

## A non-exclamative account of Catalan "Déu n'hi do!"

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**INTRODUCTION** Déu n'hi do" (DND) is an interjection in Catalan, resulting from the grammaticalization of the sentence "Déu n'hi do" ('that God gave it to him/her'). The interest of DND lies in the fact that it behaves like an emotive predicate, because it selects for *wh*-clauses, but, although it conveys the meaning of unexpectedness, DND also involves a scalar implicature that disregards extreme degree. In this paper we propose a unified semantics for all *wh*-clauses that embed in DND and present an analysis for DND inspired in the semantics of *pretty/quite*.

**BACKGROUND** Sancho (2003) argues that the basic function of DND "is that of emphasis or intensification". He also notes that DND can be followed by an exclamative and he claims that in such cases, DND "only reinforces constructions which are already emphatic". Such an analysis complies with the idea that *wh*-interrogatives and *wh*-exclamatives are different clause types and involve different denotations (cf. Zanuttini and Portner 2003, who argue that exclamatives involve a sentential force called *widening*). In line with D'Avis (2002) and Abels (2005), we entertain a simpler idea, namely, that all *wh*-clauses that embed in DND have the same semantics and that the exclamative flavor of the clause derives from the semantics of the predicate.

### PROPERTIES OF DND

a) DND takes *wh*-clauses, both questions (including multiple *wh*-clauses) (1a) and (so-called) exclamatives (i.e., *wh*-clauses that cannot be used as matrix questions ((1b))).

- (1) a. **Déu n'hi do** qui va anar a la festa.                      b. **Déu n'hi do** que bé que zona.  
    "DND who came to the party"                                      "DND how good it sounds"

b) DND can answer questions ((2i)) and embed under verbs that take propositions ((2ii)), even though the meaning expressed is similar to the implicated meaning in matrix exclamatives (cf. Castroviejo 2006), which, crucially, cannot answer questions ((2i)).

- (2) (i) A: Heu retirat moltes escenes?  
    "Have you removed many scenes?"  
    B: **Déu n'hi do**.                                      B': #Quantes escenes hem retirat!  
    "How many scene we have removed!"  
(ii) a. Crec que \*(**Déu n'hi do**) que guapo que és el seu novio  
    'I believe that DND how cute his/her boyfriend'

c) However, in contrast with an emotive predicate like *it's amazing*, the proposition denoted by the *wh*-clause does not lie at the extreme end of a contextually given scale, but rather, DND conveys the meaning that an extreme degree has not been reached, by means of a regular scalar implicature (cf. Mayol 2007). This implicature can be cancelled, as shown in (3a), or reinforced as in (3c), while their counterparts with *it's amazing* cannot. Furthermore, observe that DND can introduce *wh*-exclamatives in Catalan that include a degree word that indicates high degree (*tan* 'so'), whereas DND is incompatible with the adverb *extremadament* ('extremely') ((4)).

- (3) a. **Déu n'hi do** que alt que és! Tanmateix, no és extremadament alt  
    "DND how tall he is! However, he's not extremely tall"  
    b. #It's amazing how tall he is, although he's not extremely tall.  
    c. **Déu n'hi do** que alt que és! De fet, és extremadament alt  
    "DND how tall he is! Actually, he's extremely tall"  
    d. ??It's amazing how tall he is. Actually, he's extremely tall.  
(4) a. **Déu n'hi do** quin plat tan ple que m'ha servit el cambrer!  
    "DND what a full dish the waiter served me!"  
    b. #**Déu n'hi do** que extremadament ple que és el plat que m'ha servit el cambrer!

“DND how extremely full the dish the waiter served me is!”

d) The meaning of DND does not stay embedded under semantic operators ((5a)) and it is a speaker commitment ((5b-c)).

- (5) a. La Júlia creu que el Pere va arribar tard perquè Déu n’hi do quant de trànsit hi havia.  
“Julia believes that Peter was late because DND how much traffic there was.”  
b. # però, de fet, no em vaig immutar per la quantitat de trànsit que hi havia.  
“but, actually, I was not emotional about the amount of traffic there was.”  
c. # però, de fet, jo sé que no hi havia pas gaire trànsit aquell dia.  
“but, actually, I know that there was not a lot of traffic that day.”

**PROPOSAL** We propose that the lexical meaning of DND resembles that of *surprise*, as shown in (6) (a version of the one proposed in Sharvit (2002:103)).

(6)  $[[\text{surprise}]]^{H/K}(w)(Q)(a) = 1$  iff AMAZING(a)(w)  $\supseteq \cap \{p: p \in Q(w) \text{ and } w \in p\}$  where:

- (i) AMAZING(a) is a proper subset of NONEXP(a);  
(ii) NONEXP(a) is the complement of the set of worlds compatible with a's expectations and a superset of AMAZING(a), and  
(iii) Q is a Hamblin/Karttunen-style question intension.

More specifically, DND involves a weaker condition on its arguments, namely (7):

(7)  $[[\text{DND}]](w)(Q)(a) = 1$  iff NONEXP(a)(w)  $\supseteq \cap \{p: p \in Q(w) \text{ and } w \in p\}$

In addition,  $[[\text{DND}]]$  and  $[[\text{surprise}]]$  are ordered on a scale of unexpectedness, in the same way as <quite/pretty, very>. Thus, these items are subjected to a conversational implicature: each element entails the elements lower on the scale and conversationally implicates the negation of the elements higher on the scale. Thus,  $[[\text{DND}]]$  conversationally implicates that the degree of unexpectedness conveyed by  $[[\text{surprise}]]$  has not been reached, which explains the facts in (3).

Furthermore, we assume, following Castroviejo (2007), that *tan*+ADJ in (4a) and *extremadament* in (4b) are non-restrictive modifiers, which are, hence, not interpreted at the regular descriptive meaning, but at the domain where conventional implicatures are computed. Consequently, all *wh*-clauses denote sets of alternatives, irrespectively of whether they are used as questions or exclamatives when they stand alone as matrix clauses. Given this assumption, the contrast in (4) follows straightforwardly: *tan*+ADJ involves high degree of ADJ-ness, which is not incompatible with the denotation of DND, whereas the conventional implicature according to which the speaker claims that the dish is extremely full is incompatible with the conversational implicature that DND generates. Note also that (4b) is evidence for a previously unnoticed fact: conventional implicatures are unable to cancel a conversational implicature, as opposed to assertions, which do have this ability as shown in (3c). Finally, although DND has a literal meaning and expresses an assertion, it is always interpreted as involving an expressive meaning. Therefore, it also conveys a conventional implicature, which explains the facts in (5).

**CONCLUSION** We have provided an economic analysis for DND which treats it as an emotive predicate and which, at the same time, does not have an extreme degree requirement on its argument. This has interesting consequences for an analysis of exclamatives that does not differ from that of *wh*-interrogatives.

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