

Silent Elements and Some Norwegian Exclamatives

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1. Introduction

Until recently, little theoretical attention has been devoted to exclamatives in Norwegian. The aim of this paper is to address some theoretical issues that arise when we look at just two of the structures that exist in all varieties of Norwegian. I will not give any overview of the rich empirical landscape surrounding exclamatives in the various Norwegian dialects (see Vangsnes [48], and Delsing [14] for a broader Scandinavian typology), but rather limit my scope to theoretical issues. In particular I will be focusing on the types in (1) and (2), hereafter called the *for*-exclamative and the *så*-exclamative.¹

(1) **For en tulling** han er!

for a fool he is

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¹ Norwegian has two written standards, Bokmål and Nynorsk. Most of the examples in this paper will be drawn from Bokmål, but whenever an example from Nynorsk or a dialect occurs, this will be clearly indicated.

- ‘What a fool he is!’
- (2) **Så mye** han forstår!
so much he understands
‘How much he understands!’

Exclamatives in Norwegian basically have the same properties as English exclamatives: absence of inversion, obligatory movement to the left periphery, and embedded exclamatives in certain cases (cf. Elliott [17], Grimshaw [19], Sadock and Zwicky [43], Pesetsky and Torrego [38], Zanuttini and Portner [51], Ono [35], Ono and Fujii [36] for English).² The first property may seem a little bit peculiar since Norwegian is a V2-language, as shown in (3).

- (3) I dag kom John på jobb.
on day came John to work
‘Today John came to work.’

² Zanuttini and Portner [51:46] argue that there are three criteria for exclamatives: factivity, scalar implicature, and inability to function in question/answer pairs. On this account, structures like (i) from Norwegian are not exclamatives (pace Faarlund, Lie and Vannebo [18]) since they fail to meet the third criteria.

- (i) Hva er det du sier!
what are it you say
‘What are you saying!’

I will not deal with the absence of V2 in this paper. For an account of this property, see e.g. Pesetsky and Torrego [38], Ono [35], Ono and Fujii [36] and in particular Westergaard [50] for Norwegian.

Another interesting puzzle is that Norwegian has many exclamatives where there is no *wh*-phrase in exclamatives. However, (1) is possible with a *wh*-phrase in archaic varieties.

- (4) Hvilken tulling han er!
what fool he is
'What a fool he is!'

Degree exclamatives often have a *wh*-phrase in many dialects of Norwegian and in the Nynorsk variety, though I will not focus on these varieties here.³

In this paper I will focus on the structure of the two exclamatives in (1) and (2), in particular the lack of a *wh*-phrase. The outline is as follows. Section 2 discusses whether exclamatives are sentential or nominal, and based on the conclusion that they are sentential, I present a rough outline of the general syntax of exclamatives in Section 3. Section 4 discusses the structure of the DPs in (1) and (2), arguing that both of these contain a DegP and a silent *wh*-phrase. Section 5 concludes the paper.

³ An example is given in (i).

- (i) Så/hvor høy hun er!
So/how tall she is
'How tall she is!'

2. Whether the Exclamatives are Sentential or Nominal

An important question is whether exclamatives are nominal or sentential. I will discuss this issue based on Portner and Zanuttini [39] and argue that the exclamatives in question are clausal. Then I will go on to discuss a version of the *for*-exclamatives and the *så*-exclamatives that appear to only consist of a DP. Contrary to appearance, I will argue that these structures are elliptical, and that an analysis à la Merchant [31, 32] can be fruitfully implemented for our purposes.

Portner and Zanuttini [39] discuss how one can distinguish between clausal and nominal exclamatives. They argue that whereas (5) is a clausal exclamative (6) is a nominal exclamative.

(5) What strange things he says!

(6) The strange things that he says!

They present several arguments supporting an analysis where (6) is a nominal phrase, involving parallelism with relative clauses and selection criteria (drawing on Grimshaw 1979). Unfortunately it is very hard to replicate these arguments for Norwegian.

Grimshaw [19:section 4.1] shows that predicates like *couldn't believe* and *give a damn* support an exclamative interpretation, but whereas *couldn't believe* subcategorizes for both clauses and nominal phrases, *give a damn* does not subcategorize for the latter. A straightforward prediction, then, is that nominal exclamatives only should be possible with predicates of the *couldn't believe* type. Indeed that is the case:

- (7) John couldn't believe [the strange things she said].
- (8) *I don't give a damn [the strange things she said].

The question is then whether we can replicate similar tests faced with the Norwegian data. A problem is that many verbs do not allow for embedded exclamatives, only a few perception verbs and some other predicates (like *rart* 'strange', *merkelig* 'odd' and *vanvittig* 'insane'). There are verbs like *insistere* 'insist' that only select clausal complements (see Lødrup [29] for a comprehensive description of the Norwegian data), as shown in (9)-(10).

- (9) Han insisterer at denne boken er godt skrevet.
 he insists that this the.book is well written
 'He insists that this book is well written.'
- (10) *Han insisterer dette.
 he insists this

However, *insistere* does not allow embedded exclamatives. The other predicates listed above allow the exclamatives under discussion to be embedded. This is illustrated in (11)-(14).

- (11) Det er merkelig så vanvittig dum han er.
 it is odd so incredibly stupid he is
 'It's odd how incredibly stupid he is.'

(12) Det er merkelig for en tulling han er.

it is odd for a moron he is

‘It’s odd what a moron he is.’

(13) Det er vanvittig så høy han er.

it is crazy so tall he is

‘It’s crazy how tall he is.’

(14) Det er vanvittig for en idiot han er.

it is crazy for an idiot he is

‘It’s crazy what an idiot he is.’

However, the predicates that allow exclamatives to be embedded, *merkelig* and *vanvittig*, do not allow nominals as their complements:

(15) Det er merkelig at han kom.

it is odd that he came

‘It is odd that he came.’

(16) *Det er merkelig den/en mann.

it is odd that/a man

These facts seem to indicate that the *for*-exclamative and the *så*-exclamative are not nominal exclamatives. The overall consensus in the literature, originating with Grimshaw [19], is that exclamatives are generally sentential (see Castroviejo [13] for a

comprehensive summary of the literature). Based on this and the data above, I will in what follows assume that both the *så*- and the *for*-exclamative are sentential. That of course does not mean that all exclamatives in Norwegian are sentential, an issue that requires further investigation.

Assuming that the *for*-exclamatives and the *så*-exclamatives are sentential, we are confronted with another problem. Alongside (17) and (19), we also find (18) and (20).

(17) For en bok det var!
for a book it was
'What a book that was!'

(18) For en bok!
for a book
'What a book!'

(19) Så tøff han er!
So cool he is
'He's so cool!'

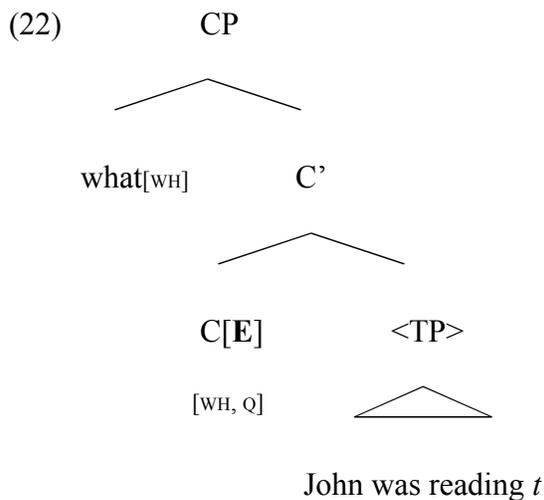
(20) Så tøff!
So cool
'Cool!'

I will argue that (18) and (20) should be analyzed as ellipsis. Specifically, I argue that these examples involve deletion of TP, similar to sluicing and fragment answers (cf.

Lasnik [24], Merchant [31, 32]). That is, (18) and (20) receive an analysis similar to the sluicing case in (21).

(21) John was reading something, but I don't know what (John was reading *t*)

Merchant [31, 32] argues that (21) is best analyzed as in (22), building in part on Lobeck [27]. Here C bears a feature E.



The locus of the properties that distinguish the elliptical structure from its non-elliptical counterpart is located on the E feature. This feature is based on the notion of E-Givenness, modeled on Schwarzschild's [44] Givenness. The feature introduces a relation to focus in these structures, given that a phrase can only be deleted if it has a proper antecedent.⁴ The specific syntactic requirement on E is given in (23).

⁴ That is, E-given as Merchant [31] calls it.

(23) E [u_{WHEF} , u_{QEF}]

I have altered the notation that Merchant uses in a few ways. Most importantly, I have replaced his ‘*’ with ‘EF’. The latter is an abbreviation for ‘Edge Feature’, which is the current way we think about deriving the Extension Condition on Merge (setting some details aside, cf. Chomsky [9, 10]), and thereby also movement to a specifier.⁵

The analysis I have suggested for exclamatives above is similar to sluicing, but also to fragment answers. An example of the latter is given in (24)-(26).

(24) Who did she see?

(25) John.

(26) She saw John.

Merchant [32] argues convincingly that fragments should be given an ellipsis analysis, though he warns that fragments like (25) and (26) should be distinguished from e.g. exclamations of the sort shown in (27) [32:731].

(27) Wonderful! Nonsense!

⁵ Merchant uses the ‘*’ notation as an abbreviation for a ‘strong feature’ or an EPP-feature. Both of these simply mean that a head signals that something has to move overtly to its specifier. This movement always has to be ‘at the root’, which is what the Extension Condition says.

I think Merchant's conclusion is correct for cases such as those given in (27), but I don't think it extends to the cases I have been discussing above, viz. (18) and (20). The exclamations in (27) do not appear to be elliptical when they are uttered out of the blue, whereas (18) and (20) do. (18) and (20) also have natural non-elliptical counterparts, as shown in (17) and (19), whereas that is not the case for (27).

Thus, it seems that the same type of ellipsis is present in sluicing, fragment answers, and exclamatives. In the next section, I will present a brief outline of the syntactic analysis of sentential exclamatives that I will be using in this paper. This analysis will be compatible with Merchant's analysis of ellipsis, as we will see below.

3. A Rough Outline of the General Syntax of Exclamatives

In this section I will briefly present the main ingredients of the syntactic analysis I will be using in this paper. In particular I will look at the position of the exclamative phrase in the clause, and also at the features and the triggers for the movements.

In this paper I will follow Benincà's [2] proposal on the cartography of the CP (see also Benincà and Poletto [3]; irrelevant details are omitted. See Rizzi [42] for another proposal).

(28) [ForceP Force [TopP Top [FocP Foc [FinP Fin [IP]]]]]

Benincà argues that exclamatives land in SpecForceP whereas *wh*-questions land in SpecFocP (see also Munaro [33] and Zanuttini and Portner [51]; see Munaro [34] for complications). There are some interesting data that point towards this conclusion. In

Italian, the interrogative *wh*-phrase appears on the right of a Left Dislocated element as shown by the contrast in (29)-(30).

(29) A tua sorella, chi vorresti presentare/presentarle?
to your sister, who would you introduce /introduce to.her?

(30) *A chi, tua sorella, la presentano?
to whom, your sister, do.they.introduce her? (Benincà [2:60])

Crucially, an exclamative phrase can appear on the left of the left dislocated element (31).

(31) Che bel posto, a Giorgio, che (gli) hanno assegnato!
what a nice place, to Giorgio, that they have allotted.to him. (Benincà [2:61])

Based on these data, Benincà concludes that exclamatives land in ForceP. I will assume that the same is true for the Norwegian exclamatives discussed in this paper.

This analysis also has consequences for the approach to ellipsis given above. Assuming that SpecForceP is the relevant landing site for the exclamative in the left periphery, the E feature will have to be located on the Force head.⁶ Since there is now inversion, this means that everything but the DP in SpecForceP will remain unpronounced. As we saw above, that is indeed a welcome result.

⁶ Merchant does not apply a split-CP model in his discussions, so it is not entirely clear whether there are restrictions on which head the E feature can appear.

I will assume that the Force head bears a *wh*-feature that enters into a dependency with a *wh*-feature in the DPs in exclamatives. This dependency, together with an Edge Feature (Chomsky [9, 10]), accounts for why the DPs move to the left periphery in Norwegian.⁷ This proposal is fairly similar to Castroviejo [13], though my feature system is a little bit different, as I do not assume a specific exclamative feature as she does.

With these assumptions in place, let us move on to an analysis of the DPs in the two types of exclamatives that are investigated in this paper.

4. The DP in exclamatives

In this section I will discuss the structure of the DP in the *for*-exclamative and the *så*-exclamative. The DP is boldfaced in (32) and (33).

(32) **For en mann** han er!

for a man he is

‘What a man he is!’

(33) **Så enormt populær** han er!

so enormously popular he is

‘How enormously popular he is!’

I will first discuss the *for*-exclamative in (32) and then turn to the *så*-exclamative in (33).

4.1. The *for*-exclamative

⁷ This recalls what is known as the *Wh*-criterion in the literature (May [30], Rizzi [40, 41]).

The *for*-exclamative has a remarkable resemblance to another well-known Germanic structure, namely the *what for* structure. A couple of examples are provided in (34)-(35).

(34) Hva for en mann er det?

what for a man is that

‘What kind of a man is that?’

(35) Was für ein Auto hast du gesehen?

what for a car have you seen

‘What kind of car did you see?’

These phrases can also be split. This is shown in (36), using a Norwegian example.

(36) Hva er det for en mann?

what is it for a man

‘What kind of a man is that?’

The main difference between these interrogative structures and the *for*-exclamative is that the *for*-exclamative does not allow an overt *wh*-phrase in Norwegian. Put differently, (37) is unacceptable.

(37) *Hva for en mann han er!

what for a man he is

As we have seen above, this is not an exclusive property related to the *what for* structure. It seems to be a more general difference between exclamatives and questions. But the similarity is interesting because similar restrictions apply to the *what for* structure independently of whether it is part of an interrogative or an exclamative sentence. First, one can observe that the indefinite article appears to be required. The following data show this.

(38) *For mann han er!

for man he is

(39) *For mannen han er!

for man.DEF he is

However, it is possible to add an adjective as illustrated in (40).

(40) For en stor mann han er!

for a big man he is

‘What a big man he is!’

Notice that the DP still has to be indefinite.⁸

⁸ It does not change if one adds double definiteness, cf. (i).

(i) *For den store mannen han er!

for the big the.man he is

There are also other interesting differences. Whereas English allows bare plurals and mass nouns in an exclamative like (41), Norwegian only allows for an indefinite noun (42).

(41) What fools these students are!

(42) For *(noen) tullinger disse studentene er!
for some fools these the.students are
'What fools these students are!'

Interestingly, a similar quantifier as in (42) is prohibited in English.

(43) *What some fools these students are!

This is true for *few* too, though not for *a lot of*.

(44) *What a few fools these students are!

(45) What a lot of girls they invited!

If one compares (44) and (45) to Norwegian, we see that (44) is bad in Norwegian too, though (45) is good:

(46) *For noen få idioter disse studentene er!
for some few idiots these the.students are

- (47) For en haug med jenter de inviterte!
for a bunch of girls they invited
'What a bunch of girls they invited!'

Yet another difference between English and Norwegian is that the syntax of exclamatives with adjectives in them is different from that of questions, cf. (48) vs. (49).

- (48) What a big car he was driving!
(49) How big a car was he driving?

Norwegian does not appear to show a similar contrast, as seen above (though see Vangsnes this volume for Northern Norwegian data that are more similar to English in this regard). In Norwegian, the issue is whether the *wh*-phrase can be pronounced or not.

As for the other differences, they seem to be related to the requirement in Norwegian that *for* has to be accompanied by an indefinite element; either an indefinite article or a quantifier like *noen*. That is, plurals and mass nouns seem to have a slightly different behavior in English than in Norwegian. At present it is unclear why this is so, and I have to leave that question for future research.

Returning to the similarity with *what for* phrases, I will argue that there is an unpronounced *wh*-phrase in the *for*-exclamative (what Kayne [22] calls a silent element). That is, (50) really looks like (51).

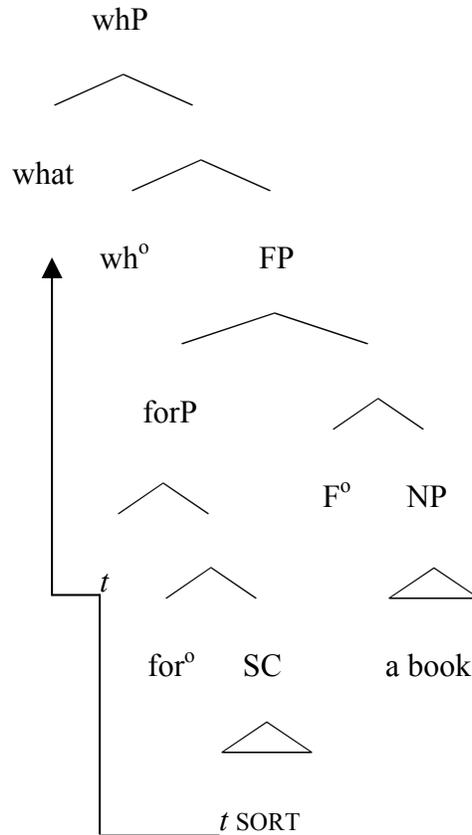
- (50) For en tulling du er!

for a fool you are
'What a fool you are!'
(51) HVA for en tulling du er!

This silent *wh*-phrase bears a *wh*-feature. By virtue of this feature, the phrase enters into an Agree relation with the Force head in the left periphery. However, if this is the correct analysis, the structure of the DP seems to be crucially related to the structure of *what for* phrases in general. In what follows I will pursue this rationale.

Leu [25, 26] looks very closely into the variation among the Germanic languages when it comes to *what for* phrases (see e.g. Bennis [4, 5], Ijbema [20], Bennis, Corver and den Dikken [7] for other analyses). Based on a thorough comparison between Dutch, German, Norwegian, Swedish and Swiss German, he argues that a general *what for* phrase has the structure in (52).

(52)



Leu presents several arguments in favor of (52). One important argument for decomposing the phrase into two subcomponents is that the NP following *for* in *what for* phrases is assigned Case by an element to the left of *for*. This is illustrated with German examples in (53)-(54).

(53) Mit was für einem Hund hast du gespielt?

with what for a.DAT dog have you played

‘What (kind of) dog did you play with?’

(Leu [25:11])

(54) Für welchen Kandidaten hast du gestimmt?

for which.ACC candidate.ACC have you voted

Other researchers like e.g. den Besten [8], Corver [11] and Pafel [37] have taken this fact to mean that *für* is Case-inert. Instead of making this assumption, Leu argues that the data in (53)-(54) are captured straightforwardly if *für* does not c-command the noun, as in (52).

I will not discuss the other data Leu uses to motivate (52), but it is necessary to say something about the distribution of *for* in these structures, as it turns out to be relevant for the discussion below. The literature on *what for* phrases assumes *for* to be limited to co-occurring with interrogative/exclamative *what*, and as Leu notes, this has lead researchers to propose that *for* in *what for* inherently has a *wh*-feature (Bennis, Corver and den Dikken [7]; see also den Dikken [15]). The *wh*-feature on this approach is intended to be a morphological feature. Leu argues against this on the basis of the following data. He presents the possible environments for *für* NPs in German, namely the interrogative (55) and the exclamative (56).

(55) **Was** verkaufen die für Platten?

what sell they for records

(56) **Was** die für Platten verkaufen!

what they for records sell

(Leu [25:12-13])

These constructions can also occur in environments that are neither interrogative nor exclamative (57).

(57) Die verkaufen **sonst was** für Platten.

they sell else what for records

‘They’re selling all kinds of records (even pretty weird/rare ones).’

(Leu [25:13])

Crucially, in this construction the *für NP* is unacceptable without modification of *was* by *sonst* (58).

(58) Ich hab mir was (*für Platten) gekauft.

I have myself something (for records) bought (Leu [25:13])

Leu argues that this suggests that the *für NP* in (58) (as in interrogatives) must be licensed by a quantificational element of a certain kind, and that the indefinite *was* is not a possible licenser. This shows that although *was* in (58) has a morphological *wh*-feature, this is not sufficient to license the *für NP*. Leu presents more arguments in favor of this conclusion, and summarizes his argument as follows: “Among the possible licensors of *für NP* are interrogative [+wh], exclamative [+wh], focused *sonst*, and a number of [V] expressions” (Leu [25:14]). I will show immediately why this is important for our analysis of exclamative phrases in Norwegian.

In the discussion of *what for* phrases in the previous section we saw that it is difficult to argue that *for* has a *wh*-feature. This means that we cannot say that this is the trigger for movement in Norwegian exclamatives like (50), repeated here as (59).

- (59) For en tulling du er!
for a fool you are
'What a fool you are!'

As seen above, the counterpart with an overt *wh*-phrase is unacceptable in exclamatives in most varieties of Norwegian (60), but as we have seen in (56), it is grammatical in e.g. German.⁹

- (60) *Hva for en tulling du er!
what for a fool you are

Interestingly, a silent *wh*-phrase also derives the unacceptability of (60).

- (61) *Han er for en tulling
he is for a fool

⁹ Some speakers of Northern Norwegian dialects allow an overt *wh*-phrase here, as in (i)-(ii).

- (i) Ka for en idiot han var!
what for an idiot he was
'What an idiot he was!'
- (ii) Ka for en stemme ho hadde!
what for a voice she had
'What a voice she had!'

However, other speakers do not allow these sentences. Further empirical investigation seems to be necessary here.

On the assumption that a *wh*-feature triggers movement to the left periphery, the explanation of (61) is straightforward: a *wh*-phrase in situ makes the derivation crash. If there weren't a silent *wh*-phrase in (61), we would have no explanation for the unacceptability. However, a more serious problem complicates this picture. I have assumed that the silent *wh*-phrase remains in situ in (61), and we expect that if the *wh*-phrase moved to the left periphery, (61) would be grammatical. This prediction holds regardless of whether the phrase is split or not (recall (34) vs. (36)). Unfortunately, if we split a phrase with a silent *wh*-phrase, the result is ungrammatical (62).

(62) *HVA han er t for en tulling.

what he is for a fool

This is really unexpected if we assume silent elements to behave on a par with overt elements. I think the unacceptability of (62) tells us that there actually is a difference between silent and overt elements, hence the assumption just mentioned does not hold. Empirical support for this is provided by *what for* questions. As (65) shows, splitting with a silent HVA is impossible in questions.

(63) Hva for et bilde hengte du t på veggen? *Unsplit structure*

what for a picture hung you on wall

(64) Hva hengte du [t for et bilde] på veggen?

what hung you for a picture on wall *Split structure*

- (65) *HVA hengte du [t for et bilde] på veggen? *Split structure*
 what hung you for a picture on wall

Importantly, movement of the entire *what for* phrase with a silent WH is ungrammatical in questions (66), though not in exclamatives as we have seen above.

- (66) *HVA for et bilde hengte du t på veggen?
 what for a picture hung you on wall

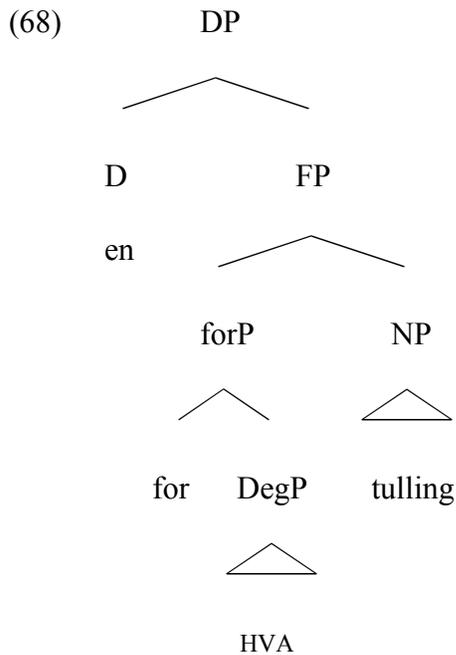
The empirical generalization to be drawn from these examples is that you cannot split a *what for* phrase when the *wh*-phrase is silent. Or put the other way around: in order to split, the *wh*-phrase needs to be overt. We may also notice that there is a difference between questions and exclamatives, as only exclamatives allow the *wh*-phrase to be silent. I will not have anything to say about how this difference can be captured. It is an interesting empirical generalization, but it is not evident how it should be accounted for. I leave this issue for future research.¹⁰

¹⁰ Kayne [23] presents a radical proposal that could be useful here. He argues that there is a difference between silent and overt elements, and that this difference is an automatic consequence of the architecture of derivations. Specifically, he suggests that unpronounced elements need to be in the specifier of a phase head (i).

- (i) a. At a given phase level, only the head and material in the c-command domain of the head can (and must) be spelled out.
 b. At a given phase level, no material within (or adjoined to) a lower phase can be spelled out. (Kayne [23:295])

Before turning to the *så*-exclamative, it is necessary to detail the structure for the DP I am assuming. I will use important insights from Leu [25, 26] and argue that *for*-exclamatives like (67) have the following DP-internal structure (67). Here I am showing the base-generated structure, before any movements have occurred. Any other relevant intermediate projections are not shown (see Julien [21] for a comprehensive modern study of nominal phrases in Scandinavian).

- (67) For en tulling du er!
 for a fool you are
 'What a fool you are!'



However, it is not clear to what extent there is independent support for such an analysis (cf. Leu [26:10]).

Further research is clearly needed here.

Notice that there are some differences compared to Leu's structure in (51) above. I am assuming that the *for*-phrase selects a DegP in exclamatives,¹¹ and that the silent *wh*-phrase is lexicalizing the degree operator (cf. Castroviejo [13:70]).¹² Furthermore, I have adjusted some labels to more conventional labels, and, crucially, I am assuming a DP hypothesis (see Leu [26] which revises some of Leu [25] on exactly this point, among others). FP is used as a label for a functional projection as it is not my concern here what kind of functional projection this turns out to be. The following derivation is then required to get (67).

(69) [DP en [FP [forP for [DegP HVA]]] [NP tulling]] → move HVA to SpecforP

(70) [DP en [FP [forP HVA[for [DegP t]]]] [NP tulling]] → move forP to SpecDP

(71) [DP [forP HVA[for [DegP t]]]] en [FP t [NP tulling]]

I am assuming that Edge Features are triggering these two movements. Subsequently to (69)-(71), the entire DP moves to SpecForceP, cf. Section 3. I will now turn to the other type of exclamative that we are discussing, namely the *så*-exclamative.

¹¹ Castroviejo [13] argues at length that every exclamative sentence involves the presence of a DegP. See her work for empirical justification. We will also see in the next section that a DegP is crucially involved in the *så*-exclamative.

¹² Interestingly, Castroviejo [13:70] argues that 'only *wh*-words that are degree operators themselves [...] and *wh*-phrases that allow for the presence of a DegP as a complement of the N that D selects for are available in exclamative environments'. Her structure of the DP is somewhat different compared to mine, but the insight can equally well be maintained assuming the structure above. See also Villalba [49:31-32] on the inventory of exclamative *wh*-phrases.

4.2. *The så-exclamative*

In this section I will discuss the *så*-exclamative. (33) is repeated as (72) for expository convenience.

- (72) Så enormt populær han er!
so enormously popular he is
'How enormously popular he is!'

An interesting fact here is that the complementizer *som* in most cases is optional.

- (73) Så enormt populær **som** han er!
so enormously popular SOM he is
'How enormously popular he is!'

This is a difference compared to the *for*-exclamative since a complementizer is disallowed in this case.

- (74) For en person (*som) han er!
for a person that he is
'What a person he is!'

However, in both cases, when the exclamative phrase is a subject, *som* is required:

(75) Så mange biler som kjører på veien!
so many cars *som* drive on the.road
'How many cars that are driving on the road!'

(76) For en idiot som holdt talen!
For an idiot *som* held the.speech
'What an idiot who gave the speech!'

Notice, though, that in (75), *som* can be replaced with *det* 'it'.

(77) Så mange biler det kjører på veien!
so many cars it drive on the.road
'How many cars there are driving on the road!'

It is not clear why these differences exist.¹³ One may think that it could be related to a claim by Taraldsen [46, 47] that *som* is disallowed when a non-subject *wh*-phrase is relativized (assuming that my claim about a silent *wh*-phrase is correct). Even if (74) has

¹³ As Øystein Vangsnes (p.c.) reminds me, these data show that there are important parallels between embedded questions and exclamatives. Although this strengthens my claim that there is a *wh*-phrase in exclamatives, it is not straightforward to capture the parallel, among others because as I argue in the text, it seems hard to argue that all exclamatives are relative clauses. Exclamatives may be clausal because embedded clauses generally are assumed not to have their own force, which exclamatives clearly do have. I leave a detailed comparison of this parallel for future research.

been argued not to be a relative clause, it is not too far-fetched to hypothesize that there could be a relation. Supporting evidence for such an analysis may be the contrast between Bokmål and Nynorsk as seen in (78)-(79).

(78) Så stor (som) han har blitt! (Bokmål)

so big *som* he has become

'How big he has become!'

(79) Kor stor (*som) du er blitt! (Nynorsk)

how big *som* you is become

Both *så* and *kor* are degree elements associated with scalar implicature (see, among others, Zanuttini and Portner [51], Castroviejo [13] and Villalba [49] on the latter). This can also be seen by the fact that they cannot co-occur (81).

(80) Kor lite han forstår!

how little he understands

'How little he understands!'

(81) *Kor så lite han forstår!

how so little he understands

It is not entirely clear why there is such a difference between (78) and (79). However, an important problem is that in most varieties of Norwegian, Taraldsen's empirical claim is not correct. As argued in Lohndal [28], one very often finds *som* following a non-subject

wh-phrase in relative clauses (cf. also Åfarli [1] who reported this for complex *wh*-phrases). I leave this problem for future research.

Although there is no nominal present in (78), one finds cases where a nominal occurs (82). This shows that, as expected, an NP can be present following the adjective.

- (82) Så stor en kar du har blitt!
so big a man you have become
'What a big man you have become!'

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that *så* is not a question word in general, as illustrated by the unacceptability of (83).

- (83) *Så har du gjort *t*?
so have you done

Given the theoretical assumptions in Section 3, we need to answer how the DP moves to the left periphery since this movement is dependent on a *wh*-feature.

The syntax of the *så*-exclamative is similar to *what for* phrases, thus it seems reasonable to argue that there is a silent *wh*-phrase in these structures too.⁶ However, a question arises regarding the nature of this *wh*-phrase, in particular because I argued above that two degree elements cannot co-occur. Sæbø [45] assumes that *så* has *wh*-semantics, and I will develop this line of thought somewhat further. In order to do so, I think it would be instructive to look at some data from Italian.

Zanuttini and Portner [51] distinguish between two groups of *wh*-phrases. One occurs only in exclamatives, while the other may be used in both exclamatives and interrogatives. Examples of these are given in (84)-(85), which illustrate the latter group, and (86)-(87), which illustrate the former group.

(84) Chi inviterebbe per sembrare importante!

who would.invite for to.seem important

‘The people he would invite to seem important!’

(85) Chi inviterebbe per sembrare importante? (Zanuttini and Portner [51:67])

(86) Che tanti libri che ha comprato!

which many books that has bought

‘How very many books s/he bought!’

(87) *Che tanti libri ha comprato? (Zanuttini and Portner [51:66])

Importantly, the *wh*-phrases that only occur in exclamatives must co-occur with the complementizer *che* ‘that’ (88).

(88) *Che tanti libri ha comprato!

which many books has bought

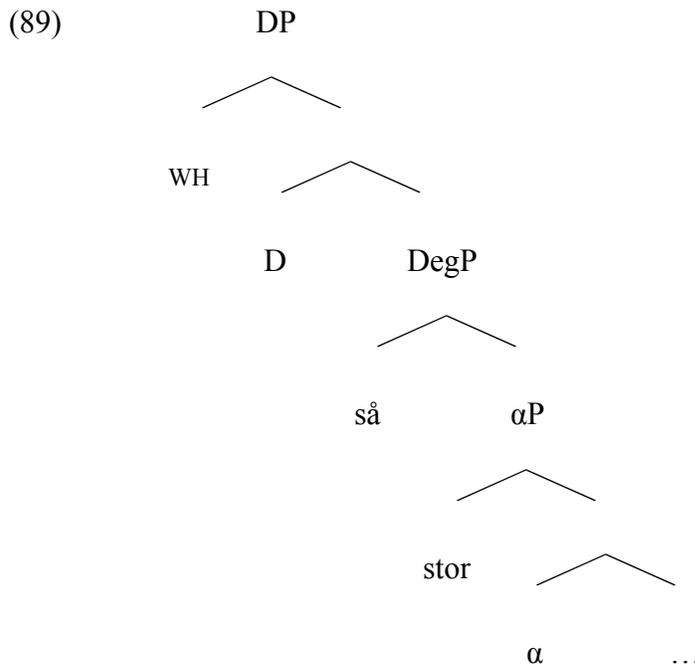
(Zanuttini and Portner [51:66])

Zanuttini and Portner [51:68] refer to the *wh*-phrases of this kind as E-ONLY *wh*-phrases.

The presence of an E-ONLY *wh*-phrase forces the clause to be exclamative because it requires the presence of a factive operator. I will argue that the silent *wh*-phrase in the så-

exclamative is of the type E-ONLY. This silent phrase only occurs with *så*, i.e. it can only select *så*. An argument in favor of this suggestion is that a complementizer can be present in these structures in Norwegian. A difference between Italian and Norwegian is however that this complementizer is not obligatory in Norwegian, cf. (78).

The presence of this silent morpheme together with *så* ensures that the clause is exclamative, at the same time as a trigger for the leftward movement is provided. In sum, a simplified phrase structure of (78) looks like (89).¹⁴



Importantly, in (89) WH is only merged when it is part of the numeration. If it is not part of the numeration, there is no movement of the nominal phrase to the left periphery. This

¹⁴ Again I am setting aside details. Notice that I am adopting a Cinque-style approach to adjectives where adjectives are located in specifiers of functional projections. Julien [21] labels this functional projection αP in her work on Scandinavian DPs, and I follow her in using that label here.

makes the prediction that phrases introduced by *så* can remain in situ. As (90) shows, this prediction is borne out.

- (90) Han kjenner **så** mange mennesker.
he knows so many people
'He knows so many people.'

I take this example to show that we in a sense have a special *så* (as suggested by Sæbø [45]), without assuming two lexical entries for *så*. Whether we end up with an exclamative sentence or not depends on the numeration. The question is nevertheless why the *wh*-element cannot be omitted from the numeration when we have a *what for* phrase. This seems to be related to *for* and its complement, specifically that *for* selects a DegP with a *wh*-phrase. That is, in the *what for* structure there is a specific selectional requirement on the complement of *for*. Since there is no corresponding requirement in the *så*-exclamative, the *wh*-phrase is not obliged to enter the numeration. Needless to say, further investigation is needed to either confirm or disconfirm this proposal.

Interesting evidence in favor of the present analysis comes from Iberian languages. For example, Catalan allows both the *wh*-phrase and the degree element to be present at the same time, as shown in (91).

- (91) Quin vestit més/tan car que m'he comprat!
What dress more/so expensive that I AUX.I bought
'What an expensive dress I bought!' (Castroviejo [13:70])

I take this example to provide independent support for the suggestion that *så*-exclamatives in Norwegian have a silent *wh*-phrase.

5. Conclusion

In this paper several issues bearing on the syntactic analysis of in particular two exclamatives structures from Norwegian have been discussed. I have argued that both the *for*-exclamative and the *så*-exclamative have a silent *wh*-phrase. This phrase bears a *wh*-feature that enters into a dependency with the left periphery in the clause. These silent phrases have been shown to have overt counterparts in other languages.

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