Romance exclamative markers at the syntax-pragmatics interface: A compositional approach to exclamativity

Xavier Villalba [1]

Centre de Lingüística Teòrica and Dept. de Filologia Catalana, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Edifici B, 08193 Cerdanyola del Vallès, Spain

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I will analyze the set of markers that have been associated with exclamative sentence-type and exclamations in Romance, like Catalan *ma, mira, que*, and *si*, Italian *guarda* and *che*, or Spanish *mira, que, si*, and *vaya*. The hypothesis I will defend is that the meaning encoded by each of these markers contribute to create an exclamation speech act. I will show that we must first distinguish mirative markers like *ma, mira* or *guarda*, which encode the surprise attitude of the speaker towards a proposition. A second class of elements are degree operators, like *si*, which create the necessary domain extension on which the attitude of the speaker is built. Finally, I will show that *que/che* is a marker of exclamative sentence-type. In the second part of the article I will show that these pragmatic differences have a transparent reflex in syntax: mirative markers occupy the Judge Phrase position in Krifka's Speech Act Layer, above ForceP and vocatives, so they may combine with different sentence-types, besides exclamatives. In ForceP we find degree operators (and exclamative *wh*-phrases) in its specifier, and the sentence-type marker *que/che* in its head. All in all, the paper aims at showing that a compositional approach to exclamativity can deal with the rich set of pragmatic and syntactic properties of exclamative markers in Romance.

1. Introduction: discourse markers and the syntax-pragmatics interface

Our actual knowledge of discourse markers (or markers) is increasing both from a synchronic and a diachronic perspective, and from works from many different theoretical persuasions. The complete list would be too large to be included here, but one can highlight the pioneering work by pragmatists and discourse analysts (see a.o. Schiffrin (1985, 1987); Fraser (1990, 1996, 1999); Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen (2011); Aijmer (2013); Taboada (2006); Tanghe (2016b)). This enormous amount of knowledge also shows another characteristic of the field: its heterogeneity. One clear signal of this state of affairs is the liquid nature of the concept under study. Beyond the consensus on their non-truth conditional meaning, and their anaphoric nature to foreground discourse, discussion abounds on the limits of the concept of what a marker is. Fraser (1990, 1996) proposed a working playground with four subkinds of *pragmatic markers*: (i) *basic markers*, which encode the illocutionary force of the utterance; (ii) *commentary markers*, which add the speaker's stance toward the propositional content; (iii) *parallel markers*, which add expressive meaning on a secondary level of the utterance; and (iv) *discourse markers*, which signal the connection and role of the utterance regarding to the prior discourse. In this article, I will be concerned with the first two categories, without making a strong commitment to finer-grained definitions and classifications.

E-mail address: xavier.villalba@uab.cat.
[1] https://clt.uab.cat/xavier-villalba

Besides the taxonomic and terminological debate, a second clear sign of the heterogeneity of the field is the strong encapsulated nature of the research. As a prominent scholar phrases it, "the studies available so far are hardly comparable; the approaches vary with respect to very many different aspects: the language(s) under consideration, the items taken into account, the terminology used, the functions considered, the problems focussed on, and the methodologies employed. Some kind of overview is needed that allows us to sort out the different research directions, methods, and perspectives." Fischer (2021, 1).

Regardless of the heterogeneity of the field, it is beyond doubt that we have a much better understanding of the meaning and use of pragmatic markers, which has revived interest for offering a theoretical approach to the syntactic encoding of pragmatic meanings. The earlier attempts in the seventies (Ross (1970); Karttunen (1973); Gordon and Lakoff (1975)), which were concerned with speakers' intentions and beliefs, didn't find a fertile ground for growing until the nineties, when attention was paid to the left periphery of sentence as a domain for connecting sentential syntax with discourse and speech acts. In this respect, two groundbreaking works merit a special mention. First, Rizzi (1997) offered a highly articulated description of the left periphery of sentence that incorporated pragmatic information like sentence-force, topic and focus as functional categories which interacted with syntactic-based ones and aimed at offering a transparent mapping between syntax and pragmatics. This framework was generally labeled as the Cartographic Enterprise, and as far as the syntax-pragmatics interface was concerned, it was a bold program to attain the "pragmatization of syntax" (Haegeman and Hill (2013); Rizzi (2013); Rizzi and Cinque (2016); Cinque and Rizzi (2015)). Second, following this particular goal, Speas and Tenny (2003) showed that the syntax-pragmatics interface is mediated by dedicated functional projections, what they label the Speech Act Projection and the Sentience projection, where the role of speech act participants and the Point of view involved is encoded. This particular line of research has been developed in recent years by highly articulated proposals like Giorgi (2015, 2018); Krifka (2015, 2021); Wiltschko and Heim (2016); Wiltschko (2021). Leaving aside technical details, these works clearly show a tendency to enrichening syntactic representations with several layers of pragmatic meaning, which have been shown to be associated with specific lexical elements, typically labeled markers or markers. These elements not only act as flags of a certain pragmatic meaning or operation, but are also integrated into the syntactic architecture of sentence, and interact with other syntactic elements and operations. For instance, as we will discuss in Section 3, the respective order of mirative markers and wh-exclamative phrases is fixed, which suggest a clear syntactic distribution of their roles (see Fraser (2015), and the collective works Bayer and Struckmeier (2016); Zimmermann (2019); Artiagoitia et al. (2022); Gergel et al. (2022)). As Rizzi (2013) emphasizes, the alternative amounts to an impoverished syntax, like the narrow syntax of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky (1995, 2000); Lasnik (2002); Horvath (2010)) or the Simpler Syntax of Culicover (2013); Culicover and Jackendoff (2006), where the computational burden is placed on a very rich set of interpretive mechanisms that must extract the correct information from mostly underspecified syntactic structures. While these authors are not particularly explicit about the way we move from a bare syntax to a rich set of inferences and commitments, one may think of the sophisticated models of discourse update (Farkas and Bruce (2009); Malamud and Stephenson (2015); Farkas and Roelofsen (2017); Murray and Starr (2021)), which have been quite successful at offering a clearer understanding of the rich set of pragmatic nuances linked to evidentiality and commitment.

This is an ongoing debate, and the present work aims at offering some evidence from exclamative markers for a rich syntax−pragmatic interface encoding the speaker's attitude and epistemic knowledge in a specialized speech act layer, along the lines of Krifka (2021). Consider the different elements that use to fall under this label (I will follow Leipzig Rules for glosses)[2]:

(1) a. Ma   que   és   bonic   això!   (Ca., CTILC)
         EM   EM   be.3SG   nice   this
         'How pretty this is!'

     b. Si   (que)   n'és,   de   bo!   (Ca., CTILC)
         EM   EM   of-be.3SG of   good
         'How good it is!'

     c. Maria   bé   canta   plan!   (Oc., Morin (2008))
         Maria   EM   sing.3SG   well
         'How beautifully Maria sings!'

     d. A   l   ze   za   partìo,   Mario!   (Pa., Benincà (1996))
         EM   CL.3SG   be.3SG   already   depart.PTPC Mario!'
         'How early Mario has departed!'

     e. Se   lo   ha   comido   todo.   ¡Vaya!   (Sp., Espinal et al., 2024)
         REFL   it   has   eaten   everything   EM
         'She ate everything. Wow!'

While generally associated to exclamative sentences, it is unclear whether their exact contribution to the sentence is encoding the exclamation illocutionary force or rather they contribute akin meanings, like mirativity (Delancey (1997);

Sánchez López (2017a, b); Unger (2019)). In this paper, I will follow the standard distinction between *exclamative sentences* and *exclamations* (Rett (2011); Siemund (2015); Villalba (2017, 2023); Trotzke and Giannakidou (2024)): while the former are a formal encoding of sentence-type, just as declarative or interrogative sentences, the latter are speech acts, just as assertions or questions. Even though exclamative sentences typically perform an exclamation speech act, this is not necessarily the case, just as not all interrogative sentences perform a question speech act. Hence, we can find exclamative sentences without exclamation force (rhetorical exclamatives: *Yes, of course. What a genius you are!*, see Andueza (2011)), just as declarative sentences with exclamation force (*He is a liar!*). I will defend that these different meanings are formally encoded across the rich left periphery of sentence.

As a background for the discussion, I will consider the following typology of exclamative markers:

For example, I will argue in detail that in (2), *ma*, *guardate* and *mira* are mirative markers, *si* and *come* are degree operators, and *que* is a maker of exclamative sentence-type[3]:

(2) a. **Ma que**   és   bonic això! (Ca., CTILC)
     EM EM   be.3SG nice this

Table 1
Classification of exclamative markers.

Kind of marker	Information encoded
mirative marker	mirativity
degree operator	domain extension
complementizer	sentence-type

    'How pretty this is!'
  b. **Si** (**que**) n'és,   de   bo!   (Ca., CTILC)
     EM   EM   of-be.3SG of good
    'How good it is!'

  c. **Guardate** come piove   oggi!   (It., Badan (2020))
     EM   how rain.PRS.3SG today
    'Surprisingly how it's raining today!'
  d. ¡**Mira**   que   eres   tonto! (Sp., CORPES XXI)
     EM   EM   be.2SG silly
    'How silly you are!'

Henceforth, this article is intended as a contribution to the above-mentioned theoretical debate on the syntax-pragmatics interaction. As I will show, the very specific role of exclamative markers and their strict ordering suggest that we can extend recent insights of the so-called "pragmatization of syntax" to an interface construction such as exclamativity, while integrating the heterogeneous set of exclamative markers into a coherent compositional analysis.

The structure of the article is as follows. In Section 2, I will consider the pragmatic contribution of exclamative markers, which will be classified in three classes (see Table 1): mirative markers (Section 2.1), degree operators (Section 2.3), and sentence-type markers (Section 2.4). In Section 3, I will suggest how these markers are distributed in the architecture of sentence. Finally, I will close the article with the conclusions.

2. The pragmatics of exclamative markers

2.1. Mirative markers

Since the pioneering work by Delancey (1997, 2001), mirativity has been recognized as a category distinct from evidentiality (but see Lazard (1999); Hill (2012); Hengeveld and Olbertz (2012); Delancey (2012); Aikhenvald (2012) for discussion). It is generally accepted that mirativity is not concerned with the source of the information, but rather with its unexpected status regarding the speaker's epistemic state. Consider the classical Turkish example from Slobin and Aksu-Koç (1982) commented by Delancey (1997, 37):

(3) a. Nixon istifa   et-ti
     Nixon resignation make-PST
    'Nixon resigned.'
  b. Ecevit istifa   et-mis.
     Ecevit resignation make-MIR
    '(Surprisingly) Ecevit resigned.'

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[3] CORPES XXI is the acronym for *Corpus del Español del Siglo XXI*, a Spanish corpus of contemporary texts created by the Spanish language academy (Real Academia Española). It can be consulted online at https://www.rae.es/CORPES XXI/.

In a context where Nixon resignation was a matter of discussion, and something highly plausible, the expression of surprise was inadequate (3)-a, but in the case of Turkish prime minister Ecevit, this was totally unexpected. Hence, the mirative marker *mis* marks this information as unexpected in (3)-b.

When it comes to encoding this particular meaning, Romance languages display a wide range of markers, mostly based on 2nd person imperative forms (see Tanghe (2016a); Remberger (2021) for a general view).[4] For instance, in Catalan (example (4)), we have the markers *goita* from the verb *guaitar* 'look', *mira* lit. 'look', and its shortened form *ma*, found in Valentian Catalan, from *mirar* 'look' Institut d'Estudis Catalans (2023, 34.3.1.3). In Italian (example (5)), it is prominent *guarda*, derived from the verb *guardare* 'look' Waltereit (2002); Cardinaletti (2015); Badan (2020). Similarly, Occitan shows *guarda*, from *guardar* 'look'. Portuguese has a form *olha*, from the verb *olhar* 'look', and Spanish (example (6)) features the form *mira*, derived from the verbal form *mira* 'look' Sánchez López (2017a, b); Fuentes-Rodríguez (2020), and the form *vaya*, derived from the imperative of *ir* 'to go' Espinal et al. (2024).[5]

(4) Ca., CTILC
    a. **Mira** que són dolents!
        EM   EM   be.3PL bad
        'How bad they are!'

    b. Tu, **goita** les pentinetes del monyo! **Ma**!
        you EM the.F.PL combs of.the bun EM
        'Boy, what bun's combs! Wow!'

(5) It.
    a. **Guarda** che cosa stupida ha fatto! Cardinaletti (2015)
        EM which thing stupid.F has done
        'Wow what a stupid thing (s)he did!'

    b. **Guardate** come piove oggi! Badan (2020)
        EM you.2SG how rain.PRS.3SG today
        'Surprisingly how it's raining today!'

(6) Sp., CORPES XXI
    a. ¡**Mira** que eres tonto!
        EM EM be.2SG silly
        'How silly you are!'

    b. Se lo ha comido todo. ¡**Vaya**!
        REFL it has eaten Everything EM
        'She ate everything. Wow!'

In all the cases, the speaker is expressing her surprise regarding the information denoted by the utterance.

Markers derived from verbs do not exhaust the list of mirative markers: following Norrick (2009), we can consider forms traditionally included in the class of interjections, since they also mark that the information is unexpected for the speaker. This is the case of Catalan markers *manoi*, *oh*, *òndia* (see Cuenca (2008)) and even some uses of Balearic Catalan *idò* (Mascaró (2014)):

(7) Ca., CTILC
    a. **Manoi**, que és grossa!…I com pesa, la mala bèstia!
        EM EM is big and how weighs the Bad beast
        'Oh boy, how big she is! …And how heavy, the ugly brute!'

    b. **Òndia**, tu, quin xou!
        EM you what show
        'Wow, what a show, man!'

    c. **Oh**, quina virtut que té vostè!
        EM which.F virtue EM has you
        'Wow, how virtuous you are!'
    d. —I fan pagar per veure-la. —**Idò**!
        and make.3PL pay.INF for see.INF-her EM
        '—And they even make you pay for seeing her. —Wow!'

Generally, mirative markers precede the proposition they modify, but most of them may appear as well after the relevant proposition:

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[4] Other prominent mechanisms are also found, like fronting. See for instance, Jones (2013); Authier and Haegeman (2019); Cruschina and Remberger (2017); Cruschina and Bianchi (2021) for Romance, and also Trotzke (2017) for German.

[5] These deverbal markers are not exclusively mirative, but they usually have a rich array of pragmatic meanings; see Fuentes-Rodríguez (2020); González López and Trotzke (2021) for Spanish *mira*, Octavio de Toledo y Huerta (2001); Espinal et al. (2024) for Spanish *vaya*; and Cardinaletti (2022) for Italian *guarda*.

(8) Ca., CTILC

   a.   Tu,   goita   les   pentinetes   del   monyo!   **Ma**!
         you   look   the.F.PL   combs   of.the   bun   EM
         'Look at the bun's combs! Wow!'

   b.   Si   que   estem   frescos,   **manoi**!
         EM   EM   stay.1PL   cool   EM
         'How cool we are, wow!'

(9) It., Munaro (2019)

   a.   Maria   ha   dimenticato   le   chiavi!   **Toh**!
         Maria   has   forgotten   the.F.PL   keys   EM
         'Maria has forgotten the keys! Wow!'

   b.   Gianni   ha   passato   l'esame!   Pero!
         Gianni   has   passed   the=exam   EM
         'Gianni has passed the exam! Wow!'

(10) Sp., CORPES XXI

   a.   ¿Es   que   has   trazado   una   raya?   ¡**Vaya**!
         is   that   have.2SG   draw.PTCP   a   line   EM
         'Did you draw a line? Wow!'

   b.   ¡Vaya!,   ya   abrió   los   ojos   −dijo   tu   hija.
         wow   already   open.PST.3SG   the.PL   eyes   say.PST.3SG   your   daughter
         'Wow! she opened her eyes −your daughter said.'

In these cases, we can follow Espinal et al. (2024) and consider that the mirative marker modifies a propositional anaphor bound by the previous proposition. This rephrases the idea advanced by Światkowska (2006) that interjections are inherently anaphoric (see also Munaro (2019) regarding the interjection *mo* in Emilian varieties).

To sum up, Romance displays a rich gamut of mirative markers, which modify a proposition encoding the unexpected nature of the information provided.

2.2. Mirativity ≠ exclamativity

We have seen that exclamative sentences appear reinforced by mirative markers, which is expected, for Michaelis (2001, 1031) remarked that "exclamations convey surprise" and Unger (2019, fn. 1) makes the strong claim that "that exclamativity and mirativity are essentially the same phenomenon, and that exclamations, exclamatives and mirative utterances express the same range of pragmatic meanings."

Notwithstanding, there is strong empirical evidence for separating mirative and exclamative meanings. On the one hand, authors like Olbertz (2012), Cruschina et al. (2015), and Sánchez López (2017a, b) highlight the fact that mirative contents are not restricted to exclamative sentences, but occur in declaratives (11a)/(12a)/(13a) or interrogatives as well (11b)/(12b)/(13b). Witness:

(11) BP, Moreira (2017)

   a.   O   João,   **nossa**,   eu   não   sabia   que   ele   era   tão   esperto.
         the   John   EM   I   not   knew.1SG   that   he   was.3SG   so   smart
         'John, wow, I didn't know he was so smart.'

   b.   **Nossa**,   mas   o   que   aconteceu?
         EM   but   the   that   happened.3SG
         'Wow, but what happened?'

(12) Ca., CTILC

   a.   **Ma**,   noi!   Sí,   que   hi   vinc!
         EM   boy   yes   that   loc   come.1SG
         'Wow, boy! Sure I am coming!'

   b.   Per   què   no   dorms,   **òndia!**
         for   what   not   sleep.2SG   EM
         'Why don't you sleep, wow!'

(13) Sp., CORPES XXI

   a.   Ah,   **vaya**,   ahora   resulta   que   estamos   jugando.
         EM   EM   now   results   that   stay.1PL   play.GER
         'Wow! Wow! So it's like we are playing now.'

   b.   ¿Es   que   has   trazado   una   raya?   ¡**Vaya**!
         is   that   have.2SG   draw.PTCP   a   line   EM
         'Did you draw a line? Wow!'

It is clear, thus, that mirative markers, while particularly common with exclamative sentences, since both encode expressive meanings, are by no means restricted to this particular sentence-type.

On the other hand, it is not clear that exclamative sentences must involve the surprise meaning associated with mirativity. For instance, Chernilovskaya (2014) discusses cases like the following:

(14) What a delicious dessert John baked! I am not surprised, though. He's a professional cook.

Here, the emotional content encoded by the exclamative cannot be one of surprise, as it would enter into contradiction with the continuation. This fact is confirmed by Mandarin Chinese exclamatives, which mark this distinction formally (Badan and Cheng (2015); Wang (2023)): whereas demonstrative based exclamatives (15)-a involve a surprise meaning, *duōme* exclamatives (15)-b don't.

(15) a. Lǐsì **zhème/nàme** gāo a! [surprise exclamative]
          Lisi this.EM/that.EM tall SFP
          'How tall Lisi is!'
      b. Lǐsì **duōme** gāo a! [non-surprise exclamative]
          Lisi much.EM tall SFP
          'How very tall Lisi is!'

As one anonymous reviewer points out, one might consider whether these examples ask for extending the pragmatic interpretation of mirativity to including admirative meanings, which don't need to include surprise. However, I will not pursue this possibility any further, and I will consider mirativity as a separate pragmatic and syntactic component from exclamativity.

2.3. Degree operators

It is generally assumed that exclamative sentences must include a degree operator creating the necessary domain extension which surpasses the speaker's expectations (Zanuttini and Portner (2003); Castroviejo (2006); Rett (2011)). This function is typically encoded by specialized words modifying a gradable adjective o noun:

(16) a. **Que** agradable que és passar una vetllada aixì! (Ca., CTILC)
          how pleasant EM is pass.INF an evening this
          'How pleasant it is to spend an evening like this!'

      b. ¿Eres idiota?, ¡**menudo** susto me has dado! (Sp., CORPES XXI)
          are.2SG idiot small fright ME.DAT(CL) have.2SG give.PTPC
          'Are you idiot? What a fright you gave me!'
      c. Nossa, **que** raiva que eu tive, menino. (BP, Moreira (2017))
          EM what anger EM I have.PST.1SG boy
          'Wow, how angry I was, boy.'

      d. **Cât** de înalt e acel turn! (Ro., Giurgea (2015))
          how of high is that tower
          'How high that tower is!'

      e. **Itte** bellu ki ses! (Sa., Jones (1993))
          what beautiful EM are.2SG
          'How beautiful you are!'

Besides this well-studied set, some Romance languages feature *that*-exclamatives as well, namely exclamative sentences that are headed by a complementizer like element, as Catalan and French (see Section 2.4 and Villalba (2003)):

(17) a. ¡**Que** n'és, de car! (Ca., Villalba (2003))
          EM of.it-is of expensive
          'How expensive it is!'

      b. **Que** cette histoire est obscure! (Fr., Gérard-Naef (1980))
          EM this story is dark
          'How dark this story is!'

As the translation highlights, these exclamative sentences involve a degree reading, just as *wh*-exclamatives do. Henceforth, we can follow the original idea from Villalba (2003) and developed by Sánchez López (2020) that a null degree operator is doing the job in these sentences in a similar way to the *wh*-word *com* 'how' and the marker *si*:[6] We can appreciate the parallelism between *that*-exclamatives with a null operator and exclamatives with degree operators *si* and *com/comme/cómo*:

(18) Ca., Villalba (2003)
      a. ¡Que n'és, de car!
          EM of.it-is of expensive
          'How expensive it is!'

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[6] This marker is not to be confounded with the polarity marker *sí* Batllori and Hernanz (2013) nor the *si* 'if' in the expression of regrets Sánchez López (2017a,b), which do not need a degree quantification and involve a counterfactual situation:

(i). a. Ah! Si elle m'aimait! (Fr., Delatour et al. (2004))
          EM if she me=love.pst.3sg
          Alas, if only she loved me!
      b. ¡Si al menos hubieras estado allí! (Sp., Sánchez López (2017a, b))
          EM to-the least have.pst.sbj.2sg be.ptcp there
          'If only you had been there!'

b. ¡Si   que n'és,   de car!
   EM   EM   of.it-is of expensive

c. ¡Com és,   de   car!
   EM   is   of   expensive

(19) Fr.

a. Qu'elle est   jolie!   Jones (1996)
   EM   she is   pretty
   'How pretty she is!'

b. Si   c'est gentil! Le Goffic (1993)
   EM   it=is nice
   'How nice it is!'

c. Comme elle est jolie! Jones (1996)
   how   she   is   pretty
   'How pretty she is!'

(20) Sp., Bosque (2017)

a. ¡Cómo eres   de   bella!
   how   be.2SG of   beautiful
   'How beautiful you are!'

b. ¡Si   será   Juan tonto!
   EM   be.FUT.3SG Juan dumb
   'Juan is so dumb!'[7]

We must note that Spanish lacks *that*-exclamatives, and that the use of *si* is much more restricted in French and Spanish than in Catalan, but besides these differences, these exclamative constructions encode the degree quantification by means of an operator, which can be realized overtly (*si*, and *com/cómo/comme*) or covertly, as a *that*-exclamative. I will come back to the exact syntactic representation of these constructions in Section 3.

2.4. Sentence-type markers

We have seen that some exclamative markers are better analyzed as mirativity (Section 2.1) and others as degree operators Section 2.3. Now I will consider exclamative markers that seem to encode the exclamative sentence-type. Sure, not everybody agrees that a exclamative sentence-type exists, on a pair with the declarative, interrogative, imperative or optative (see, for instance, Rosengren (1997, 2011); d'Avis (2013, 2016)). However, certain elements make exclamative sentences clearly distinctive in most languages (Michaelis (2001); Villalba (2008, 2023); Siemund (2015)). One outstanding element is the complementizer heading so called *that*-exclamatives in Catalan or French (21), but also in Germanic languages (22) (see Villalba (2003, 2017, 2023); Trotzke and Villalba (2020, 2021)):[8]

(21) a. ¡Que n'és,   de car!   (Ca., Villalba (2003))
         that of.it-is of expensive
         'How expensive it is!'

      b. Que cette histoire est obscure! (Fr., Gérard-Naef (1980))
         that this   story   is   dark
         'How dark this story is!'

(22) a. Dat   hij die   boeken kan   lezen!   (Du., Bennis (1998))
         that he   those books   can.3SG   read.INF
         'Wow, he can read those books!'

      b. Dass DIE   Geige spielt! (Ge., d'Avis (2013))
         that she   violin plays
         'Wow, she plays the violin!'

      c. Att du   hann   till mötet!   (Sw., Delsing (2010))
         that you reach.PST.2SG to   meeting.DEF
         'What a surprise that you reached the meeting!'

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[7] The future tense encodes a mirative value in this example. See Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti (2021).

[8] Unlike their Romance counterparts, Germanic *that*-exclamatives (see Truckenbrodt (2013); Trotzke and Villalba (2021)) are not restricted to degree readings. This can be appreciated in a context where the source of surprise is not a degree of a property but a proposition:

(i). Trotzke and Villalba (2021)

a. Dass er   gestorben ist! (Ge.)
   that he   die.ptcp   has
   'So suprising that he died!'

b. #Que ha   mort!   (Ca.)
   EM   has die.PTCP
   'So suprising that he died!'

As remarked by Villalba (2017); Corr (2018, 2022), *que* is the default force marker in Ibero-Romance, where it may encode interrogative (Prieto and Rigau (2007)), optative (Sánchez López (2017a, b)) and exclamative sentence-types (Villalba (2003)). Henceforth, I will argue that it is a marker of exclamative sentence-type.

What is less clear is how should we treat the *que* marker appearing in wh- and definite exclamatives:

(23) a. Que   bo   que és!   Ca.
        how   good   EM   is
        'How good it is!'
     b. ¡Las/Menudas cosas que come! Sp.
        the.F.PL/small things EM eats
        'The things she eats!'

Villalba (2016) makes the claim that we must take this marker as the same exclamative marker heading *that*-exclamatives, on the basis of diachronic evidence: both *that*-exclamatives and *wh*-exclamatives with *que* appear regularly in texts in the second half of the 19th century. However, this is not a settled issue, and the cartographic tradition follows the proposal developed for Italian by Benincà (1996), which treats the marker as the realization of a Focus head. We will consider the details of Benincà's proposal in Section 3, but the idea seems counter-intuitive, for Romance languages do not mark focus by means of markers. Note, for instance, mirative focus fronting:

(24) a. **Des   sauterelles   grillées** ils   mangent dans ce   pays.   (Fr., Authier and Haegeman (2019))
        some   grasshoppers grilled   they   eat   in   this country
        'Grilled grasshoppers they eat in this country.'

     b. (Pensa   te!) **Una tigre** abbiamo visto!   (It., Cruschina and Bianchi (2021))
        think.IMPR.2SG you a   tiger   have.1PL see.PTCP
        '(Guess what!) We saw a tiger!'

     c. Ite   abbistu, custu pitzinnu! **Su giornale** est leghende. (Sa., Jones (2013))
        what   clever   this child   the newspaper   is   reading
        'How clever this child is! He is reading the newspaper.'

Even though this fronting is customary analyzed as movement to a peripheral FocusP (Cruschina et al. (2015); Cruschina and Remberger (2017)), there is no Romance variety including any marker. Hence, we can be suspicious about treating *che/ki/que* in exclamative sentences as a genuine focus marker. Consequently, I will maintain the idea that it is rather a marker of exclamative sentence-type in parallel with interrogative and optative markers.

3. The distribution of exclamative markers in the speech act layer

In this section, I connect the pragmatic properties of the exclamative markers described in the previous section with the syntactic structure of the left periphery. To achieve this goal, I adopt the Speech Act Layer by Krifka (2021), which assumes three functional projections in the left periphery of sentence encoding three pragmatic values. The lower projection is Judge Phrase (JP), which encodes subjective epistemic and evidential attitudes. JP is dominated by Commitment Phrase (ComP), which encodes the commitment of the speaker with respect to the truth value of the proposition. Finally, the highest projection is Act Phrase (ActP), which encodes the relation of the proposition to the common ground, namely its illocutionary force. Schematically:

(25). [ActP [Act] [ComP [Com] [JP [J] [ForceP [TP]]]]]]

We can apply Krifka's framework for building the meaning of utterances compositionally: the proposition (ForceP) is modified by JP, adding epistemic or evidential nuances. Then, the modified proposition is further modified by ComP, which incorporates the (degrees of) commitment of the speaker regarding the proposition (operator ⊢). Finally, the illocutionary force of the utterance incorporated in ActP applies to the modified proposition to yield the resultant speech act, which in our case study is an exclamation.

First, since mirative markers encode the speaker's surprise towards the situation expressed by the proposition they modify, I assume that they appear in the layer devoted to the speaker's epistemic states, namely JP (we restrict ourselves to Catalan for space reasons, but we will analyze similarly Italian *guarda* or Spanish *mira* and *vaya*; see Espinal et al. (2024) for a similar proposal for Spanish *vaya*):

(26) a. [ActP [Act !] [ComP [Com ⊢]   [JP [J ma] [ForceP que bo [Force' que [TP és]]]]]]
     b. [ActP [Act !] [ComP [Com° ⊢] [JP [J ma] [ForceP OP/si [Force' que [TP és bo]]]]]]

The mirative marker sets the evidential/epistemic value of the proposition, in this case, one of surprise. The commitment operator ⊢ encodes the strong commitment of the speaker towards the proposition and towards the attitude expressed (see Villalba (2024) for a detailed proposal on the commitments involved in exclamations), and the illocutionary operator ! in ActP converts the proposition into an exclamation, as we have stated in the introduction is not restricted to exclamative sentences. Hence, my analysis encodes exclamative sentence-type in ForceP, and exclamation illocutionary force in ActP.

Moreover, the proposal entails that mirativity is encoded in a position higher than ForceP. Such a move is confirmed by the placement of mirative markers with respect to vocatives. As Slocum (2016); González López (2022); González López and Schmid (2023) have highlighted, two kind of vocatives must be distinguished regarding their function and position. On the one hand, initial vocatives typically fulfill a call role, and are placed above ForceP. This is the case in example (4a), repeated here for the sake of reference:

(27) a. **Tu**, goita les pentinetes del   monyo! **Ma**!
    Ca., CTILC you look the.F.PL combs of.the bun EM
    'Look at the bun's combs! Wow!'

The pronoun is intended to call the hearer attention, and is placed before the mirative marker *goita.* Slocum (2016); González López (2022); González López and Schmid (2023) argue that these vocatives (calls) are generated in Voc(call)P above ForceP. However, these authors do not take into account the speech act layer, so we will suggest that the projection is rather above ActP:

(28) [Voc(call)P [ActP [Act !] [ComP [Com ⊢] [JP [J ma] [ForceP que bo [Force' que [TP és]]]]]]]

In contrast, lower vocatives are typically used for maintaining contact between speaker and listener and appear typically after mirative markers, as in the following examples:

(29) Ca., CTILC
    a. Ma, **chica**, quina falla   més bonica.
      EM girl   what bonfire so pretty
      'Wow, girl, what a pretty bonfire!'

    b. Òndia, **tu**, quin xou!
      EM   you what show
      'Wow, what a show, man!'

    c. Goita, **noi bufó**, quina pila de caça!
      EM   boy cute which.F pile of game
      'Wow, cute boy, what a stock of game!'

These lower vocatives do not involve any call, and in some cases, the second person pronoun *tu* is used in utterances without any physical hearer.

Moreover, as the last examples show, *wh*-exclamative words are always lower than low vocatives. The same is true for degree operators and sentence-type markers:

(30) Ca., CTILC
    a. **Noi**, si que et   costa.
      boy EM EM you.DAT(CL) costs.3SG
      'Boy, how much it takes you!'

    b. Un vestit?… **noia**, si   que anirem   mudats!
      a dress   girl EM EM go.FUT.1PL well.dress.PTPC
      'A dress? Girl, how well dressed we will be!'

(31) Sp., CORPES XXI
    a. Pero **Isabel**, qué tonterías se te   ocurren.
      but Isabel what nonsenses REFL you.DAT(CL) happen
      'Come on, Isabel, what nonsense are you coming up with.'

  b. Bueno, **hombre**, vaya genio…
    well man   what temper
    'Ok, man, what a bad temper…'

While Slocum (2016); González López (2022); González López and Schmid (2023) argue that these vocatives (addresse) are generated below ForceP, the interaction with mirative markers, degree quantifiers, and sentence-type markers suggests that they appear in a Voc(addr)P just above ForceP (see Hill (2007, 2014) and Espinal (2013)):

(32) [ActP [Act !] [ComP [Com ⊢] [JP òndia [J] [Voc(addr)P tu [ForceP quin xou [Force' [TP]]]]]]]

Moreover, the structure in (0) helps us explain the generation of the Catalan mirative marker *manoi* 'wow', as a lexicalization of the mirative marker *ma* in JP and the vocative *noi* 'boy' in Voc(addr)P:

(33) Ca., CTILC
    a. Ma, noi, quina remorassa!
      EM boy which big.noise
      'Oh, boy, what a big noise!'

    b. Manoi, que en són, de bones!
      EM   EM of.it are.3PL of good.F.PL
      'Wow, how good they are!'

Once the form is fixed, *manoi* is reanalyzed as a mirative marker and precedes adressee vocatives, just as other mirative markers do:

(34) **Manoi**, Pip, company! […] quin savi no sou!   (Ca., CTILC)
    EM   Pip friend   which thinker not are.2SG
    'Wow, Pip, my friend, […] what a thinker you are!'

Finally, since the placement of degree operators and sentence-type markers is ForceP, we can maintain the marker *che/que* in the head of Force in all exclamative types:

(35) a. Que bo que és!
    b. [ActP [Act !] [ComP [Com ⊢] [JP [J] [ForceP que bo [Force' que [TP és]]]]]]

(36) a. Si que és bo!
      b. [ActP [Act !] [ComP [Com° ⊢] [JP [J] [ForceP si [Force' que [TP és bo]]]]]]
(37) a. Que n'és de bo!
      b. [ActP [Act !] [ComP [Com° ⊢] [JP [J] [ForceP OP [Force' que [TP n'és de bo]]]]]]

We can thus summarize the syntax-pragmatics interaction of exclamative markers in Table 2:

Table 2
Pragmatic meaning and syntactic position of exclamative markers.

Kind of marker	Information encoded	Position
mirative marker	mirativity	Judge Phrase
degree operator	domain extension	Specifier of ForceP
complementizer	sentence-type	head of ForceP

One must note that this idea is incompatible with the proposal developed for Italian by Benincà (1996), which treats the marker *che* as the realization of the Focus head. We have criticized the proposal on theoretical grounds in Section 2.4, but it is true that the relative position of dislocates between the wh-exclamative word and the marker *che* in Italian (38)-a and Paduan (38)-b is a major empirical issue Benincà (1996, 33):

(38) a. Che   bel   libro, a   tua   sorella,   che (le)   hanno   regalato! (It., Benincà (1996))
          what nice book to your daughter that to.her have.3PL given
          'What a nice book, to your sister, they gave her as a a gift!'

      b. Che   bel   libro, a   to   sorela,   che i   ghe   ga   regalà! (Pa., Munaro (2003))
          What nice book to your daughter that CL.SBJ CL.DAT have.3PL given
          'What a nice book, to your sister, they gave her as a a gift!'

If we assume the left periphery by Rizzi (1997), where left-dislocates appear in the higher TopP, between the ForceP and FocusP (1), we must conclude that, in these varieties, *che* cannot be in ForceP, but in the head of FocusP.

(39)
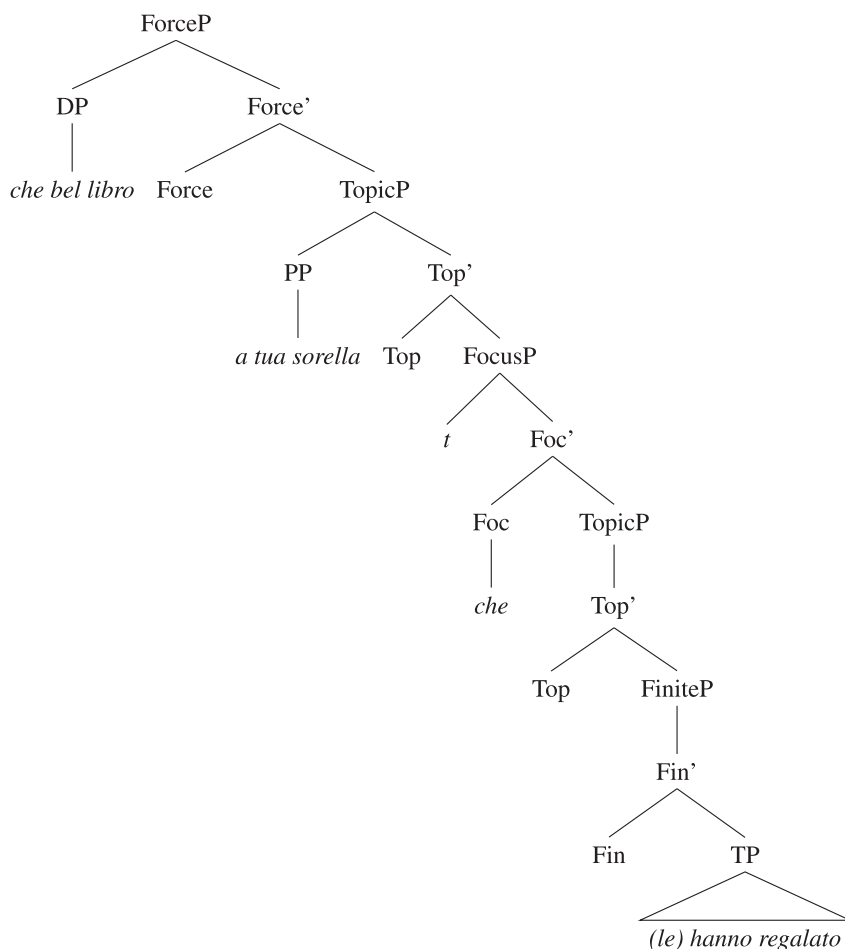
According to Benincà's proposal, the wh-phrase first moves to the specifier of FocusP, and then further moves up to the specifier of ForceP, leaving the dislocate behind.

If we extend her proposal to Ibero-Romance varieties, we run into trouble, for dislocates must precede exclamative *wh*-words, *wh*-phrases and markers. Consider the following examples:

(40) Ca., CTILC

    a. D'aquest tema, quantes bestieses que se'n diuen!
       of=this subject how.F.PL nonsenses EM SE=CL.PART say.3PL
       'How much nonsense people say about this subject!'

    b. ¡Aquesta si qu'és lletja!
       this.F EM that=is ugly
       'How ugly is this one!'

(41) Sp., Tirado (2016)

    a. A Pedro, qué cosas (que) le pasan.
       to Pedro what things EM DAT.3SG happen.3PL
       'The things that happen to Pedro.'

    b. A María, vaya regalo (que) le han hecho.
       to Maria what gift EM DAT.3SG have.3PL make.PTPC
       'What a gift they gave to María.'

If we maintain the proposal for Paduan and Italian by Benincà (1996), we must conclude that the *wh*-exclamative word remains in Focus, from where it would be able to check its exclamative feature against that of Force. However, we still have no answer why Italo-Romance varieties should allow the extra movement, in contrast with Ibero-Romance varieties.

Moreover, the particular case of Italian and Paduan described in (38) is far from being conclusive once one considers a broader set of examples. For instance, Munaro (2003) remarks that the order dislocate ≫ exclamative phrase is not totally excluded in Bellunese, and is even required with exclamative words:

(43) Be., Munaro (2003)

    a. Che/Quanti bei vestiti, to sorela, che la a compra!
       what/how.PL beautiful.PL dresses your sister EM CL.SBJ has buy.PTPC
    b. ?To sorela, che/quanti bei vestiti che la a compra!
       your sister what/how.PL beautiful.PL dresses EM CL.SBJ has buy.PTPC
       'Your sister, how (many) beautiful dresses she has bought!'

(44) Be., Munaro (2003)

    a. *Quant, par sta festa, che ave laora!
       how for this party EM have.2SG work.PTPC
    b. ?Par sta festa, quant che ave laora!
       for this party how EM have.2SG work.PTPC
       'How hard you have worked for this party!'

These data suggest that the apparent cases of dislocation in (38) might be reanalyzed as parentheticals, as suggested for other cases of embedded CLLD by Hernanz (2011) and Villalba (2022) (on parentheticals and the left periphery, see Koev (2021); Giorgi (2018)). Henceforth, these cases would not necessarily support the claim that *che* is a focus marker.

In any event, the available evidence seems to support the analysis I defend for *che/que* as an exclamative sentence marker, rather than the proposal that analyzes it as a focus marker.

4. Conclusions

In this paper, I have shown that the set of markers that have been associated with exclamative sentence-type and exclamations in Romance have a specialized pragmatic role in building the meaning of an exclamation speech act, and their role is encoded transparently in the syntactic structure. Mirative markers encode the surprise attitude of the speaker towards a proposition, and they appear in the Judge Phrase position in Krifka's Speech Act Layer, above ForceP and vocatives, so they may combine with different sentence-types, besides exclamatives. Degree operators, which create the necessary domain extension on which the attitude of the speaker is built, occupy the specifier of ForceP, next to the marker of exclamative sentence-type, in the head of ForceP. The resultant picture of the paper shows that we can offer a compositional approach to exclamativity dealing with the rich set of pragmatic and syntactic properties of exclamative markers in Romance. Henceforth, we can take the results on the different role of exclamative markers and their strict ordering as evidence for a rich syntax-pragmatics interface along the lines of the Cartographic Program.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Xavier Villalba: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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Xavier Villalba is associate professor of Catalan Linguistics and member of the Center for Theoretical Linguistics at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain). His main research interests are the interface of syntax with information structure (with focus on right-dislocation) and with semantics and pragmatics (with focus on exclamative and existential sentences), on which he has published in journals such as *Discourse Processes, International Review of Pragmatics, Italian Journal of Linguistics, Journal of Portuguese Linguistics, Journal of Pragmatics, Lingua, Linguistic Variation, Syntax*, and *The Linguistic Review*. He has also contributed to several collective works (*Manual of Catalan Linguistics, Manual of Romance Morphosyntax and Syntax, Advances in the Analysis of Spanish Exclamatives, Wh-exclamatives, Imperatives and Wh-questions: Issues on Brazilian Portuguese*), and has recently edited with Andreas Trotzke the volume *Expressive meaning across linguistic levels and frameworks* (Oxford University Press).