisfy (a version of) the WH-Criterion, no room or necessity exists for merging of *que* ‘that’. Moreover, as long as *com* ‘how’ types the sentence as exclamative, *com*-exclamatives can be embedded under a verb selecting an exclamative sentence:

(81) (És increïble/No et pots imaginar) com és de car aquest vi.
    ‘It is incredible/You cannot imagine how expensive this wine is.’

In sharp contrast with *com*-exclamatives, *que*-exclamatives cannot be selected by an exclamative predicate:

(82) *És increïble/*No et pots imaginar que n’és de car aquest vi.
    ‘It is incredible/You cannot imagine that this wine is expensive.’

This contrast suggests that the null degree operator, unlike *com* ‘how’, doesn’t bear a WH feature, so that it is incapable of marking the sentence as a *wh*-exclamative, and, as a consequence, a clash results of selectional requirements between the selecting verb and its complement. This suggests that no verb-to-C movement applies, allowing the merging of *que* ‘that’:

(83) \[ \text{CP}_2 \text{DegOp} \left[ \text{C}_2^\small{\text{0}} \text{és de car aquest vi} \right] \text{FACT} \left[ \text{C}_1^\small{\text{0}} \text{que} \left[ \text{IP} \text{n’és de car aquest vi} \right] \right] \]

The crucial point now is the obligatory presence of the complementizer. I would like to suggest that the head of C1 must be filled in order to license the presence of

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\(^{19}\) Following Zanuttini and Portner (2001), I will consider that the lack of intervening effects of the factive operator follows from the very different nature of this element with respect to the *wh*-element moving to the specifier of the higher CP.
the factive operator in the CP field, so that either V-movement or que-merging is obligatory. Since the null degree operator has no WH-feature, it cannot force movement of the verb to C, which forces the insertion of que ‘that’ as a last resort. Evidence for this move comes from nominal exclamatives and intensive constructions (see Section 2.5):

(84)  

a. Les bestieses *(que) va dir!  
the nonsenses that said  
‘The nonsense (s)he said!’

b. Prou/I tant *(que) ho sap!  
enough/and so that it knows  
‘Sure/Of course (s)he knows it!’

Arguably, the fronted elements lack a WH-feature, which requires inserting que ‘that’.20

Another piece of evidence supporting the link between the factive operator and the presence of que ‘that’ follows from the crosslinguistic observation that complementizer deletion is systematically banned in factive sentences (Italian sentences from Poletto, 2000: 120; see also Acquaviva, 1991: 645; for Spanish see Delbecque and Lamiroy, 1999: 2026):

(85)  

a. Credo (que) lo faccia.  
think that it do.SUBJUNCTIVE  
‘I think (that) he does it.’

b. Mi dispiace *(que) lo faccia.  
me sorry that it do.SUBJUNCTIVE  
‘I am sorry that he does it.’

Even though the discussion doesn’t exhaust the full range of issues originating in the left-periphery of exclamative sentences see Benincà, 1996 and Poletto, 2000 for a survey of related intriguing phenomena in northern Italian dialects, it becomes quite

20 We are left with the intermediate case of wh-exclamatives, which optionally insert que ‘that’:

(i)  

(És increíble/No et pots imaginar) que car (que) és aquest vi.  
is incredible/not you can imagine how expensive that is this wine  
‘It is incredible/You cannot imagine how expensive this wine is.’

A possible explanation for this mixed behavior may follow from the complex nature of the exclamative wh-element—que + Adj ‘how + Adj’ and quin + N ‘which + N’—, in contrast with com ‘how’, which may lead speakers to analyze this structure either as com-exclamatives (hence, the lack of que ‘that’) or as nominal exclamatives (hence, the obligatoriness of que ‘that’). Nevertheless, this may be considered speculative at best, for now.
clear from the discussion that *que-* and *com-* exclamatives fit in the abstract split-CP structure stemming from Rizzi (1997) and fleshed out in Zanuttini and Portner (2001) for exclamatives.

5. Conclusion

The main hypothesis of this paper is that certain exclamative constructions apparently involving the right-dislocation of an adjective should be analyzed as having it in situ, and involving a null exclamative degree operator. First, several standard tests have been conducted to confirm that *que-* exclamatives are fully-fledged exclamative sentences, and not just declarative sentences expressing an exclamation.

The second concern has been offering a fine-grained characterization of the construction, specifically of the introduction of the adjective by means of the marker *de* (*of*), the presence of the partitive clitic *en/ne*, and the introduction of the sentence by means of complementizer *que* ‘that’. Evidence has been provided that traditional analysis are incapable of offering a principled explanation of these properties, particularly once *com-* exclamatives enter the playground.

Finally, an analysis of *que-* exclamatives has been offered deriving the main properties of the construction from the presence of a null degree operator. Moreover, it has been argued that this construction involves a VP-external *de*, along the lines of Kayne’s (2002) analysis of English preposition *of* and its French counterpart *de*. When combined, these two aspects have offered a principled and unified explanation for both *que-* and *com-* exclamatives.

References


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