

An expressives analysis of exclaimatives in Spanish¹

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Abstract

I make two major claims in this paper: (i) Spanish matrix *that*-clauses are exclamative sentences, and not just declaratives used with exclamative intonation; (ii) the item at the beginning of the clause, *QUE*, is an expressive, and not the regular Spanish complementizer *que*. I find support for (i) by applying the tests established in the literature to identify exclamative sentences (a.o. Elliott 1974; Grimshaw 1979; Villalba 2003; Zanuttini & Portner 2003). I argue in favor of (ii) by showing, first, that there are syntactic and semantic differences between embedded *that*-clauses and matrix *that*-clauses. Then, I argue that *QUE* is an expressive by showing that matrix *that*-clauses bear the features characteristic of expressives. Since this claim is independent of the theoretical account adopted for expressives, the conclusion is that any attempt to formalize expressives will need to consider matrix *that*-clauses in Spanish.

1. Introduction

In Spanish, matrix *that*-clauses are very frequent, and the construction is productive:

- (1) a. ¡Que viene Juan!
that comes.2.SG.INDIC John
“John is coming!!!!”
b. ¡Que comas la sopa!
that eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup
“Eat your soup!!!!”

(Notation: ‘!!!’ indicates extreme emphasis)

A speaker who utters (1)a or (1)b reveals something about her emotional state. If two burglars are going through the papers on John’s desk and they suddenly hear the front door, one of them could utter (1a) to express his surprise about Juan’s unexpected arrival. If a mother is talking to a child who refuses to obey her requests that he eat the soup, the utterance of (1b) is an emphatic order, arising from the mother’s degree of annoyance.

At first sight, the sentences in (1) are exclamatives. Exclamatives are sentences that express the speaker’s state of surprise, the unexpectedness of something or its location at an extreme degree with respect to an evaluative scale. The sentences in (1) fit this pattern. However, the formal status of these sentences as exclamatives has been questioned (cf. Zanuttini & Portner 2003; Sæbø 2005).

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In this paper I argue that the sentences in (1) are exclamatives and not just declaratives used with exclamative intonation. I also argue that the crucial difference with declaratives concerns the presence of a special item at the front: QUE. I claim that QUE in (1) is different from the regular Spanish complementizer *que* ('that'),² and I propose an analysis in which QUE is an expressive (Potts 2007a, 2007b, 2007c).

The paper is organized as follows: in section §2, I present evidence supporting the claim that the sentences in (1) are exclamatives; in §3, I explain the formal characteristics of expressive content; and in §4, I argue that QUE is responsible for such characteristics in matrix *that*-clauses. In §5, I point out different topics for further research.

2. Not just declaratives with exclamative intonation

Zanuttini & Portner (2003) (henceforth Z&P) propose that exclamative sentences have a special syntax and semantics: (i) exclamatives contain a *wh*-operator variable structure, and (ii) exclamatives contain an abstract morpheme (*Fact*) in the CP domain. Given this characterization, the sentences in (1) would not be exclamative sentences. Sæbø (2005), on the other hand, claims that matrix *that*-clauses are exclamative sentences and that no special head (semantic operator) is needed in the syntax. In his argumentation, Sæbø uses German examples, (2), since matrix *that*-clauses are productive in German (unlike in English).

- (2) a. Dass die U-Bahn noch fährt! (Schwabe 2004)³
 "Well, I never, the tube is still running!"
 b. Dass du dich daran noch erinnerst...! (Sæbø 2005)
 "It is amazing that you still remember!"

Sæbø argues that the exclamative status of (2) is just the result of the semantic type of these clauses when they are unembedded.

In this section I argue that the Spanish matrix *that*-clauses in (1) are exclamatives on the basis of standard tests established in the literature to identify exclamatives (Elliott 1974; Grimshaw 1979; Zanuttini & Portner 2003). The tests are as follows: if a sentence belongs to the exclamative type, the sentence has to be factive, §2.1; an exclamative sentence has to have a scalar interpretation, §2.2; and finally, if a sentence belongs to the exclamative type, it does not introduce question/answer pairs, §2.3.

2.1 Factivity

Exclamatives are factive (Elliott 1974; Grimshaw 1979). An argument often used to support this claim is the impossibility of embedding exclamative sentences under non-factive predicates, (3).

- (3) a. How very cute he is!
 b. Mary knows/*thinks/*wonders how very cute he is [Z&P:46]

² I will maintain a typographical distinction throughout this paper: QUE refers to the item at the front of matrix *that*-clauses and *que* refers to the regular complementizer equivalent to *that* in English.

³ Examples from the original author cited from Sæbø (2005).

The status of (3)a as an exclamative is not questioned. As we can see in (3)b, this sentence can be embedded under factive predicates like *know*. However, embedding is not possible under *think* or *wonder*, which are not factive.

This argument is not applicable to the sentences in (1), since those sentences are not embeddable, (4).

- (4) a. Creo que/# QUE viene Juan
 say.1.SG.PRES that/ QUE come.3.SG.PRES John
 b. Sé que/# QUE viene Juan
 know.1.SG.PRES that/QUE come.3.SG.PRES John

QUE in Spanish matrix *that*-clauses in (1) is homophonous with the regular complementizer que. If we try to embed (1)a under a predicate (factive or not), the sentence loses its exclamative strength, and QUE in (1)a is just interpreted as the regular complementizer que.

However, there are other ways to test factivity. In particular, it can be done by showing the incompatibility of (1) with a state of ignorance (Villalba 2003): a state of ignorance is incompatible with the presuppositions carried by the factive sentence, (5).

- (5) a. ¡QUE viene Juan! #Si es que viene.
 QUE comes John if is that comes
 “John is coming!!! #If he comes at all”
 b. ¡QUE comas la sopa! #Si es que la comes
 QUE eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup if is that it eat.2.SG.SUBJ
 “Eat your soup!!! #If you eat it at all

In (5) we can see that the sentences in (1) are not compatible with states of ignorance. (5)a is infelicitous because after announcing the fact that John is coming the speaker wonders whether John is coming: when the first clause is factive, the speaker believes it, and that is incompatible with the speaker being unsure.

The same reasoning is applied in (5)b. It is infelicitous to wonder whether the addressee will eat his soup after claiming that it is the only option that holds. Therefore, we can conclude that the sentences in (1) are factive.

2.2 Scalar implicatures

Exclamatives introduce a scalar implicature that the proposition they denote lies at the extreme end of some contextually given scale (Elliott 1974; Z&P). This explains the sense of surprise or unexpectedness conveyed by the speaker when uttering an exclamative. In this section, I argue that the sentences in (1) introduce a conventional scalar implicature. I will start by explaining how this implicature is scalar and, then, I will explain how it is conventional.

To see that the implicatures are scalar we can compare the utterance of (6)b and (7)b with an utterance not containing QUE, 0a and (7)a respectively.

- (6)
- a. Viene Juan [plain declarative]
come.3.sg John
“John is coming”
 - b. ¡QUE viene Juan!
que come.3.sg John
“John is coming!!!”

- (7)
- a. Come la sopa. [imperative]
eat.2.SG.IMP the soup
“Eat your soup”
 - b. ¡QUE comas la sopa!
QUE eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup
“Eat your soup!!!”

(6) is a plain declarative. It asserts that John is coming. (7)a is an order to the addressee to eat his/her soup.

Like (6), the utterance of (6)b also asserts that John is coming and, in addition, it expresses that the speaker is excited/surprised to an extreme degree about it. (6)b is only possible in a scenario like the one described above, in which John arrives to his office unexpectedly.

Several authors (Villalba 2003, Zanuttini & Portner 2003) have proposed that in examples like these, scalar implicatures are derived by comparing two sets, one with expected elements and one with unexpected elements. In the example in (6)b we compare the set of contextually regular events (D1), which includes, for example, the events of people talking in other offices, with the set of unexpected (no-contextually regular/usual) events (D2), which includes the event of John coming. A scalar implicature arises when these two domains are compared.

In the case of (7)b, following similar reasoning, the domain of contextually regular events, (D1), does not include an event of eating the soup by the kid. Indeed, the parent utters (7)b because such an event is not taking place. (7)b is used to indicate that the only option that is available to the kid is to eat the soup (D2). The comparison of the two domains gives rise to the scalar implicature.

A correct account of these implicatures has to account for the fact that they are not cancelable. This is illustrated in (8) and (9).

- (8)
- a. Viene Juan. Pero no me importa
come.3.SG John but neg me.CL.DAT care.1.SG
“Juan is coming. But I do not care”
 - b. ¡ QUE viene Juan! #Pero no me importa.
QUE come.3.SG John but neg. me.CL.DAT.1.SG care.1.SG
“Juan is coming!!! #But I do not care”

(9)

- a. Come la sopa. Pero no estoy enfadada.
eat.2.SG.IMP your soup but neg I am angry
“I order you to eat your soup. #But be.1.SG not angry”
- b. ¡QUE comas la sopa! #Pero no estoy enfadada.
QUE eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup but neg be.1.SG angry
“Eat your soup!!! #But I am not angry”

(8)b shows that the implicature is non-cancelable. An utterance of (8)b implies that the speaker is extremely excited/surprised about the sudden arrival of John, and that excitement cannot be negated. In the same way, (9)b shows that the implicature is not cancelable: the utterance of (9)b implies that the speaker is very excited/surprised, and the implicature cannot be negated.

To summarize, in this section I have argued that the presence of QUE gives rise to a scalar interpretation.

2.3 Question/Answer pairs

Exclamative sentences do not introduce questions in the discourse. It is infelicitous to try to provide them with an answer, (10)-(11).⁴

- (10) A: How tall is he? B: Seven feet
(11) How very tall he is! B: #Seven feet

Unlike questions, (10), exclamatives do not pragmatically call for answers, (11). This means that exclamatives do not introduce questions in the discourse, since questions can always be answered. This can be further illustrated by considering the pattern in (12) and (13).

- (12) How tall is he? Seven feet?
(13) How very tall he is! #Seven feet or eight feet?

In (12), a second question can be used to narrow down the first question. However, this cannot be done in (13). If the exclamative introduced a question, it would be possible to ask further questions to narrow down the topic of introduced by the first question into the discourse. However, as illustrated in (13), it is not possible to introduce 'further' questions after an exclamative. This indicates that a question was not introduced in the first place.

We can try to reproduce this argumentation for the sentence in (1). If they introduce questions, it should be possible to have follow-up questions. We could worry that in the absence of a *wh*-operator, it is not obvious which potential answer could exemplify an attempt to answer any supposed question introduced by the exclamative. But we can bypass this problem by noting that no further questions can be asked about whatever topic is introduced by the exclamative, (14).

- (14) a. ¡QUE viene Juan! #¿A qué hora?

⁴ Examples from Z&P: 47.

- QUE comes John at what time
 “John is coming!!! #¿At what time?”
 b. ¡ QUE comas la sopa! #¿Qué sopa?
 QUE eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup what soup
 “Eat your soup!!! #What soup?”

If the sentences in (1) introduced a question, the speaker could narrow it down further using another question, as tried in (14). However, it is not possible. Therefore, we can conclude that the sentences in (1) do not introduce a question, and thus no possible answer.

2.4 Conclusion

In this section I have applied tests established in the literature that determine whether a sentence belongs to the exclamative clause type. We have seen that the sentences in (1) are factive; that they have a scalar interpretation; and that they do not introduce questions in the discourse.

Even though the fulfillment of these three conditions is taken to mean that the sentence in question is an exclamative (these are necessary conditions), notice that the conditions are not sufficient.⁵ To see this let us look at (15).

(15) John knows that some student are in the hall

The sentence in (15) is factive (notice the factive predicate *know*); it also has a scalar interpretation (*some* introduces a scale), and it does not introduce a question in the discourse. However, no one would say that (15) belongs to the exclamative type. Something else, maybe a pragmatic component, is needed.

3. QUE

I have already argued that the presence of QUE is responsible for informing us about the speaker’s emotional state (§2.2).

- (16)
- | | | |
|----|---------------------|---------------------|
| a. | Viene Juan | [plain declarative] |
| | come.3.SG.IND John | |
| | “John is coming” | |
| b. | ¡QUE viene Juan! | |
| | QUE come.3.sg John | |
| | “John is coming!!!” | |

- (17)
- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--------------|
| a. | Come la sopa. | [imperative] |
| | eat.2.SG.IMP the soup | |
| | “I order you to eat your soup” | |
| b. | ¡QUE comas la sopa! | |

⁵ This has been pointed out to me by Christopher Potts.

QUE eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup
 “Eat your soup!!!”

The propositional content of the (a) and (b) examples in (16) and (17) is the same. However, the (b) examples tell us something about the emotional state of the speaker that the (a) sentences do not, and the only difference between them is the presence of QUE at the front.⁶

Han (2000) argued that (17)b is an emphatic imperative. However, in her analysis, QUE is just the regular complementizer *que* that precedes embedded clauses in Spanish, (18). The only difference between (17)b and (18)a is that in (17)b the main predicate, *ordeno* (‘order’), would be elided, (18)b.

- (18) a. Ordeno *que* comas la sopa
 order.1.SG.IND that eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup
 “I order that you eat your soup”
 b. ~~Ordeno~~ *que* comas la sopa
 order.1.SG.IND that eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup
 “I order that you eat your soup”

In this section I argue that QUE is not the regular Spanish complementizer *que*, and propose that QUE is an expressive. In §3.1, I start by pointing out the differences between QUE, and *que*, noticing that the elision of the matrix predicate does not explain the implicature arising when (17)b is uttered (illustrated above in §2.2). Then, I present evidence to argue that the sentences in (16)b and (17)b are syntactically different from embedded *that*-clauses. In §3.2 I summarize the crucial additions made by the introduction of QUE, and, in §3.3, I argue that QUE is an expressive.

3.1 *The difference between QUE and que*

The utterance of (19) in itself does not tell the hearer anything about the speaker’s emotional state (e.g. if the speaker was yelling at the addressee, it would indicate that the speaker is very angry or anxious, but this information is not conveyed if a neutral tone is maintained).

- (19) Ordeno *que* comas la sopa
 order.1.SG.IND that eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup
 “I order that you eat your soup”

The strength of the utterance of (17)b is not replicated by the utterance of (19). If (17)b was derived from (19) by eliding the matrix verb, this difference would not be expected. Furthermore, the addition of QUE, (20), promotes (19) to a non-refusable order by expressing the speaker’s annoyance and lack of patience, i.e. his/her emotional state, (20) (without the need of any special intonation).

- (20) ¡ QUE ordeno *que* comas la sopa!
 QUE order.1.SG.IND that eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup
 “I order that you eat your soup!!!”

⁶Looking at (23)b one can notice that there is another difference with respect to (23)a: whereas the verb morphology in (23)a is *imperative*, the morphology in (23)b is subjunctive. This is expected if QUE is in C position and is compatible with the syntactic proposal for imperatives in Han (2000) and Biezma (2007).

The contrast between (19) and (20) provides further illustration that, as discussed in §2.1 above, sentences with QUE cannot be embedded under any predicate and preserve their strength.

There is still another difference between QUE and que. Embedded clauses like the one in (18) can overtly express the agent of the predicate, (21). However, that is not possible with the sentences in (17)b, as shown in (21)b.

- (21) a. Ordeno que *tú* comas la sopa
 order.1.SG.IND that you eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup
 “I order that you eat your soup”
 b. *¡QUE *tú* comas la sopa!
 QUE you eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup

(21)b shows that it is not possible to spell out the agent of the embedded predicate, whereas it is possible in regular embedded clauses, as in (21)a. If the syntactic characteristics of matrix *that*-clauses and embedded clauses introduced by que are the same, this difference would not be expected.

We can conclude then that QUE and que are different items.⁷

3.2 Conclusion

In the previous section we saw that QUE cannot have the same denotation as que. In this section, I explain the contribution of QUE. Let us consider again at the data presented in (16) and (17), repeated here in (22) - (23) for convenience.

- (22) a. Viene Juan
 come.3.SG.IND John
 “John is coming!”
 b. ¡QUE viene Juan!
 QUE come.2.SG.IND John
 “John is coming!!!”
 (23) a. ¡Come la sopa!
 eat.2.SG.IMP the soup
 “Eat your soup!!!”
 b. ¡QUE comas la sopa!
 QUE eat.2.sg.SUBJ the soup
 “Eat your soup!!!”

The (a) sentences in (22) and (23) differ from the (b) examples in a very relevant way: although the (a) and (b) examples encode the same propositional content, the (a) sentences do not express the emotional state of the speaker, whereas the (b) sentences do. In (22) and (23), the (a) and (b) examples both entail that the speaker tells the hearer that John is coming and orders the hearer to

⁷ It is possible to assume that QUE has evolved to its current function from the regular complementizer que via *exaptation*,

eat the soup (respectively). However, only the (b) examples tell us something about the speaker's emotional state, i.e. that the speaker is in a state of great emotional excitement/ surprise. As noted above, the only difference is the presence of QUE. QUE gives us the information concerning the speaker's emotional state (at utterance time) towards the fact that John is coming, or that the child is not eating the soup. In the next section I will propose that QUE is an *expressive* (Kaplan 1999; Potts 2007a, 2007b).

4. Expressives

Kaplan (1999) defines *expressives* as “those expressions that do not present all of the semantic information that they carry as part of what is said.” [Kaplan 1999:13]. An example is *bastard* in (24).

(24) That *bastard* Kaplan was promoted to tenure (Kaplan 1999, ex. 3)

Kaplan claims that rather than describing someone, the use of the word *bastard* in (24) expresses something about the agent, about his state or attitude. However, Kaplan recognizes how difficult it is to account for these elements.

There are several attempts in the literature to account for expressives. In this paper I adopt Potts (2007a, 2007b). In §4.1 I introduce the characteristics of expressive content as explained in Potts (2007a), and in §4.2 I show how QUE shares them.

4.1 Characteristics of expressives

Potts (2007a, 2007b) accepts the challenge given by Kaplan (1999) and attempts to develop a theory to account for expressive content and all its characteristics.

(25) Expressives like *damn* and *bastard* have, when uttered, an immediate and powerful impact on the context. They are revealing of the perspective from which the utterance is made, and they have a dramatic impact on how current and future utterances are perceived. This, despite the fact that speakers are invariably hard-pressed to articulate what they mean. [Potts 2007a:1]

Potts identifies six characteristics of expressive content, (26).

(26) Characteristics of expressive content

- a. *Independence*: expressives contribute to a dimension of meaning separate from the original one.
- b. *Nondisplaceability*: expressives display something of the utterance situation.
- c. *Perspective dependence*: the expressive content is evaluated from the speaker's perspective.
- d. *Descriptive ineffability*: Speakers are never fully satisfied when they paraphrase expressive content using no expressive terms.
- e. *Immediacy*: The act of uttering an expressive is sufficient for conveying their content.
- f. *Repeatability*: Repetitions lead to strengthening.

Removing *bastard* from (24), does not affect the descriptive content of the phrase. In this way, the expressive content is independent. The inclusion of *bastard* in (24) informs us about the emotional state of the speaker with respect to Kaplan at the time of uttering (24).

Let us now consider *nondisplaceability*. Expressives cannot be used with a non-present temporal reference. They cannot be used to report the past emotional states of the speaker. To see this, let us briefly consider (27).

(27) In those days, I believed that that bastard Kaplan should not be promoted for tenure. #But now, I quite like the man.

(27) is infelicitous because *bastard* in the first sentence has to make reference to the speaker's current emotional state, and this is incompatible with the second sentence.

Returning to our original example, (24) allows us to see that the expressive content of *bastard* is *perspective dependent*. When uttering (24), what is revealed is the speaker's emotional state towards Kaplan. This perspective is not necessarily shared by anyone else in the context.

Descriptive ineffability refers to the difficulty of describing the content of the expressive in (24) with descriptive terms. The contribution of expressives is not propositional. Expressives tell us something about the emotional state of the speaker, not of the descriptive content, thus, when trying to describe the meaning, the speaker is never satisfied.

The impact of expressives in the context is immediate. When uttered, they make clear the emotional state of the speaker towards an entity, event or situation. When uttering (24), the speaker makes clear what her feelings are towards Kaplan at the time of utterance, and any utterance of the speaker referring to Kaplan have to consider it.

The contrast illustrated in (28) argues in favor of the *repeatability* characteristic of expressives.

- (28) a. Damn, I left my keys in the car.
 b. Damn, I left my damn keys in the car.
 c. Damn, I left my damn keys in the damn car.

Comparing (28)a with (28)c it is easy to infer that when uttering (28)c the speaker is more frustrated than when uttering (28)a. This fact illustrates that the repetition of an expressive manifests a stronger emotional state of the speaker.

In §4.2 I argue that QUE in (22)b and (23)b shares with *bastard* the characteristics in (26). Thus, the conclusion will be that QUE is an expressive.

4.2 QUE and expressives

The presence of QUE is also revealing of the perspective from which the utterance is made. (22)b tells us that the speaker is on edge because of the arrival of John (cf. (22)a), and (23)b tells us that the parent is extremely annoyed by her child's disobedience (cf. (23)a). By uttering (22)b

and (23)b, the context is changed, and current and future utterances will be perceived differently afterwards. As we saw, QUE is responsible for this shift and all its characteristics fits those proposed for expressive items in Potts (2007a, 2007b) and listed in (26).

4.2.1 *Independence*

We saw above that the inclusion of QUE in (29)a and (30)a does not affect the descriptive content.

- (29) a. Viene Juan
 come.3.SG.IND John
 “John is coming!”
 b. ¡ QUE viene Juan!
 QUE come.2.SG.IND John
 “John is coming!!!”
- (30) a. Come la sopa
 eat.2.SG.IMP the soup
 “Eat your soup!!!”
 b. ¡ QUE comas la sopa!
 QUE eat.2.sg.SUBJ the soup
 “Eat your soup!!!”

Both (29)a and (29)b assert that Juan is coming. However, only (29)b displays that the speaker is excited/surprised about that. In the same way, (30)a and (30)b are orders for the addressee to eat the soup. However, just (30)b tells us (without the need of special intonation) that the speaker is losing his/her patience.

This evidence argues in favor of *independence* of QUE. The use of this item does not contribute to the descriptive content. Its contribution belongs to a different domain.

4.2.2 *Nondiplaceability*

We saw above that QUE does not contribute to the descriptive content. It expresses something about the utterance situation. It expresses the emotional state of the speaker towards either the event of John coming or the child’s disobedience. However, it cannot be used later to report what happened at the time of utterance, (31)-(32).

- (31) One of the burglars sees John coming
 a. ¡ QUE viene Juan!
 “John is coming!!!”
 b. #Y entonces Juan avisó QUE venía Juan
 and then Juan warned QUE come.3.SG.PAST John
 c. #Y entonces Juan avisó que QUE venía/viene Juan
 and then John warned that QUE come.3.SG.PAST/PRES John
- (32) The annoyed parent orders the child to eat the soup
 a. ¡ QUE comas la sopa!

- “Eat your soup!!!”
- b. #Tu madre te ha dicho QUE comas
your mother te.CL.DAT.2.SG has said QUE eat.2.SG.SUBJ
la sopa
the soup
- c. #Tu madre te ha dicho que QUE comas
your mother te.CL.DAT.2.SG has said QUE eat.2.SG.SUBJ
la sopa
the soup

It could be argued that (31)b and (32)b are not felicitous because, as said above, the sentences are not embeddable. However, even when trying to report direct speech, (31)c and (32)c, the exclamative strength of (31)a and (32)a is not reproduced. Therefore, the expressive content of matrix *that*-clauses is not displaceable.

4.2.3 *Perspective dependence*

The utterance of (31)a and (32)a tells us something about the emotional state of the speaker. As a reply to (31)a, the second burglar in the scenario above could very calmly utter (33).

(33) Calm down, we can pretend we just came to see him. There is nothing to worry about. In the same way, if the kid’s grandmother is present when the parent loses her patience with the kid in (32)a, she could utter (34).

(34) Don’t stress out, he was just about to start eating it.

(33) and (34) support the hypothesis that when uttering (31)a and (32)a the expressive content refers just to the speaker, and how he/she feels towards an entity, an event or a situation. It is perspective dependent.

4.2.4 *Descriptive ineffability*

It is not easy to describe what the speaker is trying to communicate when uttering (31)a or (32)a. One could say that the speaker is 'nervous' in both cases. But this is just a general description and does not capture the details of what is really being expressed. 'Nervous' only means that the speaker is not in his usual emotional state.

It is important to notice that the contribution of the expressives is context dependent (Potts 2007b). Thus, whether utterances like (35) have a positive or negative interpretation very much depends on the context.

- (35) a. ¡ QUE el Papa ha muerto!
QUE the Pope has died
“The Pope has passed away!!!”
- b. ¡ QUE vienen los Beatles!
QUE come.3.PL.IND the Beatles

“The Beatles are coming!!!”

If (35)a is uttered by somebody who did not agree with the Pope’s ideas, one can even understand it as positive. However, the same sentence can indicate distress when uttered by somebody who did agree with the Pope's ideas.

The same observation can be extended to (35)b. The utterance of (35)b can be perceived as the manifestation of a state of joy or distress by the speaker depending on whether the speaker is the person in charge of setting up the security at the auditorium or a Beatles’ fan.

We can say that an utterance of a matrix *that*-clause means that the speaker is 'nervous', but we cannot accurately say that exactly the same information is conveyed in all contexts.

4.2.5 *Immediacy*

We have seen above that the utterance of a matrix *that*-clause in Spanish indicates that the speaker is somehow excited. With the use of a matrix *that*-clause, nothing additional is needed to convey this. One can choose among a variety of intonations, or just keep neutral intonation, but even with neutral intonation, a matrix *that*-clause expresses something about the speaker’s emotional state. At the very moment the speaker utters a matrix *that*-clause, the speaker is conveying that he/she is in a certain emotional state, and from then on all his/her utterances have to be interpreted with this consideration in mind.

4.2.6 *Repeatability*

The last property of expressives is *repeatability*. We have seen above that the repetition of an expressive leads to strengthening. In (36)-(38) the same pattern is repeated for matrix *that*-clauses in Spanish.

- (36) ¡ QUE viene Juan! ¡Ya llega! ¡Ya viene!
 QUE comes John already arrives already comes
 “John is coming!!! He is getting here! He is coming!”
- (37) ¡ QUE viene Juan! ¡ QUE ya llega! ¡Ya viene!
 QUE comes John QUE already arrives already comes
 “John is coming!!! He is getting here!!! He is coming!”
- (38) ¡ QUE viene Juan! ¡ QUE ya llega! ¡ QUE ya viene!
 QUE comes John QUE arrives QUE comes
 “John is coming!!! John is getting here!!! He is coming!!!”

The speaker uttering (38) is more nervous than the speaker of (37), and this speaker is more nervous than the speaker of (36). Thus, we can conclude that *repeatability* is one of the characteristics of matrix *that*-clauses in Spanish.

4.3 *Conclusion*

In this section I have reviewed the characteristics attributed to expressive content (Potts 2007a, 2007b). I have argued that these features are found in matrix *that*-clauses in Spanish. Since the

additional (non-descriptive) meaning in matrix *that*-clauses is added by the inclusion of QUE, we can conclude that QUE is an expressive.

5. Conclusion

I have made two major claims in this paper: (i) matrix *that*-clauses in Spanish are exclamative sentences, and not just declaratives used with exclamative intonation; and (ii) the element preceding these sentences, QUE, is an expressive, and not the Spanish regular complementizer *que*.

The first claim was argued for by applying the tests established in the literature to identify exclamative sentences (a.o. Elliott 1974; Grimshaw 1979; Villalba 2003; Zanuttini & Portner 2003).

The second claim was argued for by illustrating all the characteristics attributed to expressive content with matrix *that*-clauses in Spanish. These characteristics are commonly assumed by the scholars in the field, independently of the theory adopted to account for expressives. The consequence is that any theory of expressives has to explain these constructions.

Many interesting points are left for future research. Here I will mention the difference between situational and propositional predication of expressives. Potts (2007c) considers the example in (39), uttered when the speaker sees the cat on the sofa.

(39) Put the damn cat down! [Potts 2007c:11. ex. 21]

Potts indicates that the utterance of *damn* may not express the emotional state of the speaker towards the cat, but towards the situation of the cat being on the sofa. In that sense, there is a disconnection between the expressive and the sentence that houses it. The difference between situational and propositional predications of expressives is very clear in the examples we have been concerned with in this paper.

- (40) a. ¡QUE viene Juan!
 QUE comes.2.SG.INDIC John
 “John is coming!!!!”
 b. ¡QUE comas la sopa!
 QUE eat.2.SG.SUBJ the soup
 “Eat your soup!!!”

In (40)a, the speaker expresses his emotions about the propositional content of the utterance. The speaker is agitated by John's coming. However, in (40)b, the speaker's negative emotions are triggered by the situation of the kid not eating the soup, not by the propositional content of the utterance (that the kid eat the soup). Notice that in (40)a, in which the predication is about the propositional content, the verb is in indicative mood, whereas in (40)b, the verb is in subjunctive mood.

This connection has to be better understood and leaves the discussion open for more interesting additions.

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