

The Right Edge of Exclamative Sentences in Catalan*

Xavier Villalba

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Departament Filologia Catalana
Facultat de Lletres,, edifici B
08193 Bellaterra (Barcelona). Spain
Xavier.Villalba@uab.es
http://ggt.uab.es/xavier

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Abstract

In the paper it is argued that certain exclamative constructions apparently involving right-dislocation of an adjective must be analyzed as having it *in situ*, forming a small clause with a null exclamative operator. Compelling empirical evidence is provided for this position from the comparison with clear instances of right-dislocated adjectives. Moreover, it is suggested that the obligatory appearance of the marker *de* ('of') and the partitive clitic *en/ne* in this construction, follows from the presence of the null exclamative operator.

Key words: exclamative sentence, right-dislocation, degree modification, null operator.

Resum. Els elements perifèrics finals en les oracions exclamatives del català

En aquest article s'argumenta que certes construccions exclamatives que aparentment presenten un adjectiu dislocat a la dreta s'han d'analitzar assumint que es troba *in situ* i que forma una oració reduïda amb un operador nul exclamatiu. La comparació amb casos clars d'adjectius dislocats a la dreta ens proporciona evidència empírica de pes a favor d'aquesta postura. A més, se suggereix que l'aparició en aquesta construcció del marcador *de* i del clític partitiu *en/ne* és una conseqüència directa de la presència de l'operador nul exclamatiu.

Paraules clau: oració exclamativa, dislocació a la dreta, modificació de grau, operador nul.

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Catalan shows an interesting type of exclamative construction that has been partially characterized by Joan Solà in several works (see Solà 1990, 1994, 1999, the latter building on Mariner 1979). Let us thus refer to the construction exemplified in (1) as *que*-exclamative:¹

- (1) a. ¡Ai, filla, que en vas, d'equivocada! (Solà 1990: ex. 18f)
 alas daughter that of.it go.2 of-mistaken
 'Oh, dear, how wrong you are!'
- b. ¡Que n'és, de car! (Solà 1999: ex. 2)
 that of.it-be.3 of expensive
 'How expensive it is!'
- c. ¡Si que n'és, de car! (Solà 1999: ex. 3)²
 so that of.it-be.3 of expensive
 'How expensive it is!'

What makes these examples interesting is the presence of the partitive clitic *en/ne* and the introduction of the adjective by means of the marker *de* ('of'), which leads Solà to take for granted that the adjective is right-dislocated and the clitic *en/ne* is its pronominal correlate.

In this brief article, I will depart from Solà's view on the issue and argue that there exists compelling empirical evidence for treating the adjective as non-dislocated. Furthermore, I will suggest that the origin of the confusion might be the existence of the extremely close construction in (2) (cf. (1)c):

- (2) Sí que n'és, de car, sí, no cal que ho
 yes that of.it-be.3 of expensive yes not be.necessary.3 that it
 juris. (Solà 1999: ex. 1)
 swear.SBJ.2
 'Yes, it is certainly expensive, it goes without saying that it is.'

Only in this case, I will argue, we are really dealing with a right-dislocated adjective. For the sake of clarity, let us label this construction *confirmatory*, to distinguish it from *que*-exclamatives.

1. In Solà's examples, I respect his typographic conventions, namely the use of opening exclamative sign and that of the comma separating the adjective from the rest of the sentence, but I provide his sentences with a gloss and a translation. The conventions regarding the glosses of the examples are the following: FEM = feminine, IMP = imperative, LOC = locative clitic, NEG = negation, NEUT = neuter, PAST = past auxiliary, PL = plural, PP = past participle, SBJ = subjunctive. Moreover, for the ease of exposition, I will conventionally mark the relationship between right-dislocates and their pronominal correlates within the sentence by means of a subscript.
2. I will systematically gloss the *si* particle as 'so' in order to make explicit its intensive nature. See Mariner (1979) and Solà (1999).

The organization of the article is as follows. In section one, I will characterize *que*-exclamatives and the confirmatory construction, showing that only in the latter the adjective displays the properties of a right-dislocate. In section two, a different analysis will be proposed for *que*-exclamatives, namely I will argue that the adjective in this construction is not dislocated, but in its canonical position, involving a null exclamative operator binding the degree variable introduced by the adjective. Finally, section three will close the article with a brief conclusion.

1. The basic data

Solà (1990: ex. 18f) offers the following sentence in the midst of a discussion about right-dislocates (= ex. (1)a):

- (3) ¡Ai, filla, que en vas, d'equivocada! (Solà 1990: ex. 18f)
 alas daughter that of.it go.2 of-mistaken

Indeed, he places this sentence together with the following incontrovertible cases of right-dislocates (his exs. 18d, e, g):³

- (4) a. Hi₁ hem dinat molt bé, [al Set Portes]₁
 LOC have.1PL have.PP.lunch very well at-the Set Portes
 b. Ja les₁ tenim totes, [les cartes]₁
 already them have.1PL all the letters
 c. En el fons en Daniel només en₁ té un, [de defecte]₁
 in the bottom the Daniel only of.it have.3 one of defect

The (implicit) claim that the adjective is right-dislocated in the exclamative construction in (3) reappears without significant variation in later works (see Solà 1994: § 3.4, and 1999).

Nevertheless, beyond this succinct and inexplicit mention, little effort has been made to determine the validity of this position. In this section, I will question Solà's characterization of the phenomenon, showing that against the predictions of his analysis, the adjective in the exclamative construction at issue is not right-dislocated.

3. A similar inexplicit assumption is made in Vallduví (1990: 111), who simply quotes the following example (his ex. 142) from a short story in a newspaper by Pau Faner (I respect Vallduví's transcription and translation of the sentence, but I have normalized the gloss according to the conventions adopted throughout the text):

- (i) Ah, carall, que *pro*₁ *n*₂'és, de dura₂, de vegades₃, la realitat₁.
 oh shit that of.it-be.3 of tough of sometimes the reality
 'Oh, shit, reality IS tough sometimes.'

1.1. The informational status of the adjective

Right-dislocates are known to be ground information, in the sense that their referent must usually be highly salient in the discourse to be licensed (see Vallduví 1990: ch. 5, Villalba 2000: ch. 3):

- (5) a. La Maria és molt ingènua.
the Maria be.3 very naive
b. Ai fill, tu sí que ho₁ ets, d'ingenu₁!
alas son you yes that it be.2 of-naive

This is at the roots of the infelicity of the following sentence:

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

- (6) #Ai fill ho₁ ets, d'ingenu₁!
alas son it be.2 of-naive

Here, no explicit mention of the adjective exists in the immediately previous discourse, which renders the right-dislocation of the adjective infelicitous.

When we translate this fact to *que*-exclamatives, we predict a similar behavior for the adjective, namely given it is right-dislocated under Solà's proposal, we expect it to convey ground information. However, data are far from confirming this prediction conclusively. Hence, on the one hand, one can find examples like the following, where no mention of the adjective exists in the previous discourse:⁴

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

- (7) a. Ai fill, que n'ets d'ingenu, a vegades!
alas son that of.it-be.2 of-naive to times
'Man, you are so naive sometimes!'
b. Ai fill, que ingenu que ets, a vegades!
alas son how naive that be.2 to times
c. Ai fill, ets tan ingenu, a vegades!
alas son be.2 so naive to times

The pragmatic equivalence of the exs. in (7) argues against considering that the adjective in the *que*-exclamative *must* be part of the ground, for it would lead us to assume something similar for (7)b-c, which as far as I know, no one has ever argued for.

4. Note that since I am taking the adjective in the exclamative construction not to be a right-dislocate, I will not separate it from the rest of the sentence by means of a comma.

On the other hand, we find clear contrasts like the one in (8), gently provided by Joan Solà (I respect Solà's orthographic conventions, but I supply the examples with a gloss and a translation):⁵

[I am walking with my girlfriend by a shopping street; I have a look at a shoes shop window, and exclaim]:

- (8) a. ¡Si que són cares, les sabates, Carme!
 so that be.3 expensive the shoes Carme
 'The shoes are so expensive, Carme.
- b. #¡Si que en són, de cares, les sabates, Carme!
 so that of.it-be.3 expensive the shoes Carme

Solà (p.c.) argues that in this context no presupposition about the expensiveness of shoes is salient in the discourse; hence, he attributes the infelicity of (8)b to the same factor that in (6): since the price of shoes is not a salient discourse element at this moment, the adjective *car* ('expensive') cannot be right-dislocated. Moreover, in a similar vein, an anonymous reviewer points out to me that we can still say that in (7) the adjective is ground information, and hence right-dislocated resorting to *accommodation*, for in (7) «given what has happened before, the hearer can easily infer that something like (q') 'the hearer being naïve' has to be accommodated.»⁶ One can easily see that accommodation cannot take

5. Albert Fontich (p.c.) perceives a contrast regarding the presence of the intensifier *si* ('so') in examples like (i):

[In a restaurant. You are deciding the wine to accompany the dinner. You find a Priorat wine priced 100.000 PTA]

- (i) a. (#)Que n'és, de car, aquest vi!
 that of.it-be.3 of expensive this wine
- b. #Si que n'és, de car, aquest vi!
 so that of.it-be.3 of expensive this wine

He could accept (ia) as an out-of-the-blue utterance, whereas considers impossible the version in (ib). He suggests that this contrast might be due to the fact that the particle *si* requires more contextualization. This requirement might derive from the ponderative value of this particle, as happens with similar ponderative elements like *prou* ('enough'):

[In a restaurant. You are deciding the wine to accompany the dinner. You find a Priorat wine priced 100.000 PTA]

- (i) a. #Prou que és car aquest vi!
 enough that is expensive this wine
- b. #Prou car que és aquest vi!
 enough expensive that is this wine

I leave the issue open to further research.

6. Accommodation is technically defined by Lewis (1979: 340) as follows:

If at time *t* something is said that requires presupposition *P* to be acceptable, and if *P* is not presupposed just before *t*, then –*ceteris paribus* and with certain limits— presupposition *P* comes into existence at *t*.

place in (8), for the property denoted by the adjective (*expensiveness*) is not salient.

This argument is, however, questionable or at least misleading, for one can argue that accommodation is at stake in *que*-exclamatives, without assuming that the infelicity of the *que*-exclamative in (7) is due to the failure to accommodate the allegedly right-dislocated adjective.⁷ For one thing, right-dislocation is not generally licensed under accommodation, as (6) clearly demonstrates. The crucial point is why right-dislocates should behave so differently under *que*-exclamatives with respect to accommodation. Note as well that *que*-exclamatives display compatibility with *wh*-exclamatives or even ponderative sentences, where no such process of accommodation is called for, even though the communicative conditions are identical.⁸ Henceforth, the role of accommodation in *que*-exclamatives, whatever it is, doesn't entail that the adjective must be considered ground information nor, as a result, a right-dislocate.

A second argument against considering that the adjective in *que*-exclamatives represents ground information stems from the notion of ground information itself, which according to Vallduví (1990: 58) «does not make any contribution to the hearer's knowledge-store.» As a consequence, optionality is a typical property of right-dislocates (see Grosz & Ziv 1998, Villalba 2000: ch. 3 for qualification). Hence, the prediction Solà's analysis makes is that the adjective should pattern with clear instances of right-dislocation regarding optionality, which is incorrect altogether:

- (9) a. La Maria és molt ingènua.
the Maria be.3 very naïve
- b. Ai fill, (si) que n'ets *(, d'ingenu)!
alas son so that of.it-be.2 of-naive
- (10) a. La Maria és molt ingènua.
the Maria be.3 very naïve
- b. Ai fill, tu sí que ho ets i molt(, d'ingenu)!
alas son you yes that it-be.2 and much

A similar concept in the psycholinguistic tradition is *bridging*, a more transparent term (see Clark 1977 for a classical work).

7. By the way, note that Solà's example (8) includes a right-dislocated DP *les sabates* ('the shoes'), which in any event is as unaccommodatable as the adjective, for neither shoes nor expensiveness were salient enough in the communicative situation.

8. Furthermore, examples can be found where no accommodation process can even be assumed (I translate the context and only provide the *que*-exclamative sentence with a gloss):

(i) [A la fi l' ou gruiux va petar. -Xip! xip!- digué el menut. I es llançà enfora.]
'Finally, the thick egg broke. -Chirp! Chirp!- said the little one. And it throw itself outside.'
Que n'era de gros i de lleig! [Josep Carner, *Contes d'Andersen*, 1918]
that of.it-be.past.3 of big and of ugly

Here, the context makes clear enough that no accommodation of the adjectives *gros* ('big') and *lleig* ('ugly') is tenable, under any minimally restricted definition of the process.

Finally, a third argument can be given concerning contrast. Unlike left-dislocates, which can convey a contrast meaning (see Vallduví 1990: 80-90), right-dislocates cannot (see Villalba 2000: 2.1.2, 3.1.2), as the following dialogue plainly shows:

- (11) a. T'he presentat els meus amics, en Pere i la Maria?
to.you-have.1 introduce the my.PL friends the Peter and the Maria
'Have I introduced you to my friends?'
- b. A en Pere, ja me'l vas presentar; però a la Maria,
to the Peter already to.me-him PAST.2 introduce but to the Maria
no la coneixia.
not her know.PAST.1
'You already introduced me to Pere, but I didn't know Maria.'
- b'. #Ja me'l vas presentar, a en Pere; però no la
already to.me-him PAST.2 introduce to the Peter but not her
coneixia, a la Maria.
know.PAST.1 to the Maria

Crucially, the adjective in *que*-exclamatives may enter into contrast relations without restrictions, as in the following simple example:

- (12) a. Que n'és de dura la realitat avui dia!
that of.it-be.3 of tough the reality today day
- b. Avui dia rai, que n'era de dura ABANS, la realitat!
today day RAI that of.it-be.PAST.3 of tough before the reality

This point is made even clearer in the following dialogues, with *que*-exclamatives (13)b, confirmatory constructions (13)b', and clear right-dislocation structures (13)b'':

- (13) a. L'Albert va morir atropellat. Quina llàstima, un noi tan eficient!
'Albert died knocked over. What a pity, so efficient a fellow!'
- b. Hòstia, pobre nano! Que n'era d'eficient, el pobre,
holy.form poor boy that of.it-be.PAST.3 of efficient the poor
i, entre nosaltres, que n'era de llepaculs també!
and between us that of.it-be.PAST.3 of ass-kisser also
'Shit, poor boy. How efficient he was, the poor fellow, but, between ourselves, what an ass-kisser he was also!'
- b'. #Hòstia, pobre nano! Sí que ho era, d'eficient, el pobre,
holy.form poor boy yes that it-be.PAST.3 of efficient the poor
i, entre nosaltres, sí que ho era de llepaculs també!
and between us yes that it-be.PAST.3 of ass-kisser also

b''. #Hòstia, pobre nano! Certament ho era, d'eficient, el pobre,
 holy.form poor boy certainly it-be.PAST.3 of efficient the poor
 i, entre nosaltres, ho era, de llepaculs també.
 and between us + that it-be.PAST.3 of ass-kisser also

In connection with this fact, note that *que*-exclamatives do not show a left-dislocated version:

- (14) a. *De dura que n'és la realitat avui dia!
 of tough that of.it-be.3 the reality today day
 b. *Avui dia rai, de dura que n'era ABANS, la realitat!
 today day RAI of tough that of.it-be.PAST.3 before the reality

This behavior is unexpected for an analysis along Solà's lines, since the adjective is claimed to be ground information, and it can convey contrast, which are typical properties of left-dislocates in Catalan (see Vallduví 1990: ch. 5, Villalba 2000: ch. 2).

To sum up, taken as a whole the empirical evidence adduced in this paragraph strongly suggests that Solà's claim that the adjective is right-dislocated in the exclamative construction cannot be persuasively sustained on its alleged ground status.

1.2. The Right Periphery I: Postfocal Tags

It is a well-known fact that neutral focus, associated with the main stress, marks the limit of the core sentence (see Vallduví 1990, Solà 1990, 1994). This boundary may be made even more precise with the concurrence of postfocal tags (the effects of focus projection are dismissed, since they play no role in the discussion).⁹

- (15) Ahir va comprar [_{focus} el llibre], [_{tag} oi?/ collons!]
 yesterday him PAST.3 buy the book isn't.it?/ balls!
 'Yesterday (s)he bought the book, didn't (s)he?/shit!'

Note that these tags cannot precede the focus constituent:

- (16) *Ahir va comprar [_{tag} oi?/ collons!] [_{focus} el llibre]
 yesterday him PAST.3 buy isn't.it?/ balls! the book

Moreover the material after these tags is typically right-dislocated:¹⁰

9. I conventionally gloss the confirmatory tag *oi?* as 'isn't.it?' for convenience.

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

- (i) El va comprar [_{focus} ahir], [_{CLRD} el llibre], [_{tag} oi?/collons!]
 him PAST.3 buy yesterday the book isn't.it?/balls!

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 doesn't affect the discussion. See Villalba (in preparation) for a finer-grained description of the right-periphery of Catalan sentence.

- (17) El₁ va comprar [_{focus} ahir], [_{tag} oi?/ collons!], [_{CLRD} el llibre]₁.
 him PAST.3 buy yesterday isn't.it?/ balls! the book

In conclusion, we can establish the following distribution:

- (18) [focus]>[tag]>[right-dislocate]

Once we have established that postfocal tags are a reliable landmark for separating focus and right-dislocates, consider now the behavior of the allegedly right-dislocated adjective in *que*-exclamatives (in this case only the exclamative tag is considered, for the interrogative one would be incompatible with the exclamatory force of the sentence):

- (19) a. *Que n'és, collons, de car, aquest vi!
 that of.it-be.3 balls of expensive this wine
 'How expensive this wine is, shit!'
 b. *Si que n'és, collons, de car, aquest vi!
 so that of.it-be.3 balls of expensive this wine
- (20) a. Que n'és de car, collons, aquest vi!
 so/that of.it-be.3 of expensive balls this wine
 b. Si que n'és de car, collons, aquest vi!
 so that of.it-be.3 of expensive balls this wine

The data are conclusive: the adjective must precede the postfocal tag, which suggests that the adjective *car* ('expensive') cannot be considered a right-dislocate.¹¹ Again, there is a sharp contrast with the confirmatory construction:

- (21) a. Que car que és aquest vi!
 that expensive that be.3 this wine
 b. Sí que ho és, collons, de car, aquest vi!
 yes that it be.3 balls of expensive this wine

11. An anonymous reviewer reports me the existence of examples like

- (i) a. Que n'ets, tio, de plasta!
 that of.it-be.2 of-nuisance
 b. Si que n'és, aquest, de tonto!
 so that of.it-be.3 this of fool

For the time being, I have no clear idea of how to fit into the picture these vocatives, which in many instances involve extremely subtle intonational and interpretive properties.

1.3. The Right Periphery II: Interaction with Right-Dislocates

It is a well-known fact that right-dislocates may surface in any word order (see Vallduví 1990, Villalba 1999, 2000):¹²

- (22) a. N_1 'hi₂ vaig parlar ahir, [amb l'Albert]₂, [del llibre]₁.
 of.it-LOC PAST.1 talk yesterday with the Albert of.the book
 b. N_1 'hi₂ vaig parlar ahir, [del llibre]₁, [amb l'Albert]₂.
 of.it-LOC PAST.1 talk yesterday of.the book with the Albert

However, even though the data are inconclusive, the alleged right-dislocated adjective in *que*-exclamatives doesn't seem to freely permute with real right-dislocates, at least to the same extent than in the case of clear right-dislocates. Consider the following sentences built on Vallduví's example in footnote 3 (the main stress must be placed on the verb):¹³

- (23) a. (??)Ah, carall, que pro_1 n₂'és, de vegades₃, de dura₂, la realitat₁.
 oh shit that of.it-be.3 of sometimes of tough the reality
 b. *Ah, carall, que pro_1 n₂'és, de vegades₃, la realitat₁, de dura₂.
 oh shit that of.it-be.3 of sometimes the reality of tough
 c. *Ah, carall, que pro_1 n₂'és, la realitat₁, de vegades₃, de dura₂.
 oh shit that of.it-be.3 the reality of sometimes of tough
 d. (??)Ah, carall, que pro_1 n₂'és, la realitat₁, de dura₂, de vegades₃.
 oh shit that of.it-be.3 the reality of tough of sometimes

Compare these sentences with the confirmatory construction:

- (24) A. La realitat és molt dura.
 the reality is very tough
 B. a. Ah, carall, sí que pro_1 ho₂'és, de vegades₃, de dura₂, la
 oh shit yes that it-be.3 of sometimes of tough the
 realitat₁.
 reality
 b. Ah, carall, sí que pro_1 ho₂'és, de vegades₃, la realitat₁, de dura₂.
 oh shit that it-be.3 of sometimes the reality of tough

12. Surely this statement needs some qualification; see Solà (1990) and fn. 13.

13. I have found some disagreement regarding the status of sentences (23)a,d, which in any event are consistently perceived as better than the ones in (23)b,c. As an anonymous reviewer points out to me, resort to processing or metrical structure should be needed. Obviously, judgments on written sentences may be misleading and an accurate intonational analysis seems necessary, before extracting any categorical conclusion.

- c. Ah, carall, sí que *pro*₁ *ho*₂ 'és, la realitat₁, de vegades₃, de
 oh shit that it-be.3 the reality of sometimes of
*dura*₂.
 tough
- d. Ah, carall, sí que *pro*₁ *ho*₂ 'és, la realitat₁, de *dura*₂, de
 oh shit that it-be.3 the reality of tough of
*vegades*₃.
 sometimes

The conclusion we can extract from the empirical evidence adduced in this section is that only in confirmatory sentences is the adjective a right-dislocated.

1.4. The partitive clitic

A distinctive feature of the exclamative construction that occupies us is the presence of a partitive clitic *en/ne* that Solà (1990, 1994, 1999) and Vallduví (1990) take to be the clitic correlate of the allegedly right-dislocated adjective. Yet, this fact raises a new puzzle: why should the adjective be obligatorily resumed by the partitive clitic *en/ne*? In fact, right-dislocated adjectives in Catalan are typically resumed by the neuter clitic *ho* ('it') when appearing with the copulative verb *ésser* ('be') —in free alternation with *en/ne* in some cases (see e.g. Solà 1994: ex 40):

- (25) A. És interessant, aquest llibre?
 be.3 interesting this book
 'Is this book interesting?'
 B. No. No *ho*₁ és particularment, [d'interessant]₁
 not not it be.3 particularly of-interesting
 'No. It is not PARTICULARLY interesting.'
- (26) A: En Pere sembla simpàtic.
 the Pere seem.3 friendly
 'Pere seems friendly.'
 B: Doncs, no *ho/n*'és gaire, [de simpàtic]₁
 well not it/of.it-be.3 any of-friendly
 'Well, he isn't ANY friendly.'

Consequently, were the adjectives in *que*-exclamatives right-dislocated, a similar behavior should be expected. Nevertheless, the prediction reveals itself as incorrect:

- (27) a. *Que *ho* és, de car!
 that it be.3 of expensive
 b. ??/*Si que *ho* és, de car!
 so that it be.3 of expensive

- c. ^{??/*}Ah, carall, que ho₂' és, de dura₂, de vegades, la realitat.
oh shit that it be.3 of tough of sometimes the reality
- d. *Ai, filla, que hi vas, d'equivocada!
alas daughter that LOC go.2 of-mistaken

Again, a sharp contrast arises when the confirmatory construction is taken into account, for it allows pronominalization by the neuter clitic *ho* ('it'), pronominalization by *en/ne* also being possible with certain adjectives (see Solà's 1999 ex. in (2), on which the following is built):¹⁴

- (28) A: Aquest vi és caríssim!
this wine be.3 extremely expensive
- B: Sí que ho és, de car, sí, no cal que ho juris!
yes that it-be.3 of expensive yes not be.necessary.3 that it swear.SBJ.2
'Yes, it is certainly expensive, it goes without saying that it is.'

In sum, a clear empirical pattern arises concerning pronominalization that leads us to the conclusion that the adjective in *que*-exclamatives cannot be analyzed as a right-dislocate.

2. A New Analysis

All the evidence reviewed in section 1 pointed to the same direction, namely that the adjective in the exclamative construction under discussion is not a right-dislocate. This empirically well-sustained position raises two immediate questions:

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

The presence of the marker *de* in the exclamative construction is problematic, for it has no counterpart in degree modification structures with adjectives:¹⁵

- (29) a. Ets molt (*d')intel·ligent.
be.2 much of intelligent

14. The position of the right-dislocate and that of the emphatic affirmative element *sí* ('yes') are interchangeable:

- (i) Sí que ho és, sí, de car, no cal que ho juris!
yes that it-be.3 yes of expensive not be.necessary.3 that it swear.SBJ.2

15. It appears with certain colloquial constructions like the one in (i):

- (i) Això és l'hòstia de car!
this is the-holy.form of expensive
'This is damned expensive.'

On the presence of this particle with elided nominals, see Martí (1994).

- b. Ets massa (*d')intel·ligent.
be.2 too.much of intelligent

However, consider what happens in similar constructions in Rumanian (after Corver 2000):

- (29) a. Ion e extrem de înalt
Ion be.3 extreme of tall
'Ion is extremely tall.'
b. Maria e enorm de fericit?.
Maria be.3 enormous of happy
'Maria is enormously happy.'

Here the *de* ('of') marker is obligatory.

Furthermore, beyond this case, Catalan and Rumanian share a *wh*-exclamative construction involving *de* obligatorily (see also Torrego 1994 and Alonso-Cortés 1999 for Spanish), which I will label *com*-exclamative:¹⁶

- (31) a. Com és d'intel·ligent, la Maria!
how be.3 of-intelligent the Maria
'How intelligent Maria is!'
b. Cît e Maria de frumoasă?!
how be.3 Maria of beautiful
'How beautiful Maria is!'

With this much in mind, let us assume, following Corver (2000), that the structure of the exclamative construction at issue is (essentially) identical to that of a modified adjective, namely:

- (32) [_{FP} [_{F'} F [_{XP} AP [_{X'} X DegP]]]]

Let me word out the details of the structure, which closely follows Kayne's (1994) proposals concerning possessor and predicative complements within the NP.¹⁷ First, it is assumed that the adjective and the degree phrase form a small clause headed by the infl-like functional head X. Moreover, this small clause is the

16. One anonymous reviewer reports me that three consulted speakers found (31)a «completely foreign to their Catalan grammar.» Since the anonymous reviewer doesn't provide me with any indicator of the exact nature of this deficit—whether it is due to a dialectal factor, to an idiolectal one or to some sort of language impairment—I will keep making the assumption that the construction at issue belongs to the particular grammar of some other Catalan people.

17. More precisely, this is the structure that Kayne (1994: ex. 116) proposes for French constructions *quelqu'un de célèbre* ('someone famous'), *Jean en a acheté trois de rouges* ('Jean bought three red ones'), and *Jean a acheté trois de rouges (pas quatre)* ('Jean bought THREE red cars (not four).'):

(i) D⁰ [_{D/PP} [_{IP} AP [_{I⁰} NP ...

complement of a comp-like functional head *F*. The DegP must raise to Spec, FP 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). Up to here, the derivation parallels that of a modified adjective like *molt alt* ('very tall'):

- (33) [_{FP} DegP₁ [_F, *F* [_{XP} AP [_X, *X* *t*₁]]]]

This line of analysis offers us a straightforward explanation for the restrictions acting upon the adjective, since only gradable adjectives are allowed in *que*-exclamatives, as shown in the following paradigm:

- (34) a. *Aquest gat és molt persa/quadrúpede.
 this cat be.3 very Persian/four-legged
 b. *Que persa/quadrúpede que és aquest gat!
 how Persian/four-legged that be.3 this cat
 c. *Que és persa/quadrúpede, aquest gat!
 that be.3 Persian/four-legged this cat
 d. *Que n'és de persa/quadrúpede, aquest gat!
 that of.it-be.3 of Persian/four-legged this cat

Neither *persa* ('Persian') nor *quadrúpede* ('four-legged') are gradable adjectives, so we can consider that the illformedness of the sentences in (34) is due to a general principle against vacuous quantification.¹⁸

Now let us consider the next step in the derivation of exclamative sentences. Arguably, the DegP must raise to the higher left-periphery in order to check a *wh*-feature, more exactly an [exclamative] feature. This requirement opens two lines of proceeding: (35)a, with movement of the DegP alone, or (35)b, with pied-piping of the whole FP:

- (35) a. [_{CP} DegP₁ [_C, *C* [_{IP} ... [_{FP} *t*₁ [_F, *F* [_{XP} AP [_X, *X* *t*₁]]]]]]]
 b. [_{CP} [_{FP} DegP₁ [_F, *F* [_{XP} AP [_X, *X* *t*₁]]]]]₂ [_C, *C* [_{IP} ... *t*₂]]]

The former derivation would correspond to a *que*-exclamative (36)a—DegP being a null exclamative operator—or to a *com*-exclamative (36)b—DegP being the overt exclamative operator *com* ('how')—; the latter would correspond to the

18. As expected, this restriction doesn't extend to the confirmatory construction, which doesn't involve a degree operator obligatorily:

- (i) A: Aquest gat no és pas persa/quadrúpede.
 this cat not be.3 NEG Persian/four-legged
 B: Sí que ho és, de persa/quadrúpede, aquest gat!
 that it be.3 of Persian/four-legged this cat

typical *wh*-exclamative headed by the exclamative operator *que* ('how') or its substandard version *lo* ('how') (37):¹⁹

- (36) a. [_{CP} OP₁ [_C· *que* [_{IP} n'és [_{FP} t₁ [_F· *de* [_{XP} intel·ligent [_X· X t₁]]]]]]]
 b. [_{CP} com₁ [_C· C [_{IP} és [_{FP} t₁ [_F· *de* [_{XP} intel·ligent [_X· X t₁]]]]]]]
 (37) [_{CP} [_{FP} *que/lo*₁ [_F· F [_{XP} intel·ligent [_X· X t₁]]]]]₂ [_C· *que* [_{IP} és t₂]]]

Two loose ends remain. First, there is a contrast between (36) and (37) with respect to the realization of *F*, which is null in the latter, but surfaces as *de* in the former. At this provisional stage, let us assume that the overt marker *de* is inserted to properly govern the trace of the moved DegP in the Spec, FP, for the copular verb cannot fulfill this task properly.²⁰

The remaining wrinkle to iron out concerns the contrast between (36)a and (36)b-(37) regarding the presence of the partitive clitic. Note that *en/ne* is in complementary distribution with overt exclamative operators, such as *com* ('how'), *que* ('how') or the emphatic neuter determiner (in substandard Catalan):

- (38) a. *Com n'és d'intel·ligent, tu, aquest noi!
 how of.it-be.3 of-intelligent you this boy
 b. *Que /*Lo intel·ligent que n'és, tu, aquest noi!
 how /the.NEUT intelligent that of.it-be.3 you this boy

What I would like to propose is that the illformedness of (38) is due to an instance of illicit clitic-doubling, equivalent to the standard case in (39), for the partitive clitic correlates with the overt exclamative operator:

19. Note that it is assumed without discussion that *que* ('that') is the complementizer in *que*-exclamative (36)a, not an exclamative operator, in parallel with the interrogative *que* ('that') in (ib):

- (i) a. Que n'és d'intel·ligent la Maria!
 that of.it-be.3 of-intelligent the Maria
 b. Que és intel·ligent la Maria?
 that be.3 intelligent the Maria
 'Is Maria intelligent?'

See see Brucart (1991), Torrego (1988) and Gutiérrez-Rexach (1999) for discussion.

20. This proposal might extend to the exclamative construction discussed in Gutiérrez-Rexach (1999: ex. 41a), which is exemplified in (i) (I have normalized the glosses and corrected the original translation, which included a conspicuous error):

- (i) ¡Juan es de fuerte ...!
 Juan be.3 of strong
 'Juan is so strong ...!'

He crucially argues that this construction involves a null definite description operator that raises to the left-periphery of sentence to provide it with an exclamative meaning, in a similar vein to the proposal in the text. However, he assumes a structure like the following:

- (ii) [_{CP} Op₁ [Juan es [_{DP} t₁ [_D· [_D *de*] fuerte]]]]
 I leave the issue open to further research.

- (39) *Què₁ dius que el₁ vas comprar ahir?
 what say.2 that him PAST.2 buy yesterday

In contrast, the null exclamative 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 & Treviño's (1999) analysis of clitic-doubling:

- (49) [_{DegP} [_{DegP} OP] [_{Deg'} [_{Deg} en]]]

As for its derivation, the 'big' DegP still must raise to the Spec, FP in order to bind the degree variable of the adjective, and once therein the clitic may incorporate to the verb and the null operator may raise to the higher left-periphery to check its [exclamative] feature.

Obviously, this is far from being a fully-fledged analysis of a construction that merits more extensive a study than the one offered within the strict limits of this article. So then, the proposal in these pages should be considered as tentative and open to future elaboration.

3. 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*, forming a small clause with a null exclamative degree operator. In the first section, compelling empirical evidence has been provided for the nondislocated nature of the adjective. Moreover, the two major puzzles that follow from this conclusion, namely the appearance of the marker *de* ('of') and that of the partitive clitic *en/ne*, has been suggested to follow from the presence of the null exclamative degree operator: the former is needed to license the trace of the operator, the latter to give it a content.

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