

The Syntactic Structure of *Wh*-Exclamatives and Negation

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze *wh*-exclamatives in English on the basis of their syntactic characteristics such as *wh*-operator types, negation, and root phenomena including topicalization and negative inversion. In previous studies, *wh*-exclamatives were investigated mainly in terms of the root/embedding distinction and the categorial similarity between Exclamative-*wh/how*-phrases (E-*wh/how*-phrases) and *such/so* phrases (for example, *what a beautiful girl/such a beautiful girl, how beautiful/so beautiful*, etc.). However, it seems that less attention has been paid to the relationship between *wh*-operator types, the occurrence of negation, and root phenomena in *wh*-exclamatives. In the present study, we consider the occurrence of negation in *wh*-exclamatives and show that *wh*-exclamatives are classified into three types: Root Exclamatives (REs), Embedded Exclamatives (EEs), and Negative Exclamatives (NEs). After identifying some syntactic characteristics of REs, EEs, and NEs concerning root phenomena such as negative inversion and topicalization, in order to account for them, we propose an analysis based on the cartographic framework, which was developed by Rizzi (1997, 2009). Furthermore, we show that the proposed analysis is compatible with some insights into *wh*-exclamatives that previous research within the framework of transformational grammar provided.

In the literature, it is pointed out that Subject-Auxiliary Inversion (SAI) is not applied to *wh*-exclamatives:

- (1) a. What a beautiful girl_i John met t_i!
b.* What a beautiful girl_i did John meet t_i!
(cf. Who_i did you meet t_i?)

Another well-known fact is that factive predicates can embed *wh*-exclamatives but not other predicates such as *wonder*, as shown below:

- (2) John knows/*wonders how very cute_i the baby is t_i!

The Root Exclamative (RE) in (1a) and the Embedded Exclamative (EE) in (2) are similar in that they are incompatible with negation:

- (3) a. * How very cute_i the baby is not t_i! [RE]
b. * It is amazing how very cute_i the baby is not t_i! [EE]

However, negation is allowed to occur in the Negative Exclamative (NE) in (4b), where the E-*wh*-operator, which refers to the number of books, magazines, etc., is used:

- (4) a. What a lot of them_i we had time to read t_i! [NE]
b. What a lot of them_i we didn't have time to read t_i! [NE]

Thus, NEs are differentiated from REs and EEs in that the occurrence of negation is restricted to NEs. In addition, negative inversion and topicalization are applicable to NEs, as illustrated below (note that REs and EEs are incompatible with negation, and hence negative inversion cannot be readily applied to them):

- (5) In how many countries of the world, such behaviour, under no circumstances would autocratic leaders tolerate! (Radford (2009: 328))

NEs also differ from REs and EEs in that a topic can occur between an E-*wh*-operator and the rest of the sentence in NEs, but not in REs and EEs:

- (6) a. * What a beautiful picture, to John, Mary gave (him) as a gift! [RE]
b. * It's amazing what a nice book, to your sister, they gave (her) as a gift. [EE]
(Zanuttini and Portner (2003: 75))
c. In how many countries, that kind of behaviour, autocratic leaders would simply not tolerate! [NE]
(Radford (2009: 328))

After considering the relationship between the three types of *wh*-exclamatives and root phenomena, we make the following three claims:

- (7) a. All *wh*-exclamatives involve a *wh*-operator-variable configuration and a factive operator.
b. All *wh*-exclamatives are derived by exclamatory movement.
c. In REs and EEs, there is a locality restriction imposed on an E-*wh*-operator and a factive operator, and hence, topicalization is impossible (See (6a, b)). In NEs, the same restriction is irrelevant to the two operators, and thus topicalization is available (See (6c)).

As for the claim in (7a), we follow Zanuttini and Portner's (2003) proposal that all *wh*-exclamatives have two syntactic components: a *wh*-operator-variable configuration and a factive operator. Concerning the claim in (7b), reviewing Imai and Nakajima's (1978) insight into *wh*-exclamatives that *wh*-exclamatives are derived by exclamatory movement, which is applied to a scalar-related *wh*-phrase like *what a beautiful girl*, we develop Rizzi's (2009) idea that there is a CP projection dedicated to the "Exclamative" interpretation, revising the original split CP hypothesis, as shown below:

- (8) Force ... Exclamative (Excl) ... Topic (Top) ... Focus (Foc)... Finite (Fin)

Here, we assume that an E-*wh*-operator occupies [Spec, Excl] and a factive operator, [Spec, Top]. Regarding the claim in (7c), based on Zanuttini and Portner's (2003) idea that the source of a factive operator can be either an E-*wh*-operator or a factive predicate, we propose that the occurrence of a topic between an E-*wh*-operator and a factive operator is blocked in REs and EEs because the additional topic intervenes between the two operators.

In conclusion, we suggest that some A-bar movement constructions (including *wh*-exclamatives) involve different CP projections dedicated to discourse-related properties such as *Topic*, *Focus*, and *Exclamative*.

References

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