

What is amazement all about?

I argue that DPs interpreted like embedded exclamative clauses constitute a uniform class and refer to degrees or kinds. Relative clauses help to establish kind or degree reference.

The phenomenon of CEs: Predicates like *you wouldn't believe, it's amazing* can combine with a DP that is interpreted roughly like embedded exclamative clauses (cf. 1a); Elliot (1971) calls them Concealed Exclamatives (CEs) in analogy to DPs that are interpreted as embedded interrogatives (Concealed Questions (CQs), e.g. 1b).

- (1) a. It's amazing *the big car he bought*. ($\approx \dots$ *what a big car he bought*.)
 b. John knows *the capital of Italy*. ($\approx \dots$ *what the capital of Italy is*.)

It has to be explained how DPs get to make the contribution of an embedded clause, and what are the constraints on the DPs acceptable in such positions (as C-DPs). CQ-interpretations have been shown to depend on the arity of the NP-head noun (Caponigro & Heller 2003), as well as modifiers of the head-NP (Nathan 2006). For both CEs and CQs, relative clauses have been argued to play a special role, attributing the clause-like interpretation to the clausal nature of these modifiers (cf. Portner & Zanuttini 2003, 2005; Nathan 2006). But ultimately, acceptability conditions differ for CEs and CQs (cf. Castroviejo & Schwager 2008); hence, we cannot impose the same requirements on both types of C-DPs. In this talk, I focus on CEs.

- (2) a. ^{ok}John knows/#It's amazing *the capital of California*.
 b. #John knows/^{ok}It's amazing *the car Mary bought*.

A previous analysis relying on relative clauses: Portner & Zanuttini (2005, henceforth P&Z) single out a particular kind of C-DPs as Nominal Exclamatives (NEs): NEs obligatorily contain relative clauses, lack agreement between verb and C-DP, and contain DPs that can appear as stand-alone exclamatives without feeling elliptical. Since NEs contain a relative clause by definition, an exclamative variant of the *wh*-relative pronoun is used to derive an interpretation akin to exclamative clauses (a set of true propositions plus widening and factivity).

I follow P&Z in (A) that CEs are ordinary DPs syntactically, and (B) that relative clauses can play a crucial role. Against P&Z, I argue for a uniform class of CEs: (i) certain degree DPs can stand-alone as exclamatives without feeling more elliptical than their relative clause modified counterparts (cf. (3a)), (ii) lack of agreement is familiar from other postposed subjects (e.g. cleft constructions) and anaphoricity to non *e*-type arguments (cf. Romero 2005), cf. (3b)/(3c).

- (3) a. The height of that building!
 b. The former boyfriend of Diana said that it was she who had broken off their relationship.
 c. They revealed the winner of the contest. It/#She was Diana.

Hence, there is just a single class of CEs which often but not necessarily contain relative clauses. In the following, I propose a uniform analysis that relies crucially on an observation hinted at, but not exploited, by P&Z: amazement/astonishment as expressed by CEs targets degrees or kinds.

My analysis: *amazing, suprising,...* come in a modifier and an expletive construction-variant which are closely related but differ in logical type.

- (4) a. The president of the US/G. W. Bush is amazing.
 b. It's amazing the things you find in the dumpster.

$amazing_{Mod}$ (as in (4a)) is of type $\langle s, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle$, and expresses that an individual (simpliciter) has properties different from what was expected .

$$(5) \quad \llbracket amazing_{Mod} \rrbracket = \lambda w \lambda x_e . \forall w' \in \text{Exp}_{Speaker} [\{P \mid P_{w'}(x)\} \neq \{P \mid P_w(x)\}]$$

$amazing_{Expl}$ (as in (4b)) is of type $\langle s, \langle \alpha, t \rangle \rangle$, where α is the type of kinds or degrees. This disjunction can be resolved to index dependent properties, if we reconsider that degrees and (certain) kinds need not be seen as atomic: **degrees** of a property P are underlyingly equivalence classes d of those world individual pairs $\langle w, a \rangle$ such that d is the maximum value of P that a has in w . Hence, at each world w , *the height of that building* denotes a subset d of $W \times D_e$ s.t. for all pairs $\langle w', a \rangle$ in d : a is in w' as high as that building is in w . Thus, *the height of that building* is underlyingly of type $\langle s, \langle s, et \rangle \rangle$. **Kinds** can be derived from properties by the \cap -operator (Chierchia 1998). For kinds (obviously) and degrees (as I will argue in detail), having different properties amounts to being different $\langle s, et \rangle$ -entities.

$$(6) \quad \llbracket amazing_{Expl} \rrbracket = \lambda w \lambda P_{\langle s, \langle s, et \rangle \rangle} . \forall w' \in \text{Exp}_{Speaker}(w) [\{Q \mid Q_{w'}(P)\} \neq \{Q \mid Q_w(P)\}]$$

Relative clauses can be crucial in that they are generally able to establish amount (= degree, cf. (7)) or kind (cf. (8)) readings (cf. Carlson 1977, Heim 1987).

- (7) It will take us the rest of our lives to drink the champagne they spilt last night.
 (8) You no longer see the telephone's that there were in my grandmother's time.

Something like Heim's (1987) analysis for RC within *amazing*-DPs allows e.g. to compute the right reading for (4b) (ι over a plural set expressing maximalization).

$$(9) \quad \text{LF: the P you can find things of P in the dumpster} \\
 \iota P_{\langle s, et \rangle} [\text{CAN}_w \lambda w' . \exists x [\text{you find } x \text{ in the dumpster in } w' \text{ and } P(w')(x)]]$$

My account naturally extends to the overwhelming amount of examples detected in a google search that contain overt head nouns like *kind, number, amount, . . .*. These can contain ordinary predicate modification relative clauses, the kind/amount-shift being done by the overt embedding noun.

Conclusion and Outlook: I argue for a uniform account of DPs in argument position of emotive predicates that acquire clause-like readings. Such CEs may, but need not, include relative clauses. I explain why relative clauses are often crucial to establish CE-readings, but I avoid an *ad hoc*-treatment of relative clauses: where crucial, they establish kind or amount readings familiar from non concealed contexts.

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