

Encoding emotion in discourse: A cross-linguistic approach to *that*-exclamatives

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that-exclamatives

that-configurations that can be used as root clauses expressing an exclamatory speech act in Germanic (Bennis, 1998; D'Avis, 2016; Delsing, 2010).

- (1) a. Dat hij die boeken kan lezen! [Dutch]
that he those books can read
'Wow, he can read those books!'
b. Dass er diese Bücher lesen kann! [German]
that he those books read can
'Wow, he can read those books!'
c. Att du hann till mötet! [Swedish]
that you reached to meeting.DEF
'What a surprise that you reached the meeting!'

that-exclamatives

that-configurations that can be used as root clauses expressing an exclamatory speech act in Catalan (Romance) (Villalba, 2003).

- (2) Que n'és, de car! [Catalan]
that of.it-is of expensive
'How expensive it is!'

Claims

Claim 1

that-exclamatives in Germanic and Romance languages differ semantically in expressing either a non-degree (German) or a degree reading (Catalan).

Claim 2

At the level of discourse pragmatics, *that*-exclamatives in both German and Catalan are polar: they can be used as responses to polar information-seeking questions and convey all-sentence information focus.

Outline

- 1 Degree vs. non-degree readings of *that*-exclamatives
- 2 *that*-exclamatives used in a discourse
- 3 Conclusions

that-exclamatives in Catalan

- (4) a. Que n'és, de car!
that of.it-is of expensive
'How expensive it is!'
b. Que en tenen, de llibres!
that of.it have.3PL of books
'How many books they have!'

that-exclamatives as insubordination

that-exclamatives are a typical case of INSUBORDINATION (Evans, 2007; D'Hertefelt & Verstraete, 2014; Mithun, 2016; Gras & Sansiñena, 2017):

- (3) a. Ich weiß, [dass der schön singen kann].
I know that this.one beautiful sing can
'I know that he can sing beautifully.'
b. Dass der schön singen kann!
that this.one beautiful sing can
'How surprising that he can sing beautifully!'

According to Truckenbrodt (2013), (3b) is a case of 'Emotion zu Proposition' ('emotion towards proposition') and not of 'Emotion zu implizitem Grad' ('Emotion towards implicit degree'); see also D'Avis (2002).

that-exclamatives in Catalan are degree-based

- (5) a. #Que ha mort!
that has died
intended meaning: 'He died!'
b. Dass er gestorben ist!
that he died has
'He died!'
(6) a. Que n'és, de (#massa) car!
that of.it-is of too.much expensive
'How (too much) expensive it is!'
b. #Que (#massa) car que és!
how too-much expensive that is
'How (too much) expensive it is!'

The roots of the difference

Lexical properties of *that*

In Germanic, it possibly derives from a determiner, while in Catalan, on the other hand, it lexically corresponds to *wh*-elements that feature degree readings. On the diachronic development of the complementizer system, see Roberts & Roussou (2003); Van Gelderen (2009); Manzini (2012, 2014); Poletto & Sanfelici (2018).

Recap

- *that*-exclamatives express a non-degree reading in Germanic languages like German, while Catalan *that*-exclamatives are restricted to the degree reading that is also conveyed by their *wh*-counterparts.
- This contrast is linked to the *wh*-nature of *that* in Catalan, which differs from its determiner-like nature in Germanic.
- Next: How about using *that*-exclamatives in discourse?

that as an all-purpose finite complementizer in Catalan

- (7)
- Diuen que plourà. [declarative clause]
say.3PL that rain.FUT.3SG
'They say that it will rain.'
 - Viu en un poble que hi fa calor. [relative]
lives in a village that LOC makes heat
'(S)he lives in a village where it is hot.'
 - Prou que el conec! [verum focus]
enough that him know.1 SG
'I do know him!'
 - Que vindrà demà? [yes/no question]
that come.FUT.2SG tomorrow
'Are you coming tomorrow?'

Starting observation

Original puzzle by Castroviejo (2008): *that*-exclamatives can serve as responses to polar questions.

- (8)
- A: Saps res de l'Antonio?
'Have you heard from Antonio?'
- B: Que en fa de temps que no el veig!
that of.it does of time that NEG him see.1 SG
'I haven't seen him for such a long time!' (= No.)
- B': #Quant de temps que fa que no el veig!
how.much of time that makes that not him see.1 SG
'How long it has been since I haven't seen him!'

A new approach to understanding the pragmatics of exclamatives

Our main claim: Exclamatives are in fact emphatic assertions and therefore just a subtype of linguistic emphasis that can be found across clause types and speech acts (Trotzke, 2017).

Empirical question that the two of us have addressed experimentally (Villalba, 2017; Trotzke, to appear):

Can the descriptive content of exclamatives be denied?

- Common answer: **No!** (e.g., Rett 2008, 2011)
- Our answer: **Yes!**

This talk:

Can exclamatives be used as responses?

- Common answer: **No!**
- Our answer: **Yes!**

Exclamatives as responses

Descriptive content is in the 'background'; therefore, it cannot be used to answer a question (see Grimshaw, 1979; Abels, 2010):

- (9) A: How fast was Eliud Kipchoge?
B: Eliud Kipchoge was very fast.
B': #How fast Eliud Kipchoge was!
- (10) A: Did Andreas run the Berlin Marathon?
B: #I'd forgotten that he did.

- Prominent explanation in the semantics/pragmatics literature (e.g., Zanuttini & Portner, 2003): Descriptive content is a **factivity presupposition**.

Exclamatives as responses

Can questions only be answered by (plain) assertions?

Of course not!

Exclamatives as responses

There are certainly many contexts in which a question need not be answered by an assertion (Abels, 2010):

- (11) A: What should I do?
a. B: Give that talk!
b. B: Halte den Vortrag!
hold.IMP the talk
c. B': Den Vortrag halten.
the talk hold.INF

Exclamatives as responses

We can answer questions by means of presuppositions (Chernilovskaya et al., 2012):

- (12) A: Is France a monarchy?
B: The queen (of France) is standing in front of you.

Plus, exclamatives can be used as responses (Castroviejo, 2008):

- (13) A: Què et sembla si anem a Cala S'Alguer?
'Why don't we go to Cala S'Alguer?'
B: Quina idea tan fantàstica!
'What a wonderful idea [this is]!'

- However, A is not ignorant → 'biased' question.

Exclamatives as responses

So far, we have only focused on the different **forms of responses**:

- (15) A: How fast was Eliud Kipchoge?
B: Eliud was very fast.
B': #How fast Eliud was!

Exclamatives as responses

Remaining puzzle:

- (14) A: How fast was Eliud Kipchoge?
B: Eliud was very fast.
B': #How fast Eliud was!

If exclamatives...

- feature descriptive content that can be denied (as our experimental work has shown)
- and thus do not differ from declarative assertions like (14)B in this respect...

Why is it not possible to use them as responses to (information-seeking) questions?

Exclamatives as responses

What happens if we focus on different **forms of questions** instead?

- (16) A: How fast was Kipchoge?
B: Eliud was very fast.
B': #How fast Eliud was!
- (17) A: Tell me, how did Eliud do in the race?
B: My god! How fast he was!
B': My god! He was very fast!

Exclamatives as responses

What happens if we focus on different **forms of questions** instead?

- (18) A: How fast was Eliud Kipchoge?
 B: Eliud was [very]_F fast.
 B': #[How fast Eliud was!]_F
 B'': #[Eliud war_{'was'} vielleicht_{PART} schnell_{'fast'}!]_F
- (19) A: Tell me, how did Eliud do in the race? [= (17)]
 B: My god! [How fast he was!]_F
 B': My god! [He was very fast!]_F
 B'': [Mein Gott! Der_{this.ones} war vielleicht schnell!]_F

Wh-exclamatives can respond to information-seeking Qs.

Exclamatives as responses

Exclamatives in general feature wide/all sentence-focus and thus propositional scope; they are a type of emphatic assertion that can be found across clause types (Trotzke, 2017).

- (20) [CP C⁰<sub>[contrast]/[intensity] ... [vP ...]]
 (21) [ForceP [EmpP Emp⁰_{[contrast]/[intensity] [FinP ... [vP ...]]]]]}</sub>

If that's true, *that*-exclamatives are all sentence-foci too, both in Catalan and in German:

- (22) a. [iQue n'és, de car!]_F [Catalan]
 b. [Dass der schön singen kann!]_F [German]

Exclamatives as responses

- (23) a. #Que ha mort! non-polar/degree
 that has died
 b. Dass er gestorben ist! polar/non-degree
 that he died has

- Catalan *that*-exclamatives are non-polar semantically, but
- they are polar at the level of pragmatics; they are perfect responses to polar Qs ($\{p, \neg p\}$):

- (24) A: Saps res de l'Antonio?
 'Have you heard from Antonio?'
 B: Que en fa de temps que no el veig!
 that of.it does of time that NEG him see.1SG
 'I haven't seen him for such a long time!' (= No!)

Conclusions

- *that*-exclamatives in German and Catalan differ regarding their degree component: the former can feature a non-degree reading, whereas the latter must be interpreted as degree exclamatives.
- *that*-exclamatives in these two languages display a common discourse use: due to their expression of all sentence-focus, they can be used as responses to information-seeking questions.
- At the level of pragmatics, *that*-exclamatives are in fact polar in both languages: they can be used as responses to polar questions, emphasizing p or $\neg p$.

Thanks! Danke! Gràcies!

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Emotion and *that*-exclamatives

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