Rhetorical Exclamatives in Spanish

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Abstract

Although standard exclamatives have been studied for the last thirty years, (as far as I know) rhetorical exclamatives have not been studied at all in any language, (as far as I know). The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the systematic internal characterization of rhetorical exclamatives in Spanish, from a syntactic, semantic and pragmatic point of view. I compare the sentence class of rhetorical exclamatives to (with) standard exclamatives and to (with) rhetorical questions. I focus on the most representative members of the rhetorical-exclamative class, namely those introduced by gradable adjectival or adverbial phrases.
Dedicado a mi familia y a Eric.
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Chapter 1: introduction

1.1. Purpose of this thesis

In this thesis, I study Spanish exclamatives and identify a specific subclass: rhetorical exclamatives that, as far as know, have not been studied. Among non-declaratives sentences, exclamatives are of special interest because they have not received as much attention in the linguistic and philosophical literature as other constructions (questions, commands).

My main goal is to analyze the systematic internal characterization of rhetorical exclamatives in Spanish, from a syntactic, semantic and pragmatic point of view. In order to characterize rhetorical exclamatives, I compare this sentence class to standard exclamatives and to rhetorical questions. A more specific goal of this line of inquiry is to determine how context determines or is expressed by rhetorical structures.

A semantic analysis will tell us the type of semantic entity that rhetorical question and rhetorical exclamatives are, but much more information is needed to infer what the speaker meant when she utters a rhetorical sentence since the prima facie interpretation would appear to be irrelevant and/or infelicitous. The interaction of pragmatic and semantic factors in the analysis of linguistic constructions has become an area of intense research in the last few years (Cf. Kamp and Partee 2004, Turner
and von Heusinger 2006). The context will play a crucial role in the inferential process, since it constrains what can be said and, on the other hand, guides the speaker towards the speaker’s meaning.

Rhetorical utterances as indirect speech acts requires an inferential model, since by uttering a rhetorical exclamative or a rhetorical question the speaker provides evidence of her intention to convey a certain meaning, which is inferred by the speaker not only on the basis of the evidence provided but also on the basis of the Cooperative and Relevant principles. A decoding approach alone won’t determine which meaning the speaker is using when uttering a rhetorical utterance, since, according to the code model, a communicator encodes her intended message into a signal, which is decoded by the audience using an identical copy of the code. A rhetorical utterance is, of course, a linguistically coded piece of evidence, so that verbal comprehension involves an element of decoding. But the linguistic meaning recovered by decoding is just one of the inputs in the inferential process which yields an interpretation of the speaker’s meaning.

1.2. Object of study

I focus on the most representative/frequent members of the rhetorical-exclamative class, namely those introduced by gradable adjectival or adverbial phrases:

(1) ¡Simpático comentario el de tu madre!

‘You mother made such a kind comment!’
(2) ¡Poco te gusta comer!

‘How little you like eating!’

Rhetorical exclamatives share several characteristics with standard exclamatives:
(i) They constitute factive predicates, (ii) They have a “high-degree” (of?) interpretation, (iii) They only allow gradable adjective and adverbs, and (iv) They trigger focus preposing.

However, they differ from standard exclamatives in the felicitous conditions and in the fact that the speaker assumes not the truth of the utterance but of its negation (the complementary proposition). For example, the rhetorical reading of (1) is that the addressee did not arrange a nice party for the speaker, she most likely has done the opposite; and (2) is interpreted rhetorically as a statement about the gluttony of the addressee. I will provide an explanation of how this is possible with evaluative adjectives, that do not satisfy the requirement of participating in opposite polarity relations, and how we can get the ‘opposite’ interpretation comes from since as it has been observed (Espinal 1997) when negation occurs in an exclamative sentence, this negative element is expletive. Namely, it makes no effective contribution to the interpretation of the whole string containing this constituent. The variants of sentence (3) with or without negation have the same meaning:

(3) ¡Cuántas mentiras (no) nos habrá dicho Juan!

‘The lies that Juan has told us!’
lit. How many lies Juan will not have told us!

Another important aspect of the task of characterizing rhetorical exclamatives is the comparison with rhetorical questions which will be relevant to define eventually the concept of rhetoricity. I will focus mainly on explaining (i) How, as indirect speech acts, rhetorical utterances can communicate the opposite meaning of the one that has been uttered; (ii) How the inferential process to grasp the speaker’s communicative intentions is derived; (iii) The felicitous conditions of both rhetorical sentences, and finally (3) the attitudes expressed by them and the motivation to use them.

1.3. Overview of the analysis

The proposal is divided in four chapters. In chapter 2 I begin explaining the main concepts described in the literature on exclamatives, such as their denotation, their main types and the properties of factivity and the high degree reading. Besides that I propose that if we conceive of exclamatives as surprise constructions we will be able to explain more types of exclamatives other than wh-exclamatives. I finish the chapter offering an alternative proposal and proposing a solution for embedded exclamatives in Spanish. In chapter 3, I explain the semantic/pragmatic characteristics of rhetorical questions and develop the inferential process derived to grasp the speaker’s communicative intentions. The purpose of chapter 4 is to analyze the systematic internal characterization of rhetorical exclamatives in Spanish, from a pragmatic and a
semantic point of view. To do so I compare rhetorical exclamatives with standard exclamatives, and I explain that when uttering a rhetorical exclamative: (i) ‘what is said’ is not ‘what is has implicated’; (ii) the communicative success will depend on the addressee’s ability to recognize the speaker’s interests and goals, and (iii) that by doing that she will need to initiate an inferential process in which she will need not only to assume that the speaker is being cooperative and the utterance is relevant to the conversation, but also to consider the actual contextual facts. Finally in chapter 5, I compare both rhetorical structures, Rhetorical Questions and Rhetorical Exclamatives and show that both rhetorical utterances constitute complex indirect speech acts, and that in both an underlying negation is the responsible for the ‘opposite’ reading. I also contend that the motivation to use rhetorical utterances is a question of politeness. Finally I prove that rhetorical sentences can express relevant information and therefore can update the context.
Chapter 2: Standard Exclamatives

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and clarify some of the concepts described in the literature on exclamatives. To this end, in section 1 I begin with the denotation of these types of sentences. In section 2 I ascertain that in addition to *wh-* exclamatives which, as far as I know, have been studied the most; there are other types of exclamatives. In section 3 I explain two properties that have been treated as the hallmark of exclamatives: factivity and high degree reading. More precisely I clarify what is the factive element in exclamatives, and I question the idea of high degree as an intrinsic characteristic of these sentences. In section 4, I propose that if we conceive of exclamatives as surprise constructions we will be able to explain more types of exclamatives other than *wh-* exclamatives. In section 5, I characterize non-degree exclamatives. In section 6, I show the main differences between degree and non-degree exclamatives. The semantics of *wh-* exclamatives has been traditionally derived from the semantics of *wh-* questions (Zanuttini & Portner’s 2003), Gutiérrez-Rexach 1996). In section 7, I offer an alternative proposal. Finally, in section 8, I propose a solution for embedded exclamatives and crosslinguistic differences.
2.2. The study of exclamatives

Exclamatives have been studied for the last three decades. During the seventies they were studied in the context of the theory of speech acts (Elliot, 1971). During the eighties and the nineties, Bosque (1984) and Torrego (1988) focus on the syntax of *wh*-exclamatives. Recent works have focused on the left periphery of these constructions especially in Romance languages (Rizzi 1997, Obenauer 1994, Bennis 1995, Postman 1996, Zanuttini & Portner 1998, Gutiérrez-Rexach 2001).

Exclamative sentences have been characterized as a sentence type by traditional grammars that, according to Bosque (1984), highlighted the ‘expressive value’ and ‘emotional character’ of these constructions but did not mention their syntactic or semantic properties.

2.3. The denotation of exclamatives

What distinguishes exclamatives from other types of sentences is that they denote a semantic object that is different from those denoted by other sentence types: declarative sentences denote truth values (true or false); interrogative sentences denote questions; imperatives denote commands; and exclamatives denote exclamations. When uttering an exclamative sentence, a speaker expresses an emotive attitude toward the content of her utterance. I claim that the emotive attitude is always triggered by an expected fact or degree (1)-(4) that contradicts the speaker’s expectations. These expectations might follow common-ground norms, socially accepted standards, or they could be expectations reflecting her personal assessment.
A speaker may express wonder, admiration, amazement or criticism, among other emotive attitudes:

(1) ¡Qué inteligente es Pepito!
   ‘How smart Pepito is!’
(2) ¡Cuánto bebe Pepe!
   ‘Pepe is such a drinker’
(3) ¡Vaya casa tienen!
   ‘What a house they have!’
(4) ¡Has venido!
   ‘You came!’

2.3. Types of exclamatives

As far as I know, the literature on exclamatives has mostly focused on *wh*-exclamatives. Nevertheless, exclamatives are not uniform. There are several types of exclamatives\(^1\) with important differences in their syntactic and semantic characteristics, as we will see in the next section.

2.3.1. *Wh*-exclamatives.

In these exclamatives, the *wh*-phrase moves to the left periphery of the sentence. It has been claimed that in these types of exclamatives there is a *wh*-operator. But there

\(^1\) See Alonso Cortes (1999) for a more detailed description.
are different hypotheses about how this operator is interpreted: It has been interpreted as a function from propositions (Zanuttini and Portner 2003, Gutiérrez-Rexach 1996) which I will explain in section 2.5.1.; or as a function from degrees (Castroviejo 2006, Rett 2008) that will be explained in section 2.4.3.

The *wh*-phrase can be headed by a noun phrase (5), an adjectival phrase (6) or an adverbial phrase (7):

(5) ¡Qué cosas dice Juan!
   ‘The things that Juan says!’
(6) ¡Qué divertido es Juan!
   ‘How funny Juan is!’
(7) ¡Qué bien habla Juan!
   ‘What a good speaker Juan is!’

2.3.2. Free-relatives exclamatives

Free-relatives exclamatives or relatives introduced by definite determiners may have exclamatory force with a degree reading when occurring as root elements:

(8) ¡Lo alto que es tu hermano!
   ‘How tall your brother is!’
(9) ¡Las cervezas que bebe!
   ‘The number of beers drinks!’
In the case of (8), the raised adjective is in a focus position pied-piped by the neuter determiner, and in the case of (9) its raising is triggered by the definite determiner (Gutiérrez-Rexach 2001).

2.3.3. Evidential exclamatives

There are exclamatives introduced by evidential adjectives whose reading is clearly propositional. In (10) and (11) the alternatives are not based on degrees or kinds, but on propositions:

(10) ¡Claro que te lo voy a dar!
‘Of course, I will give it to you!’

(11) ¡Evidentemente que te voy a devolver el libro!
‘Evidently, I will give the book back to you!’

By uttering these exclamatives, the speaker asserts that it is evident that she is going to give the relevant object to the addressee, and she also expresses a contextually determined emotive attitude toward that assertion. For instance, (11) can be uttered in a situation in which the addressee has expressed her doubts about getting a book back and, by uttering this exclamative, the speaker expresses her surprise or resentment toward the fact that the addressee does not trust her.
2.3.4. Declaratives sentences

Gutiérrez-Rexach (1996) claims that the following declarative sentences can be considered genuine exclamative expressions from a prosodic and illocutionary point of view:

(12) ¡Juan se lo ha comido todo!
‘Juan ate everything!’

(13) ¡Juan es muy divertido!
‘Juan is so funny!’

They exhibit the characteristic intonational contour of these types of sentences and, by uttering them, a speaker expresses an emotive attitude toward the content of his utterance: in the case of (12) it is toward the fact that Juan has eaten everything; (13) is interpreted as ‘Juan is an instance of the kind of funny man I am referring to’. Thus, the content of these exclamatives is not about degrees but propositions.

I claim that these four structural types of exclamatives can be merged in two different semantic groups:

1. Exclamatives whose content is a degree property, such as wh-exclamatives or free-relative exclamatives.
2. Exclamatives whose content is propositional, such as exclamatives with a declarative structure and exclamatives introduced by an evidential expression.

Following Rett (2009), I assume that these two groups of exclamatives have different requirements. The exclamatives in the first group are expressively correct when their content is about a degree that exceeds the speaker’s expectations. The content of the exclamatives in the second group must be about a fact that contradicts the speaker’s expectations.

Contrary to Zanuttini & Portner (2003), Castroviejo (2006), Alonso Cortés (1999) who all claim that every exclamative must contain a *wh*-word, I claim that evidential exclamatives and declaratives can be considered exclamatives if we conceive exclamatives as surprise constructions as I will explain in section 2.5.

2.4. Characteristics of Exclamatives

Besides their illocutionary force, there are two properties that have been traditionally treated as the hallmark of exclamatives: factivity (Elliot 1974; Grimshaw 1976) and extreme degree (Gutiérrez-Rexach 1996; Zanuttini and Portner 2003). By ‘factivity’ we understand that their propositional content is presupposed and by ‘extreme degree’, we interpret that the degree of the property is maximal. For instance, when a speaker utters an exclamative like (14), she presupposes that John is
tall and expresses an emotive attitude toward the high degree of tallness which is beyond her expectations:

(14) ¡Qué alto es Juan!
‘How tall Juan is!’

2.4.1 Factivity

Factivity is a concept that has been applied in different ways in the literature. The basic notion is characterized by Kiparsky & Kiparsky (1970):

(15) [a factive operator] presupposes that the embedded clause expresses a true proposition, and makes some assertion about the proposition

That is, when the speaker utters a sentence such as the following one, formed by a factive predicate, she not only presupposes the truth of the complement It is raining, but furthermore asserts something else about the presupposed proposition It is odd/surprising:

(16) It is odd that it is raining

(17) It is surprising that it is raining
With non-factive predicates (18), the speaker does not so much presuppose as assert, directly or indirectly, that the complement ‘John is ill’ is a true proposition:

(18) I am sure that John is ill
(19) John turns out to be ill

Elliot (1974) and Grimshaw (1979) have argued in favor of the independent status of exclamatives both syntactically and semantically, and isolated a class of predicates, i.e. emotive predicates, that selects exclamatives following Kirparsky and Kirparsky’s (1970) classification\(^2\). Emotive factives are understood as the intersection of emotive predicates and factive predicates. These predicates, such as *It is important, crazy, odd, relevant, regret, resent*, etc. express the subjective value of a proposition rather than any knowledge about it or its truth value: The proof that emotive predicates are factive is that they presuppose their complement, as does the negative counterpart. For instance, (20a) and (20b) both entail the sentence (20c):

(20a) It is odd that it is raining
(20b) It is not odd that it is raining
(20c) It is raining

\(^2\)Kirparsky and Kirparsky (1970) distinguish the following factive and non-factive predicates. Factive predicates: significant, odd, tragic, exciting, relevant, matter, count, make sense, suffice, amuse, bother…regret, be aware (of), grasp, comprehend, take into consideration, take into account, bear in mind, ignore, make clear, mind, forget (about), deplore, resent, care (about)…Non-factive predicates:likely, sure, possible, true, false, seems, appear, happen, chance, turn out…suppose, assert, allege, assume, claim, charge, maintain, believe, conclude, conjecture, intimate, deem, fancy, figure…
According to Gutiérrez-Rexach (1996), another proof that emotive predicates are factive is that they are non-distributive:

(21a) It is astonishing that Mia knows Karl and Noam
(21b) It is astonishing that Mia knows Karl

The first utterance does not entail the second one, as opposed to the case by the following examples: The sentence in (22a) entails the sentence (22b):

(22a) It is the case that Mia knows Karl and Noam
(22b) It is the case that Mia knows Karl

Emotive factive verbs are intensional verbs. As Zuber (1977) claims, emotive factives seem to be sensitive to more contingent sentences than non-emotive ones. Consequently emotive factives presuppose ‘more’ than non-emotive predicates. For instance, according to Zuber, the sentence (23) is intensionally stronger than (24) since the former entails the latter but not the other way around:

(23) Bill regrets that the bottle is half empty
(24) Bill knows that the bottle is half empty
Furthermore, in order for a speaker to utter a sentence like (24), the proposition *The bottle is half empty* has to be true in all the worlds compatible with those which the speaker takes to be the case. In the same vein, when the speaker utters an exclamative like (25) the proposition *Juan is tall* is presumed to be true in all those worlds where the speaker’s expectations are satisfied:

(25) Es increíble lo alto que es Juan

Elliot (1974) and Grimshaw (1979) claim that complements of a particular semantic type will be selected by predicates of the same type. The fact that EXCs can be embedded only by factive predicates, but not by non-factive predicates such as *ask* or *wonder*, proves that exclamatives themselves are factive. This explains why in a context of speaker ignorance, an exclamative like (25) is ungrammatical. On the other hand, in the case of (26)-(27) the complement is not an exclamative but a question since interrogatives and interrogative predicates are characterized by indeterminacy in the value of the variable represented by the *wh*-word. On the other hand, exclamatives like (28)-(29) are grammatically embedded by factive predicates because they require determinacy on the part of the *wh*-variable, and so do the exclamatives themselves:

(26) *I do not know what a fool he is*

(27) Fred will ask how tall John

(28) Fred is wondering how fast John can run
(29) It is amazing how tall John is
(30) I’m surprised at how fast John can run

In the same vein, Zanuttini and Portner (2003) hold that EXCs can be embedded in factive predicates because they contain a covert factive morpheme FACT hosted in Spec, CP. According to the authors, an exclamative sentence is the result of combining a wh-operator and a factive morpheme. This factive morpheme generates a pragmatic effect of *widening*, in the sense that it creates a set of alternatives larger than the set of possible answers for interrogatives. They propose that exclamatives like the one above have two domains of quantification: the first one would be the set of individuals denoted by the wh-clause in a standard situation; the second one would be a larger domain containing not only the expected individuals, but also unusual ones. The presence of a factive operator makes the non-standard alternatives in the quantificational domain be presupposed. This widening is the hallmark of EXCs; it is what makes them different from the clause type which they resemble the most: the interrogatives. By assumption, the assignment $g$ yields the (narrower) domain $D_1$, and the assignment $g’$ yields the (larger) domain $D_2$:

$$[[S]] D_1 = \{ \text{eats (he, poblanos), eats (he, serranos), eats (he, jalapenos)} \}$$

$$[[S]] D_2 = \{ \text{eats (he, poblanos), eats (he, serranos), eats (he, jalapenos), eats (he, guereros), eats (he, habaneros)} \}$$
The authors claim that when the exclamative is embedded, the exclamative meaning is inherited by the root sentence since it includes a factive verb.

In sum, the analysis proposed by Elliot (1974), Grimshaw (1979), and Zanuttini & Portner (2003) agree in considering factivity a property of both the predicate and the exclamative clause.

On the other hand, Gutiérrez Rexach (2008) claims that factivity is part of the nature of the intensional EXC operator on propositions in which a hidden contextually dependent property is predicated of the relevant proposition. In other words, he attributes the property of factivity to the emotive factives that embed exclamatives. In the case of root exclamatives, they can be considered factive because they ‘encode’ a null emotive predicate.

I agree with Gutiérrez-Rexach on the idea that factivity is a property of the embedding predicate; however, I contend that EXCs can be embedded by emotive predicates because their semantic denotation is a fact.

2.4.2. What is a fact exactly?

I support Kratzer’s (2002) claim that EXCs denote facts, because unlike propositions they cannot predict directly a truth value, but instead exemplify a true proposition of which the speaker has de re beliefs.

According to Kratzer (2002), a fact cannot simply be identified with a ‘true proposition’, since a true proposition is not the same as a true fact. For instance, if
Jone believes that the late Prime Minister’s name began with a B, he believes what is true, since the late Prime Minister’s last name was Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman. But if he believes that Mr. Balfour was the late Prime Minister, he will still believe that the late Prime Minister’s last name began with a B. So, even though the proposition ‘the late Prime Minister’s name began with a B’ is true, the fact is false. Kratzer (2002) proposes that for someone to believe that a fact is true, we need to have de re beliefs. According to her, in order for de re beliefs to be possible, some causal connection between believers and dere of their beliefs is required as well:

(31) S knows p if and only if S believes p de re of some fact exemplifying p.

So, according to this definition, the sentence above can only be true if Jones’ belief is a de re belief about an actual fact exemplifying the proposition that the late Prime Minister’s name began with a ‘B’.

In the case of EXCs, a speaker utters an exclamative such as the following one in a situation s where she can verify that indeed Juan is tall to a degree that exceeds the speaker’s expectations: For instance, in a situation where the speaker’s expectation is that Juan is 4.5’ ft., but realizes that in the world of evaluation, Juan is indeed 6 ft. tall. By uttering an exclamative such as (32), the speaker is uttering a true proposition:
On the other hand, in a situation where Juan is as tall as expected, or in a situation where Juan is less tall than expected, uttering an exclamative as the one above will lead us to utter, in the former case, a false proposition, and in the latter an infelicitous exclamative. Furthermore in a situation where the speaker ignores the actual height of Juan, uttering an exclamative would not be possible. In other words, the actual fact is the trigger of the exclamative, but the speaker needs to have some previous expectations about the descriptive content elicited in the exclamative, as well as some evidence about the actual fact.

Interestingly Sharvit (2002) holds that surprise when embeds questions does not support de dicto readings not only because it is a veridical predicate but also, and more importantly, because it has a weakly exhaustive semantics. If we interpret the following utterance “It surprised John which students left” in the following scenario: student Mary and student Sally (the only students) left. John is surprised that Mary and Sally left, but he does not know that they are students. We understand that the de re reading of the utterance is true. But we cannot get a de dicto since the following example would sound awkward: It did not REALLY surprise John which students left. Indeed, he did not expect Mary and Sally – the students who left – to leave, but he was not aware that they were students.
In addition, no scenario can be constructed where the *de dicto* “reading” would be true and the *de re* “reading” false. In the following scenario, (33) is simply true.

(33) It surprised John which students left

(34) Scenario VIII. Student Mary and student Sally left. Student Bill did not leave. John knows that Mary and Sally are students and he is surprised that they left. He is not surprised that Bill did not leave, because he did not expect him to leave.

We can obtain the same conclusions about EXCs. In a situation where Mary and Sally are the only students who left, the exclamative (34) cannot be uttered if: (i) *de re* reading is true, but *de dicto* is false. For instance, if the speaker knows that Mary, John, Peter, Steve and Sally left, but does not know that they are students. (ii) if the *de re* reading is false, but *de dicto* is true. In a situation where the speaker does not know that Mary and Sally left but is aware of the fact that they are students. (iii) if both *de re* and *de dicto* are both false. For instance, if it is the case that the speaker does not know that Mary and Sally left and she does not know that they are students either:

(35) ¡Las estudiantes que se han ido!

2.4.3. Exclamatives as extreme degree constructions

It has been claimed that when a speaker utters an exclamative, she expresses an emotive attitude toward the high degree of the elicited property. Several authors
(Gutiérrez-Rexach 1996, Zanuttini and Portner 2003, Villalba 2003, Castroviejo 2006) have treated this idea as a high degree or extreme degree implicature or interpretation. This explains that adverbs like ‘reasonably’ do not match in a context where some degree needs to exceed the level of expectations.

(36) * It is amazing how slightly/ fairly/ reasonable long he can stay under water

There are many characteristics that define this type of exclamative.

2.4.3.1 Characteristics of exclamatives as degree constructions

As Grimshaw (1979) pointed out, exclamatives differ from questions and assertions in the fact that they cannot be answered (37) nor be used as answers (38 B1):

(37) A: How tall is John?
B: 2.20 meters
(38) A: How tall is John!
B: # 2.10 meters
(39) A: How tall is John?
B1: # How tall he is!
B2: He’s very tall
Even though a *wh*-exclamative is a *wh*-construction, it differs from a question with respect to its discourse function: Whereas (37) can be used to request information, (38) cannot. On the other hand, degree exclamatives cannot update the common ground in the way assertions do. This explains why they cannot constitute answers to a question (39 B1).

Under the degree analysis, the *wh*-operator present in *wh*-exclamatives is associated with a degree variable, so it can be properly characterized as a degree operator (Gutiérrez-Rexach 1999). According to Creswell (1976), predicates denoting properties express relations between individuals and degrees; in other words, they are sets of individuals defined with respect to a degree. In exclamative sentences, there is reference to a degree that comes from applying the gradable property (G) to an individual (x) (reference degree); and there is also a degree which is taken from context as a standard (standard degree). The reference degree has to be higher than the standard degree in the relevant scale; it cannot be equal, since this would indicate that the reference degree is average; it cannot be less than the standard degree either.

In (39) the standard level of intelligence (standard degree) is established by the speaker’s criterion or speaker’s expectations (Gutiérrez-Rexach, 1997), and John’s intelligence (reference degree) is located in a higher point than the standard one in the relevant scale of intelligence:

(40) ¡Qué inteligente es Juan!
‘How smart Juan is!’

The nature of the operator as a degree operator, allows for a straightforward explanation of the following restrictions:

1. The Spanish *wh*-words that can occur in an exclamative construction are the following:

   (41) *Qué*: ¡Qué exagerados que son tus padres!
   ‘Your parents do exagerate!’

   (42) *Cómo*: ¡Cómo son de exagerados tus padres!
   ‘Your parents do exagerate!’

   (43) *Cuánto*: ¡Cuánto corre aquel coche!
   ‘That car is really fast!’

   (44) *Cuánto/a/os/as + N*: ¡Cuántas tonterías tengo que oír al cabo del día!
   The nonsense that I have to listen all day long!

On the other hand, non-degree *wh*-words, such as *cuándo, quién, dónde* and *por qué* are not allowed in Spanish exclamatives:

   (45) *¡Cuándo compra Juan!
   When buys Juan

   (46) *¡Quién compra estas cosas!
Who buys these things

(47) *¡Por qué compra Juan!

Why buys Juan

2. In general, only gradable adjectives or adverbs are licensed in these kinds of sentences. The reason is that the presence of a degree operator with propositional scope requires the presence of a degree variable, contributed by a gradable predicate, so that it may satisfy its binding requirements. For instance, *inteligente* is gradable and therefore we can say of Juan that he is tall to degree *d*. Relational adjectives, such as *bípedo, nuclear*, cannot contribute a degree variable for the *wh*-operator to bind. Thus, this operator quantifies vacuously and produces ungrammatical sentences:

(48) ¡Qué inteligente es Juan!

‘How intelligent Juan is!

(49) *¡Qué bípedo eres!*

‘*How biped you are!’

(50) *¡Qué nuclear es la central!*

*How atomic the plant is!’

(51) ¡Qué maravillosa película!

‘What a wonderful movie!'
(52) ¡Qué inteligente eres!
‘How intelligent you are!’

Castroviejo (2006) points out that relational adjectives are not acceptable in other degree constructions, such as comparatives and result clauses, as we can see in (53) and (54):

(53) *Ana es más mortal que Pepe
‘Ana is more mortal than Pepe’

(54) *Ana es tan mortal que todo el mundo se da cuenta
‘Ana is so mortal that everybody notices it’

The raised adjective in exclamatives has to move to the specifier of the Complementizer Phrase (CP) to check [+degree]. According to Gutiérrez-Rexach (2001), the necessity that the degree feature be checked in the C-phrase of the syntactic derivation is probably conditioned by semantic reasons: The degree argument of the adjective is existentially quantified and has wide scope over other operators and quantifiers in the clause.

However, sometimes the degree phrase that contains the degree operator and the gradable adjective may not be spelled out; in these cases, it has been assumed an implicit DegP that is recovered from context. As we can see in the following example (55):
(55a) ¡Qué hombre!
‘What a man!’

(55b) ¡Qué hombre tan/más/increíblemente guapo/inteligente/estúpido!
What a man so/very incredible handsome/intelligent/stupid!
‘What an incredibly handsome man!’

We have claimed that Free-relative exclamatives denote a degree of property. These types of exclamatives can be used to express surprise at either the number of things that Juan has told us (55) or the number of beers that Juan has drunk (56); or the degree of Juan’s tallness (57):

(56) ¡La de cosas que nos contó Juan!
‘The things Juan told us!’

(57) ¡Las cervezas que bebe Juan!
‘The number of beers he is able to drink!’

(58) ¡Lo alto que es Juan!
‘How tall Juan is!’

According to Torrego (1988), free-relative exclamatives receive an amount reading because there is a null operator in the relative clause introduced by que which moves in LF from an object position to the left periphery of the sentence and has scope over the DP. The null operator receives its amount interpretation from its
antecedent, the DP. In (40) the amount reading would come from the DP expression \textit{la de cosas} (an elliptical variant of \textit{la cantidad de cosas}). The definite article introducing an exclamative without demonstrative or anaphorical interpretation has a [+wh] feature. The DP behaves as an indefinite phrase: the interpretation of the DP in (55) and (56) is \textit{la cantidad x de cosas/ cervezas} where ‘x’ is interpreted as ‘a high amount/number’; whereas in the case of (57) ‘x’ denotes a high degree of tallness.

As far as I know, exclamatives are not uniform in spite of the fact that the literature on exclamatives has been focused mainly on \textit{wh}-exclamatives. There are several types of exclamatives, as we saw in section 2, that differ from one another in their syntactic and semantic characteristics. I claim that if we conceive of exclamatives as surprise constructions we can explain more types of exclamatives. In the next section I attempt to develop this idea and explain why non-degree exclamatives can be considered exclamatives as well.

\subsection*{2.5. Exclamatives as surprise constructions}

We can conclude from the previous section 2.4.2. that (i) the speaker cannot be totally oblivious about the degree of Juan’s height because she would not be surprised. The speaker has to have some expectations (\textit{de dicto} beliefs). Therefore I conclude that EXCs can be conceived as surprise constructions (Abels 2005), that is, EXCs express a relation between the presuppositions of two contradictory
propositions and an individual: p1 expresses the speaker’s expectations and p2 the speaker’s knowledge. Consider the exclamative sentence in (59):

(59) ¡Qué alto es Juan!

‘How tall Juan is!’

This exclamative is felicitous uttered in a context in which the speaker expects John to be 4.5 ft. She believes that this proposition is true. However in reality (the evaluation world) Juan is 6 ft, and the speaker knows it. This knowledge contradicts the expectations, and therefore the surprise reading raises. Without contradiction between the two propositions there would not be surprise reading. For instance, in a situation where Juan’s height is as expected, i. e. p1= 4.5 ft., p2= 4.5 ft. In that situation p2 would not contradict p1, and therefore an EXC would be infelicitous. On the other hand, in a situation in which Juan is as tall as what the speaker expects or less tall than the speaker expects (p1=4.5 ft., p2= 3 ft.), the exclamative in (59) cannot exemplify the proposition Juan is taller than I thought. The appropriate EXC in this situation would be (60) instead:

(60) ¡Qué bajo es Juan!

‘How short Juan is!’
By considering these relevant alternatives in p1, we rule out the possible alternatives that do not exemplify $p$, and by doing that we can also distinguish the most reliable situation able to exemplify $p$, that is, p2. Notice that the relevant height hinges on the speaker’s expectations and is not set in absolute terms. In this view, presuppositional requirements are satisfied solely by virtue of the speaker’s internal state. As long as the speaker has the necessary beliefs, presuppositional requirements are satisfied.

I agree with Castroviejo’s (2006) idea that the high degree depends on the context but only as long as it affects the speaker’s expectations. For instance, if the context is formed by seven-year old kids, the speaker’s expectations are not the same as in a context where we refer to a group of basketball players. Therefore, it is the context that carries out a reliability function and helps to rule out the irrelevant possible situations.

Castroviejo (2006) distinguishes two situations in which the utterance of an exclamative would be infelicitous. She calls the first situation the basketball agent case in which a basketball agent meets with a Laker’s manager. The agent wants the manager to hire this player, but the player is not very well known. The agent utters the following exclamative:

(61) #Que alt que és en Paul!

‘How tall Pau is!’
The utterance of an exclamative, according to Castroviejo (2006), would be awkward for two reasons: first, because there is an implicit request for information (the manager of the Lakers wants to learn about Pau’s strengths), and second, by uttering an exclamative it appears that the speaker is responding to a stimulus instead of providing the requested information.

The second situation is called the history teacher case in which a history teacher is lecturing on the Romans to an uninterested audience and he utters (62) in order to gain the student’s attention:

(62) Que poderós que era l’Imperi Romà!

How powerful the Roman Empire was!’

Castroviejo (2006) points out that in this situation unlike in the previous one there is not request for information; however the exclamative would be infelicitous because by uttering it, the teacher conveys that she has just realized the high degree to which the Roman Empire was powerful; and also because the expected role of a history teacher is to convey information and not to communicate her feelings.

However, I claim that the reason why the previous exclamatives are infelicitous is due to the fact that the addressee cannot accommodate the information. She does not have any kind of information state that can be updatable by the sentence (in the first situation the manager does not know the player, and in the second situation the students do not seem to know anything about the Romans). Even if the addressee
decides to go along with her presupposition, she will not change her beliefs with respect to the proposition because she does not have any. In that case, the communication fails since the goal of communication is that everyone will have a motive to try to add relevant and coherent information to the context and facilitate the hearer the task of accommodating new information. I claim that in order to accept, or reject, the presupposed content of an exclamative, the addressee as well as the speaker needs to have *de re* beliefs about it. In other words, she needs to have access to the evidence that triggers the exclamative in order to create her own state of information.

I state that context cannot be interpreted only as both the thing which is updated, and the thing that is required to meet the constraints imposed by presuppositional expressions. Context plays as well an important role in the way the addressee is able to represent the information elicited in an exclamative. More precisely, if a context fails to satisfy the presuppositional requirements of an incoming sentence, the sentence is undefined relative to the context, and update cannot proceed. Rather, sentence presuppositions have to be part of the information which an addressee uses to construct the intended interpretation of an incoming utterance. As Simons (2003) points out, accommodation must be constructed as a belief shift undertaken individually by each discourse participant, but with the same goal: that of bringing the actual common ground in line with the presuppositional requirements of utterances. According to her, accommodation is clearly something a hearer does, and is indeed an integral part of the interpretation process. However, it cannot be driven by the common ground, as Stalnaker (1974) claims: Accommodation is not driven by a
hearer’s recognition of the presuppositions of the speaker but by the requirements of interpretation. A cooperative speaker should utter a presupposing sentence only if she believes that her addressees have or can construct an information state updatable by the utterance.

Exclamative sentences seem to be more informative than declarative sentences since they encode a propositional content and an emotive attitude, and that is why they are easily felicitous when the interlocutors share the de re beliefs, that is, when they can share the evidence (an unexpected fact or a high degree) that trigger the exclamative. This is demonstrated in cases in which exclamatives are embedded by an imperative like mira:

(63) ¡Mira que flor más bonita!
‘Look, what a beautiful flower!’

(64) ¡Mira, ha venido Pepe!
‘Look, Pepe came!’

By uttering these exclamatives the speaker is pointing to the addressee the actual fact that is triggering her surprise and she wants to share the evidence with her interlocutor in order to make the exclamative felicitous. Remember that both the speaker and the hearer have to share de re beliefs about the contextual facts that trigger the exclamative.
2.5.1. Non-degree exclamatives

So far we have seen that *wh*-exclamatives and free-relative exclamatives pattern in similar fashion with respect to the extreme degree reading. However as Torrego (1988) points out, free-relative exclamatives may behave as independent clauses (65b), in contrast to regular relative clauses (66b). We claim that this fact can be explained only if we consider that in addition to the amount/degree reading, these exclamatives have a propositional content:

(65a) ¡No te imaginas las cosas que nos contó!
‘You cannot imagine the things she told us’

(65b) ¡Las cosas que nos contó!
‘The things she told us!’

(66a) Nos contó las cosas que le preocupaban
‘She told us the things that worry him’

(66b) * Las cosas que le preocupan
‘The things that worry him’

Furthermore, there are two other types of exclamatives- the ones based on declarative sentences, and exclamatives introduced by evidential expressions- that do not seem to involve any kind of (degree) quantifier whether overt or covert, but they can be still considered exclamatives.
I state that these exclamatives constitute surprise constructions and therefore they can be considered exclamative sentences as well. An exclamative such as (67) can be uttered in a situation where María has mentioned her intentions of not going to the party. Thus p1 is constituted by the proposition *María is not coming to the party*, and the speaker presupposes it and assumes that her interlocutors presupposes it too. Later on, María changes her mind and she decides to go to the party, this unexpected fact constitutes p2: *María is coming to the party:*

(67) ¡María va a venir a la fiesta!

‘María is coming to the party!’

As we can see p2: (i) contradicts p1, this giving the surprise reading, and (ii) since it is more informative and relevant, it updates the information state of the speaker, that is, the set of the speaker’s presuppositions. In other words, the set of the presuppositions has been extended at the moment of uttering the exclamative. Presuppositions can be considered to be a dynamical process (Simons, 2003) that can update the speaker’s beliefs at different moments during the conversation. As I said before, the presuppositions do not need to be part of the common ground, but the exclamative has to be uttered in a situation where the addressee is able to accommodate the information.

I claim that there is an order between these two presuppositions (p1) and (p2); because this order is not about the degree of a property, I propose that the order is
about the degree of expectation. As a result, the less it is expected, the more relevant and information the fact will be:

\[(68) \{ \text{is not coming (María)} > \text{is coming (María)} \}\]

The expectations are based on what is known, and that which establishes the order among the presupposed propositions; for example, if María is known to be a party animal, the expectation might be that this occasion is not going to be an exception and that she will be going to the party (p1). However, if contrary to all expectations María decides not to go to the party, that unexpected fact licenses the speaker to utter (69), which constitutes p2. The order between p1 and p2 now is as we can see in (70):

\[(69) \text{María no va a venir a la fiesta!}\]

‘María is not coming to the party!’

\[(70) \{ \text{is coming (María)} > \text{is not coming (María)} \}\]

In the case of evidential exclamatives, the degree between p1 and p2 in (71) is about probability/ evidentiality which is based also on what is known or could be expected. An exclamative like (71) can be uttered in a situation where María is known to be the kind of person who does not enjoy going to parties, however this is a graduation party and people are expecting María to come. So p1 is constituted by the proposition *María might come to the party*. However, the speaker rejects this
presupposition when she utters (72), that is, p2. The order between p1 and p2 is as follows:

(71) ¡Pues claro que María no va a ir a tu fiesta!
‘Of course, María is not coming to the party!’

(72) {is coming (María), is not coming (María)}

Even if the fact elicited in the exclamative is modified by a gradable predicate, as we can see in (73) and (74), the trigger of the emotive attitude is still the unexpected fact of having fired such a worker or the fact of being able to speak two languages, but not the high degree of foolishness or amazement conveyed by these facts:

(73) ¡Qué insensatez despedir a un hombre así!
‘What a foolish thing to do to fire a man like him!’

(74) ¡Qué maravilloso poder hablar dos idiomas!
‘What wonderful thing to be able to speak two languages!’

The different emotions (amazement, disappointment…) that exclamatives can express are marked lexically by the predicate that embeds the exclamative. The level of expectation expressed by alucinar/flipar is higher than the level of expectations expressed by maravillar, and the level of expectations expressed by maravillar is higher than the level of expectations expressed by sorprender.
2.6. Differences between Degree and Non-degree exclamatives

2.6.1. The answer of a question

As we have seen in section *Degree Exclamatives*, Grimshaw (1979) was the first one to point out that exclamatives cannot constitute the answer to a question:

(75) A: How tall is John?
B1: # How tall he is!
B2: He’s very tall

However, the non-degree exclamatives differ from the latter in regard to this aspect as we can see in the following example:

(76) A: ¿Cómo es Juan?
B1: ¡Es más/increíblemente alto!
B2: *¡Qué alto es Juan!

(77) A: Entonces, ¿me vas a dar el dinero que te presté hace dos meses?
‘So, are you going to give me back the money I lent you two months ago?’
B: ¡Claro que te lo voy a dar!
‘Of course, I will give it to you!’
According to Rett (2009), the reason why non-\textit{wh}-exclamatives whose content is a proposition that can constitute the answer to a question is that they have an individual reading, whereas \textit{wh}-exclamatives with a degree reading and lacking an individual reading cannot constitute the answer to a question. The author proposes the following scenario: You have heard that Mimi speaks two Romance languages in addition to English. You know that Mimi’s mother is Swiss, so you assume that these two languages are French and Italian. However, you learn that Mimi instead speaks Portuguese and Romanian. Only a propositional exclamation (78a) can be felicitous in this context:

(78) a. (Wow) Mimi speaks Portuguese and Romanian!

b. # What languages Mimi speaks!

However, I state that the reason for this fact does not hinge on the semantics of the exclamatives but rather on the pragmatic conditions of the interrogatives. More precisely, I claim that the pragmatic conditions can modify the answer set of a question. For instance, consider the answer sets of (79) in the following scenarios:

Scenario I: Juan is 11 years old and he wants to play basketball. He goes with his mom to talk to the coach of the school. The coach asks the mother:

(79) ¿Cuánto mide Juan?
‘How tall is Juan?’

(80a) # ¡Qué alto es Juan!

‘How tall Juan is!’

(80b) ¡Es más alto!

(80c) Juan mide 1,40, Juan mide 1.45…

‘Juan is 1,40 metre, Juan is 1,45 metre…

Neither a wh-exclamative nor a non-degree exclamative can be a felicitous answer because the coach is seeking for propositional information (i.e. Juan’s height), not for propositional information and emotive attitude toward the degree. An exclamative would be too informative in this context which would lead to communicating irrelevant information. Instead, the set of possible answers for a question such as (79) could have been (80c):

However, in the following scenario, degree exclamative and not just a non-degree exclamative can be felicitous and the speaker can express not only propositional information (i.e. 82a) but also the addressee’s emotion about the fact/degree (i.e. 82b):

Scenario: María is very curious about Elena’s new boyfriend, Juan. Finally she asks Ana, a mutual friend:

(81) María: Bueno, ¿cómo es Juan?
‘So, how is Juan?

(82a) Ana: ¡Ay...Es más guapo!
‘He is such a handsome guy!

(82b) Ana: ¡Ay…qué guapo es!
‘What a handsome guy!’

I interpret this as evidence of the fact that degree exclamatives also encode propositional content.

I state that there are two more differences between degree exclamatives and propositional exclamatives: (i) The latter allow external negation, and (ii) they can constitute comparative structures, whereas this is not possible with degree EXCs:

(83) ¡No aprobaste el examen de conducir!
‘You did not pass the driving exam!’

(84) ¡Qué no alto es!
What a non-tall he is!

(85) ¡Es tan alto como su padre!
‘He is as tall as his father!’

(86) *¡Qué alto es como su padre!
‘What tall is as his father!’
2.6.2 Negation and exclamatives

2.6.2.1. Negation and degree exclamatives.

It has been observed that when negation occurs in an exclamative sentence this negative element is expletive (Espinal 1997, Portner & Zanuttini 2000, Villalba 2004). It makes no effective contribution to the interpretation of the whole string containing this constituent. In other words, it makes no effective contribution to the interpretation of the whole sentence:

(87) a. ¡Cuántas mentiras no nos habrá dicho Juan!
   b. ¡Cuántas mentiras nos habrá dicho Juan!

‘The lies that Juan has told us!’

The two exclamative sentences above have the same meaning: ‘Juan has told us a lot of lies’. According to Espinal (1997), the negative head, which is selected by the head of a non-lexical Intensifier Phrase, is logically absorbed by it at the LF level of syntactic representation.

Gutiérrez-Rexach (1996), following Elliot (1971), claims that we can find the same situation with embedded exclamatives:

(88) It is amazing how very cute he is
(89) *It isn’t amazing how very cute he is
Gutiérrez-Rexach argues that a negated emotive predicate does not qualify as properly factive. In such a situation neither a *that*-clause nor a *wh*-exclamative can be embedded, which suggests that these negated predicates do not work as factives (contrary to *I cannot believe*).

Zanuttini and Portner (2003) explain these cases of negated emotive predicates as pragmatic mismatches, since negating ‘amazing’ is incompatible with the widening that occurs in the embedded EXC.

According to my analysis, negation is incompatible with embedded EXCs since it does not make any sense to realize that an actual fact exceeds one’s expectations, and then negate the emotive attitude toward this fact. However, I claim that matrix non-degree exclamatives behave differently in regard to negation as we will see in section 2.5.1..

Further evidence that the canonical character of negation seems somewhat altered or suspended is the fact that negative polarity items (NPIs) are not licensed in these constructions:

(90) *¡La de tonterías que no habrá dicho nunca!

(91) *Juan se sorprende de haber visto animal alguno

‘*Juan is surprised about having seen any animal’

(91) *Juan se asombra de haber levantado un dedo

*Juan is amazed of having lifted a finger’
According to Castroviejo (2006), this is explained by the fact that the degree operator takes scope over negation. The ill-formedness of the following examples may be accounted for by the fact that a contradiction arises: The speaker holds an attitude towards a high degree, but the negative operator makes sure that there is no such high degree:

(92) *¡Qué sorprendido que no está el presidente!
How surprised that no is the president

Roughly, it does not make any sense to presuppose the existence of a maximal degree $d$ such that Ray is not $d$-smart (there does not exist a maximal degree of non-smartness).

According to Linebarger (1997), factive predicates do not allow NPIs (notice the contrast between non-factive epistemic verbs like wonder and epistemic factive verbs such as know in 93-94), because factive environments are not downward-entailing expressions and therefore block the occurrence of NPIs. For example (95a) does not entail (95b):

(93) John is wondering whether Bill said anything
(94) *John knows that Bill said anything
(95) a. I am surprised that you bought a car
b. I am surprised that you bought a Honda

Although the explanation I am advocating here is semantic in nature, it would be compatible with Fitzpatrick’s (2005) claim that factive complementizers (CFACT) create an island that blocks the local relation between an NPI and a downward entailing operator, as shown in (96):

(96) John did not find out [Cfact that anyone left]

On the other hand, Villalba (2004) points out that negation, although with a very limited distribution, can appear in EXCs. It can modify the verb in a quant-exclamative when the referent of the NP is salient in the context:

(97) ¡Cuántos libros que no has leído! (pointing at a pile of books)
(98) *¡Cuántas bromas no diría si estuviera en la tele!

With respect to (97), this statement could be uttered in a situation in which someone is reading books from a large list and refuses to read a majority of this presupposed set; another scenario in which (98) would be felicitous is in a situation where the speaker is looking at the shelves in John’s library containing the books that he was supposed to read during the course of his graduate studies, but did not.
2.6.2.2 Negation and non-degree exclamatives

We have seen that degree *wh*-exclamatives only license an expletive negation, but in the case of propositional EXCs like (99), as well as in (100), negation acts as an external negation that moves to ForceP, the locus of illocutionary force. More precisely, the denial of the fact of not passing the driving exam is contrary to expectations and therefore constitutes the trigger of the emotive attitude:

(99) ¡No aprobaste el examen de conducir!
‘You did not pass the driving exam!’

(100) ¡Claro que no voy a ir a esa fiesta!

Furthermore there are exclamatives with a verb in a subjunctive mood that license NPIs, such as these in the following examples:

(101) ¡Vaya que si le importa un bledo!
Go-SUBJ that yes to him matters a damn
‘Of course, he gives a damn!’

(102) ¡Venga que voy a levantar un dedo por él!
Come-SUBJ that I am going to lift a finger for him
‘Like I am going to lift a finger for him!’
2.6.3. Comparisons and exclamatives

With regard to the incompatibility between degree EXCs and comparison, Castroviejo (2006) claims that they are incompatible because EXCs require that the degree has to be high; furthermore, the comparison is not established with another individual, but rather with a standard degree applied to the same individual. On the other hand, propositional EXCs are compatible because in (102) it is not the high degree that triggers the emotive attitude, but the fact of being as tall as the father:

(102) ¡Es tan alto como su padre!
‘He is as tall as his father!’

I conclude that there are two different (exclamative) operators in Spanish exclamatives. For the first group of exclamatives, the domain of the exclamative operator is a proposition. The emotive predicate takes as arguments the proposition, the situation and the speaker:

(103) ¡Juan ha encontrado mi libro!
‘Juan has found my book!’

\[ \text{EXC} (a) (w) (\lambda w '[\text{find} (w')] (\text{my book}) (\text{John})) (w) \text{ iff } \exists P \in \text{EMOT} [O (w) (\text{find} (w) (\text{my book}) (\text{John})) (a)] \]
For the second group of exclamatives, the domain of the exclamative operator is a degree property, and the arguments of the emotive predicate are the degree property, the situation and the speaker:

(104) ¡Qué alto es Juan!
‘How tall Juan is!’

(105) ¡Lo alto que es Juan!

DET tall that is Juan

EXC (a) (w) (λw’ [id [tall (w) (j, d)]) iff

∃ P ∈ EMOT [P (w) (λw’ [id [tall (w) (j, d)] = id [tall (w) (j, d)])] (a)]

2.7. Exclamatives denote sets of propositions

I claim that exclamatives can be still analyzed as the denotation of sets of propositions. However, I do not hold the idea that they have the same denotation as questions in the way Gutiérrez-Rexach (1996) and Zanuttini & Portner (2003) suggest. Questions and exclamatives differ in many aspects:

1. Only degree wh-words such as qué, cuánto, cómo can introduce an exclamative.

2. Exclamatives do not allow either wh-words in situ or multiple wh-words.

Castroviejo (2006) points out that the impossibility of multiple wh in
exclamatives has to do with the fact that the speakers cannot experience more than one attitude towards the content of the exclamative:

(105) ¿Qué has dicho QUE? (echo-interrogative)
You have said WHAT?

(106) ¿Qué pintor ha hecho qué cuadro? (multiple interrogative)
‘What painter painted what picture?

3. Wh-interrogatives cannot contain the complementizer ‘que’:

(107) *¿Qué cosas que ha dicho?
What things that AUX.he said

4. The exclamative ‘qué’ shows no restrictions to the extension of the noun it precedes, unlike interrogative ‘qué’, which can only be combined with expressions that denote sets with at least two members:

(108) ¡Qué sol hace!
‘It’s so sunny!’

(109) *¿Qué sol hace?
What sun does?
‘What does the sun do?’
5. Exclamatives include few modifiers such as *extremadamente* and *tan*, but they are incompatible with the presence of other degree elements such as *muy* ‘very’, *demasiado* ‘too’, *bastante* ‘quite’ and *suficiente* ‘enough’:

\[ (110) \] *¡Qué muy/demasiado/ bastante/ suficiente alto que es Paul!*

How very/too/quite/enough tall Paul is

My proposal differs from Zanuttini and Portner’s (2003) on two ideas: what is presupposed and how the scalar implicature is ordered. They claim that what is presupposed is a proposition that is at the extreme of a set of propositions created by a pragmatic process of *widening*. They assume that *wh*-phrases are quantifiers and therefore they have domains of quantification. These domains can be represented as an index to the *wh*-word \((C)\) and their value is a subset of the domain of discourse \(U\).

\[ (111) \] Whatc things he eats!

Zanuttini and Portner base their analysis of exclamatives on the semantic analysis of interrogatives. They propose that exclamatives such as the one above have two domains of quantification: the first one would be the set of individuals denoted by the *wh*-clause in a standard situation; the second one would be a larger domain containing not only the expected individuals, but also unusual ones. The presence of a factive operator makes the non-standard alternatives in the quantificational domain be
presupposed. This widening is the hallmark of exclamatives, that which makes them different from the clause type which they resemble the most, the interrogatives. That is why widening is interpreted as their sentential force. By assumption, the assignment $g$ yields the (narrower) domain $D_1$, and the assignment $g'$ yields the (larger) domain $D_2$: 

$$(112)$$

$$[[S]]D_1 = \{\text{eats (he, poblanos), eats (he, serranos), eats (he, jalapenos)}\}$$

$$[[S]]D_2 = \{\text{eats (he, poblanos), eats (he, serranos), eats (he, jalapenos), eats (he, gueros), eats (he, habaneros)}\}$$

The alternatives in these sets are ordered from more standard to less standard (the criterion in the preceding example is the fact that some peppers are hotter than others). In Zanuttini and Portner’s proposal, ‘widening’ is the formal correlate of unexpectedness, extreme degree or expression of strong feelings that have been employed in the literature. Specifically, ‘widening’ is the formalization of what the authors call a scalar implicature. When someone utters an exclamative, the proposition it denotes lies at the extreme end of a contextually given scale. They claim that there is an ordering in the quantificational domain, represented by $<$. As a consequence, every item entails the one to its left:
(113) \{eats (he, poblanos) ≺ eats (he, serranos) ≺ eats (he, jalapenos) ≺ eats (he, gueros) ≺ eats (he, habaneros)\}

By contrast, I claim that exclamatives involve propositions about what is expected and what is known (facts). In my proposal, the high degree relies on the speaker’s expectations, that is, the degree in the world of evaluation has to be higher than the degree expected. How high the degree has to be in order to trigger the emotional attitude depends on the lexical semantics of the predicate that embeds the EXC as well as on the speaker’s expectations. For instance, the gap between the expected degree and the real degree has to be higher if the predicate is *It is amazing* than if it is *It is surprising*. The surprise predicates denote different scalar implicature depending on their lexical semantics. The scalar implicature under my proposal is ordered from less expected to more expected, instead of from more standard to less standard, as Zanuttini & Portner propose.

Gutiérrez-Rexach (1996) claims that interrogatives and exclamatives have basically the same denotation, but they differ on the sentential force. The exclamatory force in the case of the exclamatives comes from the presence of an illocutionary operator exclamative of type \(\langle i, s, \langle\langle s, t\rangle, t\rangle\rangle\). Exclamative is not a mere truth-functional operator (such as negation), but an operator on propositions. The definition of exclamative is as follows:
Let $a$ be the speaker, $w$ a world (typically the actual world), $p$ a proposition, and $P \in \text{EMOT}$ (the set of emotive properties). Then

$$\text{EXC} = \text{df} \lambda ai \lambda ws \lambda p<s,t> \exists P <s,<<s,t>, <e,t>>>[P(w)(p)(a)]$$

If the speaker $a$ in a situation $w$ utters an expression whose denotation is the proposition $p$, then exclamative $(a)(w)(p)$ will hold iff there is a relation $P$ such that $P$ is in the set EMOT, and $p$ and the speaker are in $P$.

Gutiérrez-Rexach (1996) assumes that emotive predicates can embed several classes of complements and the resulting construction does not satisfy the conditions for being an exclamative sentence. For instance, an emotive predicate embeds a multiple question:

(115) It amazes Bill which students are reading which books.

This sentence above cannot be interpreted as an exclamative since the speaker who utters it does not hold any emotive attitude towards the propositional content of her assertion. She is just asserting that the emotive relation of amazement holds between Bill and the proposition denoted by the embedded interrogative:

(116) $\text{Amaze } (w) (\lambda w'[\lambda x \lambda y [\text{student}(x) \land \text{Book}(y) \land \text{Read}(w')(y)(x)])(\text{Bill})$
Gutiérrez-Rexach (1996) proposes three different denotations for a case like (117). (117c) corresponds to the exclamative reading and its denotation contains the denotation of (117b), which corresponds to the interrogative reading. The additional material that (117c) possesses is the operator over the exclamative proposition and the arguments that it needs to yield a truth value, namely a speaker, a circumstance and a position. This representation is a conjunction of two propositions. The first one says that Bill found out how rich his parents are, and the second one states the speaker’s attitude toward the fact that his parents are so rich:

\[(117) \text{ Bill found out how rich my parents are!} \]

\[(117a) \text{ EXC(a)(w)(Find out(w)(\lambda w'[id[rich(w)(my parents; d)] = id[rich(w')(my parents; d)])](Bill))} \]

\[(117b) \text{ (Find out(w)(EXC(a)(w)(\lambda w'[id[rich(w)(myparents; d)] = id[rich(w')(my parents; d)])](Bill))} \]

\[(117c) \text{ Find out(w)(\lambda w'[id[rich(w)(my parents; d)] = id[rich(w')(my parents; d)])](Bill)^E} \]

In the case of a matrix exclamative, such as (118), the speaker expresses her attitude toward the fact that John is \(d\)-tall, and the degree of John’s tallness is greater than any other degree in the scale of tallness given her expectations. Gutiérrez-Rexach
(1996) assumes that there is a scalar implicature in which the degrees establish an ordering relation based on the speaker’s expectations:

(118) How tall John is!

I do not hold that the semantic denotation of the exclamative has to be based on the semantics of the interrogatives. It has been claimed that the denotation of interrogatives is a function that maps a world to the proposition constituting the exhaustive answer in that world. For instance, a question such as the following one denotes a set of propositions (the set of true answers, according to Kartunen (1977), or the set of all possible answers, including the negative ones, according to Groenendijk and Stokhof (1985)) that contain the value of a variable represented by the wh-word:

(119) Who came to the party?

(120) Bill and Jane came to the party and nobody else

I contend that the denotation of an exclamative is the set of two presupposed propositions: one that represents the speaker’s expectations about the value of the wh-word whereas the other proposition represents the actual world. However in both cases the value of the wh-word has been instantiated. For instance, the speaker attributes the value of 5 ft. tall to Juan’s height, and he believes that this is a true proposition. However, the value of tallness in the actual world is higher, i.e. 6 ft.
More precisely, interrogatives denote possible worlds, and exclamatives denote actual worlds.

Sharvit (2002) claims that surprise when embed questions has a weakly exhaustive semantics. For instance, in scenario (33), repeated here as (121): if we ask John, “Did you expect these students to leave?”, pointing to Mary and Sally, he will say, “No.” If we point to Mary, Sally and Bill –the set of actual students – and ask John which of these individuals he did not expect to leave, he will say, “This one and that one,” pointing to Mary and Sally.

(121) Student Mary and student Sally left. Student Bill did not leave. John knows that Mary and Sally are students and he is surprised that they left. He is not surprised that Bill did not leave, because he did not expect him to leave.

This is further confirmed by the oddity of (122):

(122) # It did not REALLY surprise John which students left, because, for example, it did not surprise him that Bill DID NOT leave, and Bill is a student.

2.8. The problem of embedability by factive predicates

There are two main streams about this question of embedability. Some authors (Lahiri, 1991; D’Avis, 2002; Abels, 2005) argue that wh-clauses embedded in
emotive factives are to be treated as *wh*-interrogatives, and others (Grimshaw, 1979; Elliot, 1974; Zanuttini & Portner, 2003) claim that only emotive predicates can embed exclamatives.

Let me start with the first proposals. Lahiri (1991) points out that *wh*-clauses embedded in predicates of surprise need not be interpreted as EXCs. However, he only mentions those *wh*-clauses that cannot be matrix exclamatives, such as *It is surprising who came to the party*. D’Avis (2002) and Abels (2003) claim that the exclamative reading that emerges is the result of embedding a *wh*-interrogative clause in an exclamative/surprise predicate. The denotation of a sentence like ‘It’s amazing how tall Pau is’ is the denotation of answer1 and answer2: answer1 is the set of worlds that make the sentence *Pau is d-tall* true. And answer2 is the set of worlds where the set corresponding to answer1 to the *wh*-clause is the same as in the actual world.

On the other hand, although Elliott (1974) and Grimshaw (1979) noted that emotive predicates are the only predicates that can embed EXCs, they also pointed out that this type of predicate is not felicitous with all *wh*-complements. Their conclusion was that these predicates do not embed interrogatives but exclamatives, since the truth value of the complement is already known. According to them, there are *wh*-words such as *whether* which can only be interrogatives, and therefore cannot be embedded by emotive predicates.
I agree it’s amazing what sounds they can make.

It’s amazing which team won the Champions League.

It’s amazing that Valencia won the Champions League.

#It is amazing whether Real won the Champions League.

#I’m surprised (at) whether he was found guilty.

In a similar vein, Zanuttini and Portner (2003) hold that exclamatives, which have the same denotation as interrogatives, can be embedded by factive predicates because exclamatives themselves are factive.

Ginzburg and Sag (2001) propose something new. They claim that any type of sentence (declarative, interrogative or exclamative) embedded by a factive predicate denotes a fact, and the fact is taken to be true. According to them, an interrogative contributes different information when it is embedded in question-embedding predicates rather than when it is embedded in factive predicates. He uses different kinds of tests to prove this claim:

(Substituitivity) a. Jean asked an interesting question

The question was who left yesterday

Hence, Jean asked who left yesterday

b. Jean discovered an interesting question
The question was who left yesterday

It does not follow that Jean discovered who left yesterday

(Existential Generalization) a. Jean asked who left yesterday

Hence, there is a question that Jean asked yesterday

Which question?

The question was who left yesterday

b. Jean discovered who left yesterday

It does not follow that there is a question that Jean discovered

(no assertorical use) I’m going to make the following claim: ≠who left this building.

With regard to declaratives, Ginzburg and Sag (2001) claim that declaratives may denote propositions or facts depending on the predicate that embeds them. The inferences are different when a declarative is embedded by a factive predicate compared to when it is embedded by a propositional predicate. Propositional predicates impose appropriate conditions on their argument such that truth and falsity can be predicted from them. In contrast when factive predicates embed a declarative, there is a predication of a fact whose associated proposition is taken to be true:
(128) Jean believed a certain hypothesis
Hence, Jean believed that that hypothesis is true

(129) The Fed’s forecast was that gold reserves will be depleted by the year 2000
(The Fed’s forecast is true)
It does not follow that Brendan discovered that gold reserves will be depleted by the year 2000.

Ginzburg and Sag (2001) conclude that the inferential behavior of EXCs resembles that of interrogatives and declaratives when they are embedded in factive predicates:

(130) Merle is struck by how incredibly well Bo did in the election-EXC
Hence, Merle is struck by a fact, a fact that demonstrates that Bo did very well in the elections

(131) Jean is aware of/ reported/ revealed an alarming fact
The fact is that Brendan has been working hard to destroy the company
Hence, Jean is aware/ reported/ revealed that Brendan has been working hard to destroy the company
Following Ginzburg and Sag (2001), I conclude that factive predicates embed exclamatives because they denote a fact, that is, they denote an actual fact that exemplifies a true proposition which contradicts a previous presupposed proposition, as I have claimed in section 2.4.1. and 2.5. Despite the fact that a root EXC constitutes an exclamatory speech act, and a subordinate exclamative embedded by a verb like be surprised is an assertion of the speaker’s attitude toward the embedded proposition (a true fact), they differ only in the fact that in the former the surprise predicate is null (Gutiérrez-Rexach, 2008) whereas in the latter it is elicited. Contrary to what Rett (2009) and Caponigro (2004) assert, I conclude that embedded exclamatives have the same denotation as root EXCs. As we can see in the following examples the complement of the verb surprise denotes the truth of the fact that the apartment has a price, and that this price was unexpectedly high or low, a fact that triggers the emotive attitude of surprise. This is the same interpretation that we derive from the root exclamative. More precisely, in both constructions there is a predication about a fact that is taken to be true and through which the speaker expresses an emotive attitude:

(134) Me sorprendió qué precio tenía ese piso

Me-DAT surprised that price had that apartment

‘It surprised me the price of that apartment’

(135) Me sorprendió el precio de ese piso

Me-DAT surprised the price of that apartment
We conclude from this section that (i) Factivity is a property of its predicates; and
(ii) factive/emotive predicates can embed exclamatives because they always select
facts, and (iii) The denotation of matrix and embedded exclamative is the same.

2.8.1. Cross-linguistic variation in embedding exclamatives

In cases where languages like English have embedded *w*/*h*-exclamatives, Spanish
has DP-exclamatives:

(137) It is amazing how tall that boy is
(138) It is amazing what kind of things he says
(139) It is amazing what he has done
(140) Es increíble/sorprendente lo alto que es Juan
   ‘It is incredible/amazing how tall Juan is’
(141) Es increíble/sorprendente lo/las cosas que ha hecho Juan
   ‘It is incredible/amazing what kind of things he says’

According to Gutiérrez-Rexach (1999) *lo* is a function that takes as input a lexical
item and returns the maximal set of degrees with respect to this input:
(142) Lo hermosa que era la novela
‘What a wonderful novel!’

(143) [hermosa…x…DP] \rightarrow \text{MAX}(\lambda d(\lambda x.\text{Beautiful}_f_{m.sg} (d)(x)(\text{The}(\text{Novel}')))) = M
A X(\lambda d(\text{Beautiful}_f_{m.sg}’(d)(ix[\text{Novel}’(x)])))

In other words, degree relatives denote a maximal degree such that an individual has a property to his maximal degree. Thus, they do not denote a proposition, but an individual.

On the other hand, interestingly, in Spanish only when the exclamative is introduced by ‘que + adj/noun’ is it not easily introduced by factive verbs. Contrary to the case with the rest of wh- words:

(144) ?Es increíble qué cosas dice Juan
‘It is incredible what kinds of things Juan says’

(145) ??Es increíble qué alto que es Juan
‘It is incredible how tall Juan is’

(146) Es increíble cuánto/cómo/dónde trabaja Juan
‘It is incredible how much/how/ where Juan works’
In Spanish, and also in Catalan (Castroviejo, 2006), *que*+Adj/Noun sound more natural if they are introduced by perception verbs in the imperative mood, in yes-no interrogatives and in future tense:

(147a) ¡Mira qué alto es Pablo!
‘Look how tall Pablo is!’

(147b) Mira que alt que es en Pablo!

(148a) ¿Has visto qué alto es el chico que monta en bici?
‘Have you seen how tall the boy on the bicycle is?’

(148b) Has vist quin noi tan alt que va amb bici?

(149a) ¡Ya verás que cambio tan grande ha dado!
‘You will see he has changed a lot!’

(149b) Ja veurà quin canvi tan gran ha fet

When EXCs are embedded by these predicates, the speaker wants to involve the addressee in the experience of holding an attitude towards a degree. In other words, the speaker invites the addressee to be in a position to perceive the actual fact (that is, the situation that exemplifies a proposition that is taken to be true) that triggers the EXC. According to Gutiérrez-Rexach (2008), the [+exclamative] feature is an optional interpretable feature. Only verbs in the subjunctive (*vaya, venga*) or the imperative may encode the [force] feature. The encoding of this optional feature is a lexical property and is subject to cross-linguistic variation.
Castroviejo (2006) claims that, whereas in English (and Spanish) \textit{wh}-EXCs can be embedded by factive predicates, this is not the case in Catalan:

(150) \textit{Es increïble que alt que ets}  
‘It’s amazing how tall you are’

(151) *\textit{No em puc creure quina feina tan meravellosa que heu fet a Nepal}  
‘I cannot believe what a wonderful job you did in Nepal’

According to Castroviejo (2006), there are only two kinds of embedded exclamatives: one is by means of a DP, and the other one by the \textit{wh}-word \textit{com}. However, she claims that both kinds constitute degree relatives construed as concealed propositions, and that they do not have the same semantics as the \textit{wh}-exclamatives:

(152) \textit{Es increïble lu alt que ets}  
‘It is incredible how tall you are’

(153) \textit{Es increïble como ets d’alt}  
‘It is incredible how tall you are’

She holds that degree relatives do not have the semantic denotation \textit{wh}-exclamatives because degree relatives denote propositions, and \textit{wh}-exclamatives denote an individual. She finds evidence of this in the fact that a \textit{wh}-phrase that
behaves as an embedded EXC is selected by a preposition that selects for individuals too. And when it embeds a *that*-clause, it needs to include the *fact* (an NP):

(154a) Despite what we did, how (very) stupid we were, I know we do good work
(154b) Despite my mistake we won
(154c) Despite *(the fact) that I committed a mistake, we won

Contrary to Elliot (1974) and Castroviejo (2006), I do not hold the view that free-relative exclamative are concealed propositions, since the exclamative (155) cannot be paraphrased as (156). Following Gutiérrez-Rexach (1999), I claim that these types of sentences do denote a high degree reading, since they are embedded by a surprise predicate. By uttering (155) the speaker is expressing that the degree of height is higher than expected, that is why we can paraphrase the EXC above as (157):

(155) Es increíble lo alto que es Juan
‘It is incredible how tall Juan is’
(156) Es increíble qué Juan sea alto
‘It is incredible that Juan is tall’
(157) Es increíble el hecho de que Juan sea alto en un grado superior a las expectativas del hablante
‘It is incredible the fact that Juan is tall to such a high degree above the speaker’s expectations’
Castroviejo (2006) concludes that *wh*-exclamatives cannot embed in emotive factives in Catalan because emotive predicates select facts whose content is a true proposition, and *wh*-exclamatives always denote an individual (a degree). However, she does not explain why factive predicates can embed the following *wh*-exclamatives that clearly denote a high degree:

(158) ¡Es increíble cuánto bebe Juan!
(159) ¡Es increíble cómo habla Juan!
(160) ¡Es increíble qué bien habla Juan!

I claim that the only case that cannot be embedded by a factive predicate in Spanish, such as (161)-(163) is due to the syntactic properties of these exclamatives:

(161) ?Es increíble qué alto es Pepe
(162) ??Me sorprende qué listo es Pepe
(163) ?? Es alucinante qué tonto es Pepe

As Gutiérrez-Rexach (2001) points out, the degree feature has to be checked in ForceP. If the adjective does not raise to this position, we cannot get the degree reading, as we can observe in the contrast between (164) and (165):

(164) ¡Vaya pobre que es Juan!
Go-SUBJ por that is Juan

‘How poor Juan is!’

(165) ¡Vaya que va a ser pobre Juan!

Go-SUBJ that is going to be poor Juan

‘Like Juan is poor!’

Gutiérrez-Rexach proposes two syntactic operations to explain, on the one hand, wh-exclamatives, and on the other the rest of exclamatives: For the latter, he proposes a move+merge operation: the Adj/Adv/Det moves from IP to TopicP and from TopP to FocusP, then it merges to ForceP. For wh-exclamatives, he proposes a more complex operation, that is, a move+move operation: The wh-word and the adjective move from IP to TopP, from TopP to FocusP, and from the SpecFocus it moves to ForceP:

(166) [Force qué [Focus [t; altos] [Topic que son tj]]]

I claim that with regard to the embedded exclamatives, Force can only be fulfilled by an operator that conveys the propositional attitude of the speaker toward the propositional content elicited by the exclamative, since the adjective cannot move to Force, the degree reading is not possible, and that is why wh-exclamatives like (161)-(163) lead to ungrammatical sentences.
2.9. Conclusions

I have proven that exclamatives denote facts, a semantic object that make the denotation of exclamatives different from the denotation of other sentence types such as interrogatives and imperatives, and explained why they can be embedded by factive predicates.

I have proposed that if we widen the concept of exclamatives and conceive them as surprise constructions, we can not only explain more types of exclamatives (degree and non-degree exclamatives) but also explain the felicitous and infelicitous contexts where presupposition and accommodation play a key role. Furthermore, this idea of treating exclamatives as a relation between the presuppositions of two contradictory propositions and an individual license us to go back again to the idea of exclamatives as sets of propositions without resorting to the semantics of interrogatives.

Finally, I have shown that the behavior of exclamatives in regard with negation and NPIs is not as homogeneous as it might seem.
Chapter 3: Rhetorical Questions

3.1. Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to characterize the basic properties of rhetorical questions. To this end, in section 1 I will discuss some of the definitions that have been provided for this type of sentence. In section 2 I explain the semantic/pragmatics and syntactic properties that have been treated as the hallmark of rhetorical questions. In section 3 I develop the idea of the key role that background information plays in the interpretation of this type of sentence. In section 4 I study the inference process carried out by the addressee to grasp the rhetorical interpretation and what the factors that intervene are when the rhetorical interpretation fails.

3.2. Multiple Definitions

There are several attempts to define what a rhetorical question is, but all of them seem to agree on the idea that a rhetorical question is a non-seeking information question. In this section I offer a review of the explanations that have been proposed.
3.3. A rhetorical question is an assertion

3.3.1 Han (2002)

Han (2002) claims that a rhetorical question has the illocutionary force of a strong assertion of opposite polarity from what is apparently asked. A rhetorical positive question has the illocutionary force of a negative assertion and a rhetorical negative question has the illocutionary force of a positive assertion. For example:

(1) Did I tell you that writing a dissertation was easy?

(2) Did not I tell you that writing a dissertation was easy?

Under the rhetorical reading these questions assert that: I did not tell you that writing a dissertation was easy (1) and I told you that writing a dissertation was easy (2).

Previously Sadock (1971) provides tests to show that rhetorical yes-no questions are formally assertions and that they are formally different from information seeking ordinary yes-no questions. Sadock’s test yields the same result for rhetorical wh-questions.

“After all”: this introductory item can occur with rhetorical wh-questions, but it cannot occur with ordinary questions:
(3) After all, who helped Mary?

“Yet”: The following question is only felicitous if it is interpreted as a rhetorical question:

(4) Who helped Mary? Yet, she managed everything by herself

“By any chance” can occur with ordinary \textit{wh}-questions, but it cannot occur with rhetorical \textit{wh}-questions. The following question can only be interpreted as an ordinary question:

(5) Who helped Mary, by any chance?

When rhetorical \textit{wh}-questions are used as parenthetical, they can be in the form of a nonrestrictive relative clause:

(6) Symbolic logic, which who cares about anyway, is awfully tough

Sadock (1971) argues that rhetorical \textit{yes-no} questions are semantically similar to tag questions with falling intonation and proposes that both types of questions share similar D-structures:

(7) a. Syntax isn’t easy, is it?
b. Is syntax easy?

(8) a. [S [S Speaker-declare-Syntax isn’t easy][S Speaker-ask-Is syntax easy]] (tag question)

b. [S [S Speaker-ask-Is syntax easy][S Speaker-declare-Syntax isn’t easy]] (rhetorical question)

The polarity of the tag question corresponds to the polarity of the corresponding rhetorical question. Sadock proposes that the D-structure of a tag question is a conjunction of an assertive and interrogative clause in that order. And the D-structure of the corresponding rhetorical question is a conjunction of an interrogative clause and assertive clause in that order. In order to derive the correct surface string, Sadock claims that at S-structure, part of the second conjunct of a tag question, but in the case of a Rhetorical question the second conjunction has to undergo deletion.

However, according to Han (2002), there is a problem with this approach: if the D-structures of both tag questions and rhetorical questions are conjunctions of an assertive and an interrogative clause and the only difference is the ordering of the conjuncts, the asymmetry in the deletion of the second conjunct is puzzling. Sadock would also have to explain how a strong NPI can be licensed by the negation in the second conjunct where the strong NPI is licensed because it is in the c-command domain of negation; however the NPI is also licensed in the first conjunct where there is no negation. We can see this in the following case:
(9) Does John give a damn about syntax?

[Speaker-ask-Does John give a damn about syntax] + [Speaker-declare-John does not give a damn about syntax]

Even if we accept that NPI licensing in Rhetorical Questions is a special case, the prediction is that tag questions that have a negative tag should be able to license an NPI in the body as well. But this prediction is not borne out. If tag questions and rhetorical questions have similar D-structures and similar semantics, it remains unexplained why there should be this asymmetry in NPI licensing:

(10) *John gives a damn about syntax, does not he?

Han (2002) argues that RQs are assertions of opposite polarity. Han assumes that yes-no questions have a covert wh-word that corresponds to whether in [Spec,CP] just like ordinary wh-words in wh-questions. In ordinary yes-no questions, whether is a variable ranging over negative (the bottom element in the Boolean algebra) and positive polarity (the top element in the Boolean algebra). In the case of rhetorical questions, according to the author, the two algebras collapse to the bottom element, and so whether denotes the negative polarity. The reason why the two algebra structure collapses to the bottom is motivated by the pragmatic principle of informativeness which establishes that the negative answer is more informative than the positive in terms of the speaker’s expectations. Han claims that this pragmatic
principle interacts with the output of LF of rhetorical questions, driving them to undergo a post-LF derivation, forcing the covert ‘whether’ to map onto negative polarity. This negative polarity is isomorphic to the negation that takes scope over the entire sentence.

In a positive rhetorical yes-no question, the covert ‘whether’ maps onto negative polarity at post LF level, and so the question is interpreted as a negative assertion:

(11) Did I tell you that writing a dissertation was easy?
Op [Did I tell you that writing a dissertation was easy]
~ [I told you that writing a dissertation was easy]

In the case of a negative yes-no question, two negations cancel each other out, and the question is finally interpreted as a positive assertion:

(12) Did not I tell you that writing a dissertation was easy?
~ [~ (I told you that writing a dissertation was easy)]

The author proposes that in rhetorical wh-questions, the Boolean algebra collapses to the bottom element, motivated again by the pragmatic principle of quantity which claims that if a shorter answer is enough to be informative, then the speaker prefers the shorter answer. As a consequence, the wh-phrase ends up denoting the bottom element which is isomorphic to a negative quantifier. The LF output of a rhetorical
wh-question interacts with the pragmatics, and undergoes a post-LF derivation where the wh-phrase maps onto a negative quantifier, that takes scope over the entire sentence. In the following example, the wh-phrase is mapped onto a negative quantifier. And so the question is interpreted as a negative assertion:

(13) What has John done for you?
~∃x [John has done x for you]

In the case of negative wh-rhetorical question, the two negations cancel each other out and the question is interpreted as a positive assertion:

(14) What hasn’t John done for you?
~∃x [~John has done x for you]

So the conclusion is that in rhetorical yes-no questions, the value of the polarity operator is determined; and in wh-questions, what is determined is the value of the wh-phrase. Since the gap is filled, rhetorical questions are not questions anymore. Rather, they are assertions.

3.3.2 Gutiérrez-Rexach (1998)

Gutiérrez-Rexach (1998), following Sperber & Wilson’s (1986) Relevance Theory, claims that when a speaker s utters a question, s is asking the addressee to
provide some information that s estimates to be relevant (Sperber and Wilson, 1986). In answering the question, the addressee fills a gap in the speaker's knowledge or information state. Interrogative statements involve a bi-directional interaction between a speaker and a hearer/addressee. However a rhetorical question cannot be interpreted as a request for information on the part of the addressee but rather as an assertion. In Rhetorical questions, the speaker already knows the answer to the question but calls the hearer’s attention to a thought or proposition that is being expressed by the question. More specifically, the relevant thought is already in the knowledge base or information state of the speaker and the rhetorical question makes this fact apparent to the hearer. For instance, in a situation in which A is telling B that he has a tight schedule and will not be able to finish the assigned task during the next month, B knows that A has reservations for a one week vacation in the Bahamas in fifteen days. Then, B utters the following question, which represents the proposition *You are going to the Bahamas:*

(15) Aren’t you going to the Bahamas?

This question is relevant to A because she is not aware that the speaker knows her vacation plans, so the excuses for not completing the assigned task on time do not sound truthful. Rhetorical questions are similar in their form to Confirmation Questions; however they differ in the direction of relevance: In confirmation questions, the represented thought or proposition is relevant to the speaker. She wants
to confirm whether an assumption in her knowledge base is true or not. In contrast, rhetorical questions represent propositions as desirable for the hearer. The represented thought or proposition is held as a presupposition in the information state of the speaker. For instance, in the following negative confirmation question, the speaker is assuming that Fred is coming to dinner but wants confirmation of this fact from the addressee, who presumably has more information on the matter:

(16) Isn’t Fred coming to dinner?

The question above would be felicitous as a rhetorical question in a situation in which the speaker knows that Fred is coming to dinner but wants to make the fact relevant to the hearer. Therefore, according to Gutiérrez-Rexach (1997), if a question is rhetorical then its answer set is empty.

However Rhode (2006) claims that these accounts that describe rhetorical questions as assertions with a single negative null answer can not explain non-negative RQs like (17) and either non-null RQs like (18) which highlights a salient individual from the answer set, namely ‘mom’. These types of RQs are normally relegated to footnotes under these mentioned accounts.

(17) a. A: Is Clinton a liberal?

b. B: Is the Pope Catholic?
(18) Who has fed you and given you a proper education?

Context: a mother to her son (Han 1998, footnote 4, p.9)

3.4 A rhetorical question is a question with just one possible answer

3.4.1 The answer is obvious.

Illie (1994) characterizes RQs as a question used as a challenging statement to convey the addresser’s commitment to its implicit answer, so as to induce the addressee’s mental recognition of its obviousness and the acceptance (verbalized and non-verbalized) of its validity. Illie (1994) distinguishes RQs, which aim to elicit only mental responses; the mental response is implicit, obligatory, and intended by the addresser to be inferable (not necessarily already known) by the addressee, whether or not the latter produces any overt response. Illie (1994) points out to the multiple functions for RQs such as challenging, warning, promising, etc. with the main discursive functions being to ‘induce, reinforce, or alter assumptions, beliefs, or ideas, in the addressee’s mind.

In the same vein, Schaffer (2005) states that RQs can be used as a quick, often witty, and sometimes sharp-edged verbal reply that usually repeats the preceding question’s form and also requires a matching answer to convey its specific implicatures about the answer. According to her, RQ-as-retort is itself used as an answer to the preceding question. They can be used as answers to genuine questions since they are pseudo-statements. For example, the second question in (18) is intended to provide the answer to the first question as well as emphasize that answer’s
obviousness through a specific chain of conversational implicatures. In other words, the answer to question #2, which must be easily inferred by the hearer, will also be unavoidably understood to function as the answer to question #1, even though the focus or topic of the RQ may be different from that of the prompting question:

   (19) A: Does Ed McMahon drink?
   B: Is the Pope Catholic?

   As Lee-Goldman (2006) points out this is another case of RQs without a negative answer, since in the example above the rhetorical question in B does not assert ‘The Pope is not catholic’.

3.4.2. Wrong-opinion rhetorical questions. Lee-Goldman (2006) proposes a new type of rhetorical question that expresses a refutation to a previous claim. For instance, in a situation in which someone has claimed You can certainly lift that suitcase on your own, because it is very light. The speaker wishes to refute this claim by communicating, You have obviously misjudged the weight of this suitcase. It is too heavy for me to lift it but she utters the following ‘wrong-opinion’ question:

   (20) How light do you think the suitcase is?
According to Lee-Goldman (2006), in the situation described above there is a claim, ‘X has a value of degree don a scale, below some limit, such that X is able to participate in some event.’ The speaker wishes to say that X has value of degree d’such that d’ > limit > d. The speaker uses the wrong-opinion rhetorical question, using the negatively-biasedadjective: How lightdo youthink it is? For the opposite case (d’ < limit < d), the positively-biasedadjective heavyis used.

This analysis can be extended to cases like (21):

(21) What do think they store in there?

The situation for (21) is as follows: Someone has requested the speaker to enter a storage room to do some task. However, she knows that several dangerous items are stored in the room, and knows that her interlocutor ought to as well. She thus objects to the request made of her. In this case, the wh-element denotes a (power) set of (a set of) entities, ordered in a scale of “dangerous things”. In this situation, the speaker must be assuming that the addressee knows what is inside the storage room. The speaker’s response to the request to enter the room is dispreffered, as the addressee can tell by (i) the intonation of the response, and (ii) the unexpected form of the response (i.e., a request for information that is not necessarily dependent on fulfillment of the request). The addressee then considers the (obvious) answer (whatever it might be), then she reasons that if the speaker is refusing the request, there must be a reason related to her utterance. She further reasons that her conception
of the nature of the items being stored is being called into question, and that the speaker wants her to revise that conception. She is then forced to concede the point or defend her position. On the other hand, the speaker, whose face is being threatened by the oncoming request, wishes to not lose face further with a rejection, and so creates a complex formulation of a refusal (more words = more polite). Furthermore this refusal is a power-taking move, because it forces the interlocutor into a position where she must either concede or defend her position.

A similar, though more extreme, instance of power-taking is presented in (22) as follows: something a royal advisor says to a prince after he was seen cavorting with commoners. By uttering (21) the speaker (i) criticizes or blames the subject of the main verb, and (ii) expresses disbelief at their wrongly-held opinion:

(22) Who do you think you are, my father?

3.5. A rhetorical question can have multiple answers

The analysis proposed by Caponigro and Sprouse (2007) differs from the previous ones with respect to the semantics of RQs. For them RQs are semantically the same as ordinary questions, in the sense that RQs allow for answers, and the range of their answers is the same as ordinary questions. Thus they can be interpreted as seeking information questions. For example:
(23) Speaker: You should stop saying Luca did not like the party last night. After all, who was the only one that was still dancing at 3 am?
Addressee or Speaker: Luca

The following situation proves that statements do not allow for an answer, regardless of whether it comes from the speaker or the addressee, in contrast to what happened in the previous situation:

(24) Speaker: You should stop saying Luca did not like the party last night. After all, Luca was the only one that was still dancing at 3 am!
Addressee or Speaker: #Luca

They claim that under the approach to RQs according to which these constructions are analyzed as questions whose answer set is empty, one would expect that the only answers that are possible with RQs are negative answers. This prediction is not borne out. There are situations in which RQs can only receive a positive answer. The negative answer would sound awkward:

(25) Situation: Mina helped Luca when he was in trouble and both the Speaker and the Addressee are aware of that. Now Luca adores Mina for helping him.
Speaker: It’s understandable that Luca adores Mina. After all, who helped him when he was in trouble?
In the same vein as Rohde (2006), Caponigro and Sprouse claim that there are RQs that can never receive a negative answer, no matter what the situation is. A negative answer to the following RQ would be non-sentential since it is the case that everybody has a biological mother:

(26) Speaker: You should always help your mom if she needs your help. After all, who gave birth to you?
Addressee or Speaker: Her/ my mom/ your mom/ #Nobody

To summarize, it seems that there is an agreement in recognizing that a RQ does not seek for information because its answer is present in the background of the conversation. It can be known by the speaker and the addressee or it can be easy to infer by the hearer. Therefore RQs can be understood as a question with an obvious answer. However many authors seem to agree with the idea that this answer might not be a negative one.

3.6. Characterizing Rhetorical Questions

The phenomenon of Rhetorical questions and of Standard questions as well, involves a bi-directional interaction between a speaker and a hearer/addressee. The consideration of this interaction is crucial for the study of the semantics and
pragmatics of questions in general. Rhetorical questions represent a challenge for a purely semantic account, since how a question is uttered with a particular intonation or the knowledge shared between the interlocutors may transform an ordinary question into a rhetorical one. In other words, a semantic-pragmatic interface approach as well as a syntactic analysis is required to analyze these constructions.

3.6.1. Pragmatic characteristics

3.6.1.1 Argumentative and discursive functions

According to Burguera (2009), RQs play an important role in discursive and textual organization, since it is normally used to carry out discursive operations related to discursive progression, topic change or argumentative closing. RQs have a metadiscursive value therefore they help to distribute the content of the text. By uttering a RQ, the speaker adds to the discourse indirect propositional content which allows her to defend or refute the thesis she indirectly asserts. Under Burguera’s view, RQs are not only the support of an argument or point of view; rather they constitute a mechanism that helps the speaker to organize the structure of her discourse.

Burguera (2009) argues that RQs have four metadiscursive roles: (i) they can be used to close an argumentative sequence (27); (ii) they can be used to open an argumentative sequence (28); (iii) they can be used as a mechanism of discursive progress, and (iv) they can be used as a parenthetical segment (29):
(27) Cúmplase la legalidad internacional- podría seguir pero tengo que ir acabando- sea Marruecos o cualquier otro Estado, porque qué futuro creen que tendría una autonomía saharaui en un Marruecos fuertemente centralizado y con graves carencias en derechos humanos? Desde luego, nada halagüeño.

‘Ensure that the international law is upheld-I could keep talking but I am finishing-either Morocco or any other nation, because what kind of future do you think a Saharan region will have in a strongly centralized Morocco and with a serious lack of human rights? Of course, not a promising one’

(28) Gracias, señora presidenta. Señorías, señores del Grupo de Convergencia i Unió, señor Carles Campuzano, ¿cómo no vamos nosotros a apoyar esta proposición de ley si le teníamos que cobrar copyright?

‘Thank you, president, members of this house, members of Convergencia i Unió. Mr. Carles Campuzano, how are we not going to support this bill draft, if we have to charge copyrights?’

(29) Recuerde usted, mire las cifras del año 1993, en el que tuvo lugar una recesión económica dura-¿quién puede garantizar que no llegue otra? Ojala que no llegue- hizo que los ingresos del Estado se redujeran en un billón (…)

‘Remember, look back at the figures from 1993, when a big recession occurred- who can guarantee we do not get another one? Let’s hope we do not- it made the government revenues reduce by a billion (…)’
Although, generally speaking, RQs are considered to start from an *a priori* agreement that helps to synchronize the knowledge interlocutors shared by, in political debates where the agreement among interlocutors is almost impossible to achieve, RQs are used to block any possible refutation by the addressee, since the speaker’s communicative goal is to discredit her interlocutor. Therefore they are used to impose the point of view of the speaker. In this type of discourse, RQs do not constitute the final segment of the discourse but the final segment of a sequence. On the other hand, RQs can be used as textual or sequence opening, but do not introduce so much a new topic as a new point of view:

(30) Señor presidente, señorías, si la constitución Española establece en su artículo 141 no discriminación por razón de sexo, que mayor discriminación hay que la que no permite vivir a una persona con el sexo que siente?
‘President, members of this house, if the Spanish constitution establishes in the 141st amendment that there will be no sex discrimination, what bigger discrimination could exist than the one that does not allow a person to live with the person of whichever gender that sex that she wants?’

RQs can also be used as a rephrasing strategy which allows the speaker to repeat previous information this time using this time an utterance with interrogative force. However, Burguera (2009) claims that RQs can also link old information with new
information and work as additive discourse markers by adding and organizing positive or negative aspects that help the speaker lay down her arguments.

According to Burguera (2009) RQs can also work as a discursive mechanism that allows the speaker to temporally stop the argumentative process and introduce a brief comment that introduces relevant information to the discourse:

(31) Por idénticas razones, combatiré toda forma de xenofobia que pretenda encontrar amparo en sucesos recientes- ¿es que no han muerto con los de nuestro país, decenas de hijos de otras naciones?- y condenaré e así mismo toda utilización política de terrorismo (…)

For the same reasons, I will fight any kind of xenophobia that tries to find protection in recent events- along with those from our country, haven’t there died dozens of children from other nations? I will condemn as well all political usage made by terrorists (…)

3.6.1.2. Common places and proverbs. According to Burguera (2009) the common places or Topoi are used when the speaker wants to be in tune with the addressee. For instances, in TV commercials or letters addressed to the newspaper or magazine editors (32). On the other hand, proverbs, which propositional content are difficult to refute, are frequently found in confrontational exchanges (33):
(32) ¿Quién no está a favor de que los jóvenes tengan empleo antes de que lleven 6 meses como demandantes de empleo? ¿Quién no está a favor de que se promuevan becas de prácticas en la Administración general del Estado?

‘Who is not in favor of having young people employed instead of having them unemployed for 6 months? Who is not in favor of promoting practical training internships in the government administration?’

(33) ¿No hubiese sido más razonable poner los bueyes delante del carro que el carro delante de los bueyes?

‘Would not be more reasonable to put the oxen in front of the cart rather than the cart in front of the oxen?’

3.6.1.3. Grammaticalized expressions.

Burguera (2009) points out that there is a group of expressions (i.e. ¿A quién le importa? ¿qué duda cabe? ¿Qué más da?) that automatically triggers a rhetorical reading and shows that there is a conventionalized answer. In the following case the only possible answer is ‘nobody cares’, and besides that the speaker provides an explanation about the fact that nobody cares, the reason being that the addressee does not have a political project:
(34) (...) cada viaje que usted hace, hace un plan. Luego que se cumpla o no, ¿a quién le importa? Señor Rodríguez Zapatero, y esto ¿por qué es? Lisa y llanamente porque usted no tiene un proyecto político.

‘In every trip you take, you make a plan. And afterwards, who cares if you accomplish it or not? Mr. Rodríguez Zapatero, why is that? Purely and simply, that is because you do not have a political project.’

3.6.1.4. **Speaker’s attitude.** Schaffer (2005) claims that the hyperbolic content present in some of the RQs signals the speaker’s attitude of surprise, impatience, annoyance, scorn, or amusement, etc. toward the appropriateness or necessity of the first speaker’s question. For instance, in the case of RQs as retorts, Speaker 2 challenges the first speaker’s presupposition by offering a more exaggerated and even obviously answerable question as her response:

(35) A: How reliable is he?
B: How shallow is the ocean? How cold is the sun?

Burguera (2009) shows that RQs can express complaint (36) and reproach (37):
(36) Pero, ¿de qué sirve que 20.000 policías detengan a 20.000 delincuentes si los delincuentes entran por una puerta y salen por la misma puerta?
‘What is the use of having 20,000 delinquents arrested by 20,000 policemen if the delinquents walk in through a door and they walk out through the same door?’

(37) ¿Qué autoridad tiene el gobierno de la nación ahora para hablar de Doñana?
¿Qué autoridad tiene cuando se está mintiendo descaradamente dentro y fuera de la Cámara?
‘What authority does the nation’s government have to talk about Doñana now?
What authority does the government have when they are telling bald-faced lies inside and outside the Chamber of Deputies?’

3.6.1.5. Mechanism of attenuation and mitigation: politeness

According to the theory that states that RQs do not introduce new information, but rather a common and accepted knowledge among interlocutors, some authors (Frank (1990) and Brown & Levinson (1987)) claim that RQs have a double function: on one hand, they strengthen assertions and on the other hand, they tone down criticism. This is the case of RQs used in commercials which recreate a dialogue and look for the hearer’s empathy.

Burguera (2009) claims that as a mechanism of mitigation in interactive conflicts, by uttering a RQ the speaker regulates the argumentative force of her utterance and
carries out three functions: (i) channel her message (ii) offer the hearer an open utterance with alternatives to react, and (iii) offer to the hearer the opportunity to cancel the assertive implicature in case the hearer disagrees.

2.6.1.6. Impoliteness.

Burguera (2009) claims RQs in the political debate can be interpreted as impolite mechanisms since the speaker tries to protect her own image and disqualify her adversary. He has found evidence of this impolite value in examples in which RQs are used to express: complaint, criticism, challenge and insinuation/ conjecture. According to Burguera, an utterance can express impoliteness if: (i) the speaker does not offer chances to react to the addressee (ii) if the speech act is complex rather than simple; (iii) the degree of compromise that the speaker shows in regard to her utterance. These are cases where the speaker expresses complaint, reproach or challenges the addressee (i.e. (36) and (37)).

2.6.1.7. Humor.

Schaffer (2005) points out that a substantial number of RQs might be taken as supporting incongruity theories based on content. They juxtapose elements that ordinarily would not be associated together, and whose current connections therefore seem to be amusing because they are unexpected, even bizarre:

(38) Does the Pope shit Shiva?
(39) Would it surprise you to find out the Ayatollah had been a Rockette?

(40) When was the last time you tried growin’ tits? (Asked to a man)

Two other recurring RQs-as-retorts may also be taken to support incongruity theories:

(41) Do bears bear?

(42) Do bees bee?

But the largest group of amusing RQs derives its humor from disparaging or attacking others:

(43) A: Do you know what a public defender is?

B: Can you talk like a normal person?

Another source of humor comes from the listener’s unfamiliarity with the RQ-as-retort strategy itself. For instance, cases in which the characters take a RQ-as-retort seriously.
3.6.2. Semantic characteristics

3.6.2.1. The presence of NPIs

It has been noticed (Linebarger (1987), Progovac (1994), Lee (1995), Gutiérrez Rexach (1997, 1998), Han (2002)) that when NPIs occur in questions the rhetorical reading is triggered easily. However there are some differences with regard to the type of NPI (weak or strong), and with regard to the type of questions (yes/no questions or wh-questions).

Ordinary yes-no questions are known to license weak NPIs, such as ‘any’ (Ladusaw (1980), Linebarger (1987), Progovac (1994), and Higginbotham (1993)):

(44) Did anybody visit John?
(45) Who has ever been to Moscow?
(46) Who has ever kissed a girl on the first date?

However these cases are ambiguous between the rhetorical and non-rhetorical reading. In normal conditions, when a speaker is trying to disambiguate the two readings, she places focal stress on the NPI when the rhetorical reading is the one intended.

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3NPIs are words (i.e. *any, ever*) and phrases of diverse categories (i.e. *a single thing, lift a finger*) that are licensed in a very specific and restricted set of environments, that is, within the scope of sentential or VP negation, within the scope of decreasing quantifiers, as complements of adversative predicates, in the protasis of conditionals, in before-clauses and in matrix and embedded interrogative sentences.
Ordinary *yes-no* questions do not license strong NPIs such as “lift a finger” and ‘budge an inch’. When a strong NPI appears in a *yes-no* question, the reading has to be rhetorical, like in the following example which is interpreted as an assertion of the speaker’s belief that John did not lift a finger to help Sam:

(47) Did John lift a finger to help Sam?

In relation to *wh*-questions, Han and Siegel (1996) point out that when the trace of the *wh*-phrase c-commands the weak NPI, both the ordinary question reading and the rhetorical question reading are available; on the other hand when this c-command relationship does not hold, only the rhetorical question reading is available:

(48) Who_t said anything interesting at the seminar?- c-command relationship
(49) What_t did anybody say t at the seminar?- no c-command

Just like ordinary *yes-no* questions, ordinary *wh*-questions do not license strong NPIs,*wh*-questions with strong NPIs can only be interpreted as rhetorical questions.

Whereas an ordinary negative question can have a weak NPI, a rhetorical negative question cannot have a weak NPI. The following question can be only interpreted as an ordinary question; it could be asking, for example whether John visited anyone or not, but it cannot result in a rhetorical interpretation that John visited someone:
According to Han (2002), the fact that rhetorical negative questions do not license NPIs is quite surprising. This means that the negation that is present in the surface string of rhetorical negative questions does not function as the licenser of NPIs. It has been suggested that the NPI licensing condition is applied at a more abstract level.

### 3.6.2.2. Why are NPIs licensed in RQs?

Ladusaw (1979), following Fauconnier’s theory of scalarity, claims that NPIs are licensing when they occur in the scope of a decreasing operator. Decreasing functions license set to subset inferences. For instance, the generalized quantifier [at most three students] and the negation operator are decreasing functions and, as predicted, sentences A and B entail sentences C and D respectively:

(51) At most three students ate or drank

(52) John did not eat

(53) At most three students ate

(54) John did not eat bananas

Negation is a decreasing operator, and this explains why NPIs are licensed within the scope. Since the following interrogative sentence contains an NPI, the only possible declarative response will be one containing a negation:
(55) A: Did John ever lift a finger to help?
B: No, he did not ever lift a finger to help

However Gutiérrez Rexach (1998) points out that Ladusaw’s theory wrongly predicts that the only possible reading of this sentence is the rhetorical one, which causes his account to leave unexplained why NPIs can also occur in neutral questions.

Progovac (1994) claims that NPIs are subject to Principle A of the Binding Theory. A potential binder for NPIs is either the local negation or an empty polarity operator generated in [Spec,CP]. Further, only NPIs that undergo Quantifier Raising at LF can be licensed by the empty operator. This means that while weak NPIs such as ‘ever’ and ‘any’ can be licensed by the empty polarity operator in [Spec, CP], strong NPIs such as ‘budge an inch’ and ‘lift a finger’, which are not quantifiers, can only be licensed by local negation. However, there are some problems with this analysis: Progovac’s system cannot account for the ordinary information-seeking reading that is available in some wh-questions with weak NPIs. She incorrectly predicts that all wh-questions with NPIs can only have a rhetorical question reading. Furthermore, Progovac’s analysis incorrectly predicts that strong NPIs cannot occur in rhetorical questions, since they cannot undergo Quantifier Raising. And lastly, since it is the presence of an NPI that triggers the suppression of the wh-operator, Progovac incorrectly predicts that rhetorical wh-questions without NPIs cannot exist.
Gutiérrez-Rexach (1998) argues that the semantic property that explains the occurrence of NPIs in questions is decreasing. No additional assumptions are needed. He claims that the question operator ?, that transforms a declarative statement \( \varphi \) into a question \( ?\varphi \), is decreasing. The proposition then becomes a decreasing environment and NPIs are licensed. For instance, a question representing (56b) will entail a question representing (56a):

(56a) John and Bill smoke cigars

(56b) John and Bill smoke

This is indeed the case since the question Which guests smoked? Whose answer is (44b), entails the question Which guests smoked cigars? Whose answer is (44a).

According to Gutiérrez-Rexach (1997), for a speaker to be able to ask a rhetorical question, she has to calculate the entailment set of an informative question set and ask a question about its bottom element. She has to be able to go over the whole entailment set of a question and pick out its smallest element. The presence of the NPI signals precisely this calculation.

3.6.2.3.Negation operator licenses NPIs.

According to Lee (1995), argument rhetorical \( wh \)-questions cannot license subject position NPIs, whereas object position NPIs or verbal NPIs, such as ‘budge an inch’
are licit. Lee argues that argument *wh*-phrases in rhetorical questions activate NegP by moving through its specifier on the way to [Spec, CP]. The activated NegP is then able to license NPIs that appear below it, but not ones above it. So object and verbal NPIs can be licensed, but subject NPIs cannot. There are some problems with this account: since negation in rhetorical questions is structurally located in the same position as in negative declaratives, according to Lee, LF verb movement should be blocked in rhetorical questions as well, and so d-support should be triggered. According to Han (2002), there is another problem with Lee’s analysis: To Han the following questions are grammatical, and she claims that argument *wh*-questions with subject NPIs can have a rhetorical question reading:

(57) Who did anyone see?
(58) What did anyone buy?

On the other hand, Han (2002) assumes that the well-formedness conditions to license NPIs apply not at the level of LF but a post-LF, namely a pragmatic level. At this level, rhetorical questions are not questions anymore; rather they are assertions. According to Han, NPIs are licensed when rhetorical questions are interpreted as negative assertions but they are not licensed when rhetorical questions are interpreted as positive assertions:
Both strong and weak NPIs are licensed in rhetorical positive *yes-no* questions, because both types of NPIs end up in the scope of negation in the derived representations for rhetorical questions:

(59) Did John visit anyone? = ~[John visited anyone]

(60) Did John lift a finger to help you? = ~[John lifted a finger to help you]

NPIs are not licensed in rhetorical negative *yes-no* questions, because they are interpreted as positive assertions:

(61) *Did not John visit anyone? = ~(John visited anyone) = *John visited anyone

(B) Rhetorical positive *wh*-questions license both weak and strong NPIs, because under the rhetorical question reading, the following questions are interpreted as negative assertions, and the NPIs end up in the scope of negation in the derived representation:

(62) What has Sam ever contributed to the project?

(63) Who lifted a finger to help Mary?
Rhetorical negative *wh*-questions do not license NPIs, because the two negations contributed by the *wh*-phrase and the content of the questions cancel each other out:

(64) *Who did not say anything interesting in the seminar?*

### 3.6.2.4. NPIs denote the bottom of a scale.

As observed by Krifka (1991), NPIs can be considered members of contextually determined scales. NPIs obey the following constraint:

(65) Bottom of scale principle: strong NPIs always denote elements at the bottom of the contextually associated scale. Weak NPIs may also denote bottom-of-scale elements.

In the sentence below, the presence of the NPI ‘lift a finger’ brings in the entailment that John did not perform even the minimal action necessary to help Bill. The relevant ordering of the scale is determined by a criterion of effort or willingness—now much effort or willingness is required by a certain action. Obviously, the action of lifting a finger is at the bottom of that scale, so the desired entailment is brought about straightforwardly:

(66) John did not lift a finger to help Bill
From the Bottom of Scale Principle, it follows that the presence of the NPI ‘lift a finger’ triggers an associated context C formed by an ordered set of VP denotations in which ‘lift a finger’ is the bottom element. The intended ordering criterion is the same: actions are ordered with respect to the criterion of willingness/effort; the action of lifting a finger represents the least effort or involves the least willingness on the part of the agent.

In sum, the role of NPIs in the derivation of rhetorical readings is to signal the bottom of a scale: the scale associated with the NPI present in the rhetorical question (KrifKa 1991, Rohde 2006, Lee-Goldam 2006), or the ‘scale’ associated with a Boolean algebra associated with the semantics of questions (Gutiérrez-Rexach 1998, 1997, Han (2002).

3.6.3 Syntactic characteristics

Schaffer (2005) notices that yes-no rhetorical questions usually involve simple subject-auxiliary inversion matches the one used in the prompting question:

(67) A: Does he look crazy to you?
   B: Does a bear take a Reader’s Digest in the woods?

(68) A: Does Ed McMahon drink?
   B: Is the Pope Catholic?
Sometimes more than the auxiliary is repeated from the first question:

(69) Do you suppose somebody built this room?

(70) Do you suppose God can do long vision?

In *wh*-rhetorical questions the *wh*-word used in the prompting question recurs in the response in 88.2% examples:

(71) How do you like school?

(72) How do you like prison?

The exceptions to this matching of question structure are rare (6.2%). This parallelism of vocabulary and question structure, when it occurs, may help contribute to the recognition of the parallel nature of the answers. Moreover the obvious analogy between at least some of the prompting question’s characteristics and those of the RQ response may combine with the hyperbolic content present in some of the RQs to signal the second speaker’s attitude (whether surprise, impatience, annoyance, scorn, or amusement) toward the appropriateness or necessity of the first speaker’s question.

There are structural similarities, such as whether the original question is a *yes/no* question, the RQ is a *yes/no* question; if the original question is a *wh*-question, the RQ is a *wh*-question too:
(73) A: Does he look crazy to you?
B: Does a bear take a Reader’s Digest into the woods?

(74) A: How do you like school?
B: How do you like prison?

However there are few mismatches. For instance, mismatches of a wh-question with a yes-no question, in either order:

(75) A: Do you know what happened to him?
B: What happened to the seed of Europe?

(76) A: How’d you spot them [police]?
B: oh, honey, can a dog spot fleas?

Furthermore there are uses of RQs to respond to a statement, rather than a question:

(77) A: You are shameless
The recipient is expected to work out the appropriate answer to her question by finding the RQ’s answer and then pinpointing its relevance to the original question using ‘extralinguistic contexts’ that include familiar background knowledge and rules of inference.

According to Schaeffer (2005), in the following example the first question would probably be interpreted by most people not as a yes-no question but as an indirect wh-question (*What happened to him?*) an interpretation that possibly influences the structure of the responding question:

(78) A: Do you know what happened to him?
B: What happened to the seed of Europe?

The RQ can be used as an answer offered to satisfy the implicit question behind the statement:

(79) A: You know who he is
B: Has a rockin’ horse a wooden pecker?

RQs can have the form of an echo-question:

(80) A: Do you know me?
B: Do I know you? Does an art student know Picasso?
The pragmatic effect of this echoing is a further reinforcement of the ‘you should already know the answer’ implicature of the RQ; repeating the prompting question clearly signals incredulity that it even needed to be asked and so implies the obviousness of its answers.

3.7. The role of common knowledge

Many authors have stated the idea that the context in which a rhetorical question can be felicitously uttered is a context identified with common knowledge (Schaffer 2005, Rhode 2006) or common ground (Caponigro and Sprouse 2007). According to Schaffer (2005) RQs refer to knowledge that is very well-known or self-evident. This sort of knowledge may deal either with an obvious truth or an obvious falsehood, or it may refer to the hearers’ knowledge of the physical world and shared cultural information, such as, well-known real or fictional celebrities, human talents or other attributes, as well as natural phenomena and human bodily functions:

(81) A: Do you surf?
B: Does Dolly Parton float? Does Oprah Winfrey eat?

(82) A: Do you mind if I smoke?
B: Do you mind if I fart?
This sort of knowledge is typically achieved through exploiting analyticity and syntheticity. Hurford and Heasley (1983: 91-92) define these terms as follows: “An analytic sentence is one that is necessarily true, as a result of the senses of the worlds in it”, while “a synthetic sentence is one which is not analytic, but may be either true or false, depending on the way the world is’. Schaffer (2005) states that 124 out of 134 yes-no questions (92.5%) rely on syntheticity. This point of view proves that RQs depend on hearers’ knowledge of the physical word and shared cultural information.

To measure the felicity of a rhetorical question, Rohde (2006) proposes three felicity conditions that must hold between the answer sets of the speaker and addressee: (i) the presence of an obvious\(^4\) answer, (ii) the un-informativity of the answer, and (iii) the sufficient similarity of the speaker and addressee’s answers.

According to Rohde (2006) RQs require probabilistically highlighted obvious answer(s) in the existing commitments of the discourse participants. To succeed rhetorically, (84B) requires that both participants know or be able to derive the

\(^4\)Entropy calculates the predictability of a random variable over multiple trials. It estimates how surprised one will be, on average, to learn the value of the random variable. For instance, let’s consider a scenario in which three individuals, John, Mary, and Bob, are invited to a party. Question (i) is asked to determine who attended.

(i) Who came to the party?

The random variable is party attendance. Entropy measures how surprised one will be on average to learn which subset of people attended the party given a probability assignment over the eight possibilities. If all subsets are equally probable, then one will experience a high degree of surprise upon learning who attended. Entropy is much lower when one answer is more probable than any other.
obvious answer to the question (84A). The Dallas Cowboys are the highly predictable answer. The intuition is that answers to rhetorical questions are so shared and predictable that they need not be uttered.

(84) A: So, who’s your favorite team?
B: Who do you think? The Dallas Cowboys!

Rohde (2006) claims that RQs are uninformative because they require that participants be committed to a joint mutual belief. Joint commitments require all participants to not only believe a proposition P but also be aware that other participants believe P as well. Shared knowledge about others’ beliefs and about the real world is precisely what licenses rhetorical questions.

(85) How high are taxes going to be when my kids are my age?

If all participants are already committed to high tax rates of the future, no commitment updates are induced and the rhetorical question succeeds. However when speakers incorrectly assume that the obvious answer they know is also obvious to the addressee, the question either loses its rhetorical interpretation or requires amendments to the common ground to fix the incorrect assumption.
According to Rohde (2006), sufficiently similar answers are those that either have an identical value (86) or those that share an extreme position on a contextually relevant scale (87):

(86) What’s going to happen to these kids when they grow up?

(87) How many stars are there in the sky?

Though the question (87) induces a scale with salient values, there could be cases in which the participants’ answers may not occupy identical positions along that scale. One individual might pick out a value of a trillion while another might consider a vague answer like a lot of them. In those cases, speaker and addressee answers may be different but they share sufficiently similar positions of mutual extremity along the numeric scale.

Caponigro and Sprouse (2007) adopt Stalnaker’s (1978) notion of Common Ground to explain speaker and addressee’s mutual and individual knowledge. They claim this in order to represent those contexts in which the answer of the question is not in the common ground, we also need to consider that the speaker’s beliefs are the set of propositions representing what the speaker believes or assumes for the purpose

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5 According to Stalnaker, common ground is a set of propositions representing what the participants in a discourse take to be mutually believed, or at least mutually assumed for the purpose of the discourse. What matters is mutual rather than just shared knowledge/beliefs, since it is crucial that for each proposition p in the CG, each participant is not only taken to believe p, but also to be aware that the other participants believe p as well.
of discourse. Also the addressee’s beliefs are a set of propositions representing what the addressee believes or assumes for the purpose of discourse. So a question $Q$ is an ordinary question if and only if the speaker does not have beliefs about the complete true answer to $Q$, that is, if the answer is not among the speaker’s beliefs. If the answer is not among the speaker’s beliefs, then it is not going to be in Common Ground either. The addressee’s answering a question can then be seen as a way to add to Common Ground the proposition that constitutes the complete true answer to the question.

On the other hand, a question $Q$ is a RQ if and only if the speaker and the addressee already mutually believe the true complete answer to $Q$, that is, if the answer is part of the speaker’s and addressee’s common ground, whereas the answer of an ordinary question is not known to the speaker. In other words, the difference between RQ and a standard question is just a matter of the speakers and address’s knowledge and beliefs with respect to the answer to the question at hand:

(88) Speaker: Who cares about you?

Speaker or Addressee: Nobody

However not all RQs are uttered in a defective context. Schaffer (2005) also points out that while many topics might be counted on to be familiar to listeners, other topics- and the truth value of propositions about them- are occasionally not general knowledge. It is certainly possible that a RQ whose answer is not known or is even
unknowable might be chosen intentionally to convey a different implicature than the obviousness for example the answer to the question *Why is the sky blue?*, which is assumed no one can answer. This is the case also with questions like (83) in which the prompting question and/or its answer is as pointless or unnecessary as the answer to some esoteric RQ:

(83) A: How many feet long is this ferry?
B: How many hamburgers are sold per month in Tartu?

Burguera (2009) also points out that the RQs used in political debates take place in a non-cooperative context in which the speaker expects the addressee to refute her premise. In this context RQs are used to impose on the addressee points of view that she might find difficult to embrace. Therefore in this particular context it cannot be claimed that the speaker and the addressee share the same presuppositions:

(84) El gobierno se equivocó. Por muy firmemente que uno crea que tiene la razón, la razón no le asiste ustedes han defendido a ultranza un sistema de financiación que ha fracasado por mucho que su ministro de Administraciones Publicas utilice el eufemismo de decir que no se ha modificado el método y solo los mecanismos de solidaridad. Pero, es que acaso los mecanismos de solidaridad no formaban parte del mismo sistema?
Furthermore Lee-Goldman (2006) shows that the ‘wrong opinion’ rhetorical questions do not express redundant/old information (consider *Who does he think he is?*), and they are not used to synchronize speaker/addressee beliefs since they are primarily confrontational and assume a discord between speaker and addressee.

Although I think that the vast majority of the RQs are based on common ground and that RQs are used to create non-defective contexts, there are other cases in which RQs are used to refute, criticize, complain or point out that previous assumptions are wrong. I argue that the usage of RQs does not point out necessarily to common and mutual presuppositions nor do the interlocutors try to eliminate discrepancies in their presuppositions sets. I claim that the addressee either accepts the speaker’s presuppositions for the purpose of communication (notice that accepting the speaker’s assumptions does not imply that the addressee may change her beliefs) or she rejects openly the speaker’s presuppositions. I state that if we accept that the interlocutors’ beliefs/presuppositions are already part of the common ground *a la* Stalnaker, and if we accept that the contexts in which RQs can be uttered have to be non-defective contexts, we miss the aspect of RQs as indirect speech acts and the fact that RQs raise many implicatures, which require an inferential process, and also many contextual effects that change the context by adding or eliminating propositions or strengthening

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6 Stalnaker claims that each participant in a discourse has his own set of presuppositions, that is, his own beliefs about which propositions are in the common ground. In the ideal situation, the presupposition of all discourse participants will match. This constitutes a nondefective context. When discourse participants discover that the context is defective, they will try to eliminate observed discrepancies among their presupposition sets. The argument for this is based on communication efficiency. Since communication is the point of the enterprise, everyone will have a motive to try to keep the presuppositions the same.
the degree of belief. Furthermore, I claim that by uttering a RQ the context changes, since the interlocutor’s assumptions change after hearing the rhetorical utterance. In other words, the interlocutors’ assumptions/ presuppositions cannot be part of the common ground before the speaker’s utterance.

I conclude that common ground understood as common belief cannot be the type of context that constrains the utterance of RQs. Instead, I claim that the appropriate context in which a RQ can be uttered felicitously has to be a context form by common knowledge understood as background information or co-accepted knowledge for the purpose of the conversation. Namely, the appropriate context is a context where the addressee’s information state allows her to accommodate or infer the speaker’s communicative intentions but not the speaker’s presuppositions.

3.8. Indirect speech acts and Relevance Theory

Previous studies (Gutiérrez-Rexach 1998, Han 2002, Burguera 2006) use Sperber and Wilson’s (1986) Relevance Theory to explain how the rhetorical reading is derived, I want to resume this approach and show that this theory can gather the ideas of previous theories and explain better how and why rhetoricity fails.

For Sperber and Wilson (1986) an utterance is relevant in a context just in case it has some contextual effects in that context. A context is here construed as a set of propositions, that is, a subset of an individual’s assumptions. This notion of context concerns an individual’s epistemic state, not the common beliefs (or commonly accepted propositions) of a group of individuals. Contextual effects are any changes to
the context, more precisely, additions or eliminations of propositions, or strengthening of the degree of belief in the proposition. Such effects are derived by deductions involving (a) the content of what is said and (b) any contextual assumptions, i.e. propositions in the context. An utterance is relevant for an individual at a given time just in case it is relevant in one or more of the contexts accessible to that individual at that time. Finally, an utterance is optimally relevant for an individual just in case it produces adequate contextual effects for the processing effort required. Processing effort is presumed to be affected by the complexity of the utterance being processed; by the size of the context required to derive contextual effects; by the complexity of the deductions required to derive them; and by the relative accessibility of the required assumptions.

As indirect speech acts, RQs cannot be considered as constructions that will require a complex inferential process because, although they originate more implicatures than a direct speech act, the context in which they are uttered will block the non-relevant implicatures. That is why the speaker tries, as we have seen in most of the RQs, presented so far, to utter them in uncontroversial contexts, that is, contexts where all the participants have common beliefs/assumptions or at least they share some of the beliefs/assumptions. However, I argue that the common background information should be invoked when it is relevant, in other words when it guides the addressee to get the required assumption. For instance, in the case of RQs as retorts (example from Schaffer):
A: Does Ed McMahon drink?
B: Is the Pope Catholic?

We can see in the example above that B implicates that there is some connection between the fact that the Pope is Catholic and the fact that Ed McMahon drinks. The addressee extracts from the uttered RQ the proposition that the Pope is Catholic (background implicature) and she identifies this implicature as the answer of B’s question. At this point of her inference process the interpreter might find the implicature irrelevant since it does not update her epistemic state. However following the communicative principle of relevance which claims that “every utterance conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance”, the addressee might think that if the Pope is Catholic must be related with her question, Does Ed McMahon drink? So, she concludes that the Pope being Catholic, then Ed McMahon drinks. By combining these premises, the addressee finally gets the implicated conclusion, Ed McMahon drinks, which is the answer of her original question.

In other cases the speaker or background information guides the hearer in the process of getting the implicated implicature by using linguistic forms such as NPIs (Gutiérrez-Rexach 1998, Han, 2002), proverbs, common places, grammaticalized constructions (Burguera 2006), and structural parallelism (Schaffer 2005). However, it is the relational character of rhetorical character what makes them relevant to the discourse.
3.8.1. Why Rhetorical Questions fail?

Rohde (2006) claims that a question may fail rhetorically if the speaker’s and the addressee’s answers are not sufficiently similar. These are cases like (59a) in which an addressee informs the speaker that the condition of equivalent beliefs has not been met.

(86) A: Who would steal a newspaper?
   B: Well, actually, a very shy nudist might steal a newspaper.
   B!: Well, actually, I once stole a newspaper to read on the train.

I argue that the RQ in (90) fails not because the answers of both the speaker and the addressee are not similar enough, but rather because the addressee is rejecting the speaker’s assumption that nobody would be interested in stealing a newspaper and wants to express explicitly her disagreement.

Another case of a failed rhetorical question is exemplified in (91a) where the rhetorical question is interpreted as a regular information-seeking question.

(87) a. A: How high will taxes be when my kids are my age?
   b. B: Well, that’s a great question! Let me tell you, based on the current trajectory of income tax valuation along with the growing number of Americans on social security and Greenspan’s waning confidence in the dollar, I’d say taxes are likely to increase drastically over the next thirty to thirty-five years.
I state that the RQ fails because the addressee cannot access to speaker’s epistemic state and is not getting the speaker’s assumption that nobody would be interested in stealing a newspaper. In other words, because she does not recognize the question as a rhetorical question this may happen when the speaker miscalculates the knowledge shared with her interlocutor, that is, the interlocutor’s information state is not ready to accommodate the assertion implied by the RQ. Second, because the hearer rejects the speaker’s assumptions.

Regarding the claim made by Caponigro and Sprouse (2007) that the fact that both the speaker and the addressee can answer a RQ, I argue that the addressee cannot answer a RQ because RQs are non-seeking information questions when the addressee apparently answers a question she is in fact confirming the assertion implied or rejecting the assumption implied.

I argue that although the vast majority of RQs are based on common knowledge this does not mean that they convey irrelevant information. I state that rhetorical questions as indirect speech acts, using Grice’s (1989) terms, can be viewed as “intentional actions with certain recognized purposed and direction” that raise an inference process in the addressee’s mind.

Summing up, by uttering a rhetorical question the speaker’s intentions are: (i) produce in the hearer the knowledge that an assertion has been made (ii) get the
addressee to believe that she is communicating relevant content and (iii) get her assumptions accepted by the addressee(s) without objections. In order to be successful in this task, a cooperative speaker would utter a RQ in a context in which the addressee might be able to get the intended implication.

3.9. Conclusions

These are the general characteristics highlighted by most authors. In the first place, all of the approaches agree in considering rhetoricity as a pragmatic phenomenon. An secondly, most of them claim that a rhetorical question is a question whose answer is part of the common ground, and therefore there is no need to answer it. In the cases where it is answered, the answer must be just one. In other words, we can conclude that the answer set of a rhetorical question is a singleton (elicited or not).

I have shown that these explanations can be unified under Sperber and Wilson’s Relevance Theory. According to this theory, by uttering a RQ the speaker wants to persuade two goals: (i) get the hearer to recognize that she utters an assertion not a question, (ii) the speaker finds her utterance relevant, and (iii) the speaker accepts her assumptions without objections. That explains why most of RQs are uttered in contexts where the inferential process will not require too much effort, and where the context and the Relevance Principle will guide the interpreter in the process of identifying the relevant assumption among the many potential assumptions easily.
On the other hand, I claim that a RQ fails if the speaker fails in her attempt to get her assumption accepted without objections by the addressee. The reasons to not accept the implicated assumption are two: (i) the speaker rejects explicitly the implicated assertion and answers the RQ, because she disagrees, (ii) the speaker does not recognize the implication as the relevant assumption and therefore does not recognize the rhetorical reading since she is not able to identify the assertion implied by the RQ.
Chapter 4: rhetorical exclamatives

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the systematic internal characterization of rhetorical exclamatives in Spanish from a syntactic, pragmatic and semantic point of view. To do so I compare rhetorical exclamatives with standard exclamatives, and I explain that when uttering a rhetorical exclamative: (i) ‘what is said’ is not ‘what is implicated’; (ii) the communicative success will depend on the addressee’s ability to recognize the speaker’s interests and goals, and (iii) that by doing that she will need to initiate an inferential process in which she will need not only to assume that the speaker is being cooperative and the utterance is relevant to the conversation, but also to consider the actual contextual facts.

In section 4.1 I explain the similarities and differences between standard and rhetorical exclamatives. In section 4.2 I focus on the most representative members of the rhetorical-exclamative class, namely those introduced by gradable adjectival or adverbial phrases and the wording of rhetorical exclamatives (focus sensitive). I devote section 4.4 to an explanation of the syntactic characteristics, and section 4.5, to an explanation of the pragmatic characteristics associated with rhetorical exclamatives: the speaker’s intentions, the concept of context, and the role that the
speaker plays in the rhetorical reading interpretation. Finally, section 4.6 shows important semantic characteristics that distinguish this type of utterances.

4.2. Standard exclamatives vs. Rhetorical exclamatives

Rhetorical exclamatives share many syntactic and semantic properties with standard exclamatives. As shown by the following exclamatives: (i) They denote emotive attitudes about specific facts/degrees; (ii) They only allow gradable adjectives and adverbs; (iii) They have a degree interpretation; and (iv) There is an obligatory attachment of a constituent to a focus position (Ojeda 1982, Gutiérrez-Rexach 1998, Alonso Cortés 1999, Bartra & Villalba 2007):

(1) ¡Bonita fiesta la que me organizaste!
   ‘What a nice party you prepared for me!’

(2) ¡Simpático comentario el de tu madre!
   ‘Your mother made such a kind comment!’

(3) ¡Poco te gusta comer!
   ‘How little you like eating!’

(4) ¡Mal que viven los políticos!
   ‘Politicians have such a miserable life!’
Similar to standard exclamatives, rhetorical ones only allow gradable adjectives, and they do not allow constituents to appear \textit{in situ} position. This explains the ungrammaticality of the following examples:

(5) *¡Nuclear la planta de Fukushima!
Atomic the plant in Fukushima!

(6) *¡La fiesta que me organizaste bonita!
The party you prepared for me nice

Gutiérrez-Rexach and Andueza (2011) argue that to utter a rhetorical exclamative as well as a standard exclamative, the speaker needs to have previous expectations and \textit{de re} beliefs about the facts that contradict her expectations and trigger the surprise emotive attitude. Namely, the speaker’s commitments to utter a rhetorical exclamative remain the same as in the case of a standard exclamative. Therefore, from an illocutionary point of view, rhetorical exclamatives are exclamatory sentences.

However, rhetorical exclamatives differ from standard exclamatives mainly in their felicitous conditions and in the fact that they constitute indirect speech acts, that is, ‘what is said’ contradicts ‘what is implied’ due to the presence of a negative operator. Let’s consider (1) for a moment. The interpretation of (1) as a standard exclamative can be felicitous when uttered in a context in which the speaker expected to have a modest party but in fact it turned out that her interlocutor prepared a very
special celebration. Namely the fact points to a higher degree in the scale of ‘nice’. This fact contradicts the speaker’s expectations and the surprise reading raises. When the speaker utters it, she presupposes that the party was nice. However, (1) could be uttered rhetorically in a context where the speaker expected to have a nice party, but it turned out to be a disaster. The predicate ‘nice’ is apparently asserted of the subject; however, the implicated interpretation is that the predicate is denied the subject. That is, the implicated proposition “X is not fine’ implies the falsity of the elicited proposition “X is fine”. Therefore the elicited exclamation and the implied exclamation are contradictory, as shown by the Aristotle’s square of opposition:

Unlike in standard exclamatives, the proposition asserted (that is, ‘what is said’) by a rhetorical exclamative is false. If we assume that propositions are functions from possible worlds into truth values, we can claim that the proposition The party was nicely arranged (6a) is false in the world of evaluation (reality), but its negation (6b) is true. Therefore, the content asserted by (1) is false:
(6a) max \{d: nice (party, d)\} > speaker’s expectations 0

(6b) max \{d: \neg nice (party, d)\} > speaker’s expectations 1

I argue that there is a covert or underlying negative operator, i.e. one that moves to SpecFocus at LF and from a pragmatic point of view will require consideration of the context and the speaker’s assumptions/presuppositions. More interestingly, this negative element seems to have a narrow scope: The scopal domain of this negative operator is not over the whole proposition, (as will be shown) below but over the property elicited in the exclamative. An exclamative such as (7) has the interpretation in (8).

(7) ¡Muy listo eres tú!
‘lit. You are so smart!’

(8) Muy [no listo] eres tú =
‘You are very [not smart], ie. You are dumb’

In a similar fashion, an exclamative such as (9) would have the rhetorical interpretation: ‘Te gusta comer [no poco]’ = ‘You like eating [not a little]’.

(9) ¡Poco te gusta comer!
‘How little you like eating!’
Syntactically, the narrow-scope negative element has scope over a Degree Phrase (DegP/AP), and not over the whole CP: (9) does not entail that the addressee does not like eating. Pragmatically, the effect of the underlying negation is to reverse the high-degree implicature usually associated with exclamatory expressions (Portner & Zanuttini 2003). We can paraphrase the exclamatives in (7)-(8) as follows:

(10) ¡Te gusta comer MUCHO!
(11) ¡Tú no eres tonto EN ABSOLUTO/ PARA NADA!

4.3. Types of Rhetorical Exclamatives

In chapter 2, I distinguish four types of exclamatives: wh-exclamatives, free relative exclamatives, evidential exclamatives and declarative exclamatives. I claim that this classification also works for rhetorical exclamatives:

(12) ¡(Qué) listo eres tú! (wh-exclamatives)
You are very smart
(13) ¡La de artículos que publica! (cuando no publica ninguno) (free relative exclamatives)
He publishes a lot of articles! (It is said when he does not publish any)
(14) ¡Pues claro que va a ganar el Real Madrid! (dicho por un aficionado del Barça) (evidential exclamatives)
Of course, the Real Madrid will beat us! (uttered by a Barça fan)
(15) ¡Hablas muy bien inglés! (dicho a una persona que después de 20 años en USA todavía comete un montón de errores) (declarative sentence)

You speak English very well (it is said to a person who has been living for 20 years in USA)

However, as in the case of standard exclamatives, the most frequent type is the first one, the one introduced by a *wh*-word, or bare adjective or adverb respectively.

**4.4. Syntactic characteristics: Focus**

As initially observed by Ojeda (1982) and later by Gutiérrez-Rexach (1998) and Alonso Cortés (1999) exclamatives are focus sensitive, I argue that the bare (without the *wh*-word) adjective/adverb that introduces rhetorical exclamatives occupies a Focus position too and therefore it is the constituent in the utterance that receive the prosodic accent and is taken to be "new information".

The standard theory of focus was first laid out in Mats Rooth’s (1985) dissertation, which postulates that the semantic result of putting phonological focus on a constituent is the introduction of a set of alternatives. The main idea is that assertions, like questions, are conventionally associated with a set of alternatives, although these alternatives are presupposed by the prosody rather than proffered like the Q-alternatives of questions. Rooth’s (1992) introduces a “focus interpretation operator,” negation ~, to his earlier proposal (Rooth 1985) that is as follows:
(16) Where $\phi$ is a syntactic phrase and $C$ is a syntactically covert semantic variable,

$\phi \sim C$ introduces the presupposition that $C$ is a subset of $|\phi|$ containing $|\phi|$ and at least one other element.

That is to say, $C$ is a variable over propositions, and as such it will occasionally be useful to coindex it with a previous sentence as seen in (8).

(17) A: Did you say that [Mary left]? 
B: No, I said that [[Barry]$\sim C_i$].

By (16), the focus in B’s statement in (17) introduces the covert variable $C$ with the presupposition that $C$ is some member of the focus set of $[Barry]$ left, which is \{Barry left, Mary left, Gary left, Harry left…\}. The presupposition holds because $C$ can pick up sentence $i$, which is in this focus set. The variable $C$, as defined in (16), is looking to pick up a contextually salient member of the set of alternatives.

Rooth (1985) argues that this sensitivity to focus is part of the lexical semantics of the operators he considered, and that it bears on the determination of their domain restriction. Basically, he argues that the domain is (a subset of) the focus determined alternative set corresponding to the constituent, which is the operator’s scope at LF. However, it is clear that focus does not fully determine the domain of these operators.
According to Roberts (1996), other contextual factors plus presuppositions of the constituent in the operator's scope also play an important role in its determination.

In the case of rhetorical exlamatives, I argue that the focus is a contrastive focus. According to Zubizarreta (1998) contrastive focus has two effects: it negates the value assigned to a variable in the assertion structure of its context statement (as indicated by the explicit or implicit negative tag associated with contrastive focus), and on the other hand, it introduces an alternative value for such a variable. The focus-presupposition structure of such statements is represented in terms of ‘two ordered assertions’.

In the light of this approach, the interpretation of a rhetorical exclamative, such as (18), is as follows: The domain of the negative operator is the set of properties that are relevant in the context at that point in the discourse, and its effect is to point toward the bottom element of the scale associated with nice. In other words, the negation denies the property of being nice at any degree:

(18) ¡Bonita fiesta me organizaste!

Set of alternatives: {bonita, ¬bonita}

Assertion (1) (Proffered content): the party has the property denoted by the adjective

Assertion 2 (Presupposed content): it is not the case the party has the property denoted by the adjective
Given that what the speaker is presupposing is that *The party was not nice* (in spite of the fact that she is saying that *The party was nice*), the exclamative must be uttered in a context where this is implicitly entailed. For instance, in a context where after having a party where the food was not enough, the beers were warm and the people invited did not have anything in common. Hence on the assumption that (i) the speaker is competent and wants to say something truthful, the hearer can conclude that the intended alternative is “¬ bonita”; and that (ii) the hearer will seek to resolve any apparent failure of cooperation. Finally, the hearer will be able to use the presuppositions of the constituent in focus position to accommodate the information assumed by the speaker.

Chomsky (1971, 1976) suggests that focus is defined in terms of the discourse notion of ‘presupposition’: that is, the focus is the non-presupposed part of the sentence:

(19) FocP

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{ZP} \\
\text{Foc} \\
\text{Foc'} \\
\text{WP}
\end{array}
\]

ZP=Focus

WP= Presupposition

In the case of rhetorical exclamatives, at LF the negation occupies the specifier of F’ head and the Adj/Adv Phrase (presupposition) is its complement:
4.5. Pragmatic Characteristics

4.5.1. Felicitous conditions

I define Rhetorical exclamatives as a communicative indirect speech act that shows a mismatch between the locutionary act (what is said) and the illocutionary act (what is implicated) unlike in standard exclamatives. Namely, rhetorical exclamatives show discordance between the uttered content and the speaker’s communicative intentions.

‘What is said’ has been widely identified with the literal content of the utterance; ‘what is implicated’ (i.e., the implicature) has been identified with the non-literal, what is (intentionally) communicated, but not said, by the speaker. I argue that when uttering a rhetorical exclamative, what the speaker says is a false proposition due to the presence of a covert negative operator that changes the sincerity conditions to utter the exclamative.

Gutiérrez-Rexach and Andueza (2011) claim that to utter an exclamative there are two requisites that need to be fulfilled: The speaker has to have previous expectations and the facts have to contradict these expectations by pointing to a higher degree in the reference scale. The speaker’s intention is to share her emotive attitude towards
the proposition with her interlocutor by pointing to the facts that have triggered the exclamative; therefore, the perlocutionary effects will affect the addressee’s knowledge but not necessarily her presuppositions and she does not need to have the same emotive attitude towards the propositional content as the speaker does.

When uttering an expressive utterance such as an exclamative (rhetorical and non-rhetorical), the speaker is the only individual who is able to assess the propositional content associated with EXC, since exclamatives (rhetorical and non-rhetorical) as speech acts denote an emotional attitude over an unexpected fact that is based on the speaker’s personal assessment. According to Searle’s (1975) taxonomy of illocutionary acts, by uttering an expressive speech act, the speaker simply expresses the sincerity conditions of the illocutionary act. In the case of rhetorical exclamatives, the context where the exclamative can be felicitously uttered is constrained by the speaker’s presupposition which is contradictory to ‘what is said’: In order to utter something like (18), the speaker has expectations (p1) of having a nice party; but she knows that the party was not nice (i.e. p2), because the facts deny the property of being nice by pointing toward the bottom element of the scale of nice (that is, the negation). Although she knows that the party was not nice, she chooses to echo her presuppositions and by doing so she utters a false proposition:

(21) ¡Bonita fiesta me preparaste!

p1: I expect to have a nice party

p2: I know the party was everything except nice
We can conclude that the speaker is not being sincere since she does not believe what she says. However, I argue that the speaker’s intention is not to lie to the hearer but to make her recognize the falsity of the utterance. In order to facilitate this task to the hearer, the speaker must show her intentions overtly. The addressee will recognize the falsehood of the utterance by considering not only the linguistic information, but also the communicative and conversational presumptions together with contextual beliefs. Namely, the hearer has to map the context with the proposition, assume that the speaker is competent and cooperative, and start an inferential process in order to understand the speaker’s communicative intentions. For this reason, I dismiss any pragmatic/semantic approach that does not take into consideration the role of context in understanding the meaning of rhetorical exclamatives.

4.5.2. Speaker’s intentions

In rhetorical exclamatives, what initially might seem to be the expression of a compliment may turn out to be a complaint or criticism; what seems to be a lament turns out to be an expression of joy, etc. In this section, I will briefly examine uses associated with the following attitudes: disappointment, disapproval, criticism, complaint, anger and astonishment.

By uttering (22), a speaker can express disappointment with the fact that her team has played worse than she expected:
¡Bien jugó el Real Madrid!

‘Real Madrid played well!’

A true sports fan expects that her team will win every game but, in the above example, the speaker selects the least appropriate adverb to describe how bad her team played. If she knows that the score was not good or that the Real Madrid played poorly, the hearer is able to understand that *bien* (‘well’) is the least appropriate or expected adjective to describe the situation (hence its ironic use). This is the prototypical situation in which the intentions of the speaker can be inferred, and as such as (22) is construed as a rhetorical expression of her unhappiness.

The speaker can blame the hearer when an expected event turns out to be a disaster:

¡Bonita fiesta me organizaste!

‘A nice party you arranged for me!’

The speaker may choose *bonita* ‘nice’ as an adjective describing the least appropriate or expected property of a party in a context where both interlocutors share the common knowledge that the party was ruined by bad organization, the wrong combination of guests, the wrong time, the wrong place or anything else that the hearer would be responsible for. The use of *bonito/a* in an exclamative sentence has become idiomatic, and is applicable to several sorts of entities. A sample search on
the CREA corpus yields several results of ‘bonita + noun’ with a rhetorical 
exclamative interpretation: bonita sobremesa ‘nice after-lunch conversation’, bonito 

Consider now (24):

(24) ¡Mal que viven los políticos!
‘What a hard life politicians have!’

The speaker can express her criticism about the fact that politicians in general live 
better than they deserve, because they have certain privileges that other people do not 
have. Only those participants in a conversation who share this belief would be able to 
recognize that mal ‘bad’ is the least expected adverb to describe the life of politicians. 
In other cases, the participants would not need to share any particular common ground 
in order for the intended interpretation to be retrieved, especially in indirect speech 
acts that are highly conventionalized. For example, ¡Mal que viven los políticos! is 
interpreted by most speakers as meaning ‘politicians have an easy life’ because it is a 
popular belief that politicians are crooks, do not work hard, etc.

In (25), the speaker expresses discontent when she feels offended to a certain 
degree by her mother-in-law’s comment:

(25) ¡Simpático comentario el de tu madre!
‘Your mother made such a kind comment!’

The speaker is referring to something that the addressee’s mother has said before and expresses her attitude toward it. Once again, the hearer needs to be aware of certain facts in the common ground underlying this particular comment in order to recognize that the speaker is using the least expected adjective, and thus infer in turn that she is upset by such a comment.

Consider now (26), in a context where the speaker is frustrated because she is trying to get some bureaucratic work done fast:

(26) ¡Qué rápido se trabaja en este país!
‘How fast work gets done in this country!’

The speaker expresses anger by choosing rápido ‘fast’ as the adjective expressing the opposite of what she believes is the work ethic of the citizens of that country, and assumes that the hearer believes so too. On the other side of the emotional spectrum, a speaker may rhetorically express her nostalgia about a nicer boss with (27) or her praise of Kobe Bryant’s skills to play basketball with (28):

(27) ¡Qué vida más dura nos hacía llevar el jefe anterior!
‘What a hard time our previous boss used to give us!’
(28) ¡Qué torpe es Kobe Bryant jugando al baloncesto!

‘What a clumsy basket player Kobe Bryant is!’

4.5.3. Irony

Irony deserves special mention when considering the expressive dimension of rhetorical exclamatives, since irony is probably the most common rhetorical goal when using an exclamative of this sort.

Several theories have proposed different definitions to explain the sloppy concept of irony. In Grice’s framework irony is an overt violation of the maxim of truthfulness: irony implicates the opposite of what was said. Grice (1989) claims that an ironic speaker does not say but makes as if to say. Namely, when a speaker is ironic she makes as if to say something and implicates its contradictory term (or something that implies its contradictory).

According to (Grice 1967/1989: 34), the only thing an audience will understand when hearing an ironic utterance, such as (29), is a proposition which they must already know by the time they hear this utterance. In order to get the ironic reading in the following example A’s hearers have to know that A does not believe That X is a fine friend (otherwise they wouldn’t be able to recognize the flouting of the Quantity maxim: Make your contribution as informative as is required). In short, ironic cases would be mere remarks about very well-known things:
(29) X, with whom A has been on close terms until now, has betrayed a secret of A’s to a business rival.

A says: X is a fine friend.

However, Grice points out that being ironic cannot be reduced to communicating the opposite, as we can see in the following example, (30), from Grice (1967/1989: 53) in which B, in spite of the fact that she is communicating the opposite, is not being ironic. Grice claims that a critical attitude is necessarily communicated by irony:

(30) A and B are walking down the street, and they both see a car with a shattered window. B says:

Look, the car has all its windows intact

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986) an ironic speaker echoically mentions a proposition. Instead of using it, the speaker mentions it in such a way as to make it clear that she rejects it as ludicrously false, inappropriate, or irrelevant. They say:

(31) Not all ironical echoes are as easily recognizable. The thought being echoed may not have been expressed in an utterance; it may not be attributable to any specific person, but merely to a type of person, or people in general; it may be merely a cultural aspiration or norm. (Wilson & Sperber, 1992: p. 60)
In other words, in order to be successfully ironic, the meaning mentioned must recognizably echo a thought that has been, is being, or might be entertained or expressed by someone.

Clark & Gerrig (1984) claim that when uttering an utterance like (29), the speaker is pretending that she is speaking to an unknown hearer. It is absurd that A should say that (since he himself and the hearers know that he does not believe that X is a fine friend); and what has been pretended to be said deserves a hostile opinion. A’s hearers will realize this absurdity and recognize the attitude which A has towards what she has pretended to say.

Garmendia (2008, 2010), on the other hand, states that there is a mismatch between her beliefs and the proffered content; thereby the speaker does not take responsibility for believing in its truth. Garmendia analyzes (29), the famous example from Grice (1967/1989: 34) as follows: The speaker makes as if to say a content of her utterance and implicates an ironic content (that is what she calls .Asif-Theory). She distinguishes the content that the speaker has made as if to say from the ironic, implicated content. The latter implicature is what she calls the bridge-content which is close to the Asif-content but it is the strongest implicature in terms of relevance.

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7 Garmendia’s approach is a development of Grice’s claim that an ironic speaker does not say, but makes as if to say. Namely, when a speaker is ironic she makes as if to say something and implicates its contradictory (or something that implies its contradictory).

8 A proposition may be more or less strongly implicated by an utterance. It is strongly implicated (or is a strong implicature) if its recovery is essential in order to arrive at an interpretation that satisfies the expectations of relevance raised by the utterance itself. It is weakly implicated if its recovery helps with
theory. Since the informative value is quite trivial (i.e. A’s hearer must know by the
time of the utterance that A does not believe that X is a fine friend), Garmendia
claims that the content of the ironic content will lead the hearers to further
implicatures (such as that A has been a fool for believing in X, That he should not
have trusted him) and this will act as the bridge between the Asif-content and the
ironic content:

(32) Asif-content: That X is a fine friend

Ironic content: That X is not a fine friend

Although I agree with Garmendia that there is a mismatch between the speaker’s
beliefs and what she said, I want to point out that, as I have already argued in section
4.5. of this chapter, in the case of rhetorical exclamatives, the speaker’s beliefs must
be de re beliefs (that is, she must have evidence of these facts) and she must share that
knowledge with her speaker not only to make the exclamative utterance felicitous but
also to show overtly the mismatch between them and the uttered content. There is not
a de re belief such as ‘X-is fine’ in the set of the interlocutor’s de re beliefs, since the
evidence is negating any degree of fine, that is, its negation. In the case of rhetorical
exclamatives, facts always point to the bottom of the elicited scale and always
contradict the uttered content (or the Asif-content). Rhetorical exclamatives can be

the construction of an interpretation that is relevant in the expected way, but is not itself essential
because the utterance suggests a range of similar possible implicatures, any one of which would do
(Sperber & Wilson 1986).
used to express irony in many different ways. However, it turns out to be that the majority of rhetorical exclamatives have an echoic flavor since to utter an exclamative (rhetorical or non-rhetorical) felicitously the speaker has to refer to the shared knowledge among the interlocutors, such as contextual facts, cultural knowledge, an expression mentioned before in the conversation or even her own previous thoughts/assumptions. For example, let’s take the example (28) and rephrase it as an exclamative (33). I claim that the set of speaker’s expectations includes the proposition “X is a fine friend”; however, the facts show that “X is not a fine friend” and that constitutes the speaker’s de re beliefs which contradict the expectations. Instead of referring to the former, the speaker chooses to refer to her previous expectations which give us an overt mismatch between what is said and the implicated content:

(33) What a good friend X is!

There are more examples of echoic rhetorical exclamatives, as we can see in the following models:

(34) ¡Conque ibas a avisarme!
So you were going to call me!

(35) ¡Vaya, con el socialista!
Well! And he seems to be such a socialist guy!

(36) ¡Con todo lo listo que te crefas tú!
(37) ¡ Tan ágil que eres!

For instance, in a situation like (33) where the hearer promised in a previous conversation to call the speaker to reveal something but never did, the speaker, by using the hearer’s own words, reproaches her for breaking her own word. An exclamative such as (34) can be uttered in a context where the hearer has always presented himself as a socialist but has done something (such as voting for the right wing) that makes the speaker suspicious of this. In order to point out the contradiction, the speaker takes up the hearer’s words again and by doing that she is discrediting the hearer and expressing her annoyance.

There seems to be an agreement among specialists that irony expresses negative implicatures. Grice states that:

(38) (…) irony is intimately connected with the expression of a feeling, attitude or evaluation. I cannot say something ironically unless what I say is intended to reflect a hostile or derogatory judgment or a feeling such as indignation or contempt (Grice 1967b/1989: 54).

Sperber and Wilson (1986/95: 239) claim that the attitude expressed by an ironic utterance is invariably of the rejecting or disapproving kind. The speaker dissociates herself from the opinion echoed and indicates that she does not hold it herself.
Furthermore, Haverkate (1990: 90) proposes the concept of “qualifying judgment”: ironic qualifications are depreciatory, since they serve the particular purpose of criticizing the behavior of the interlocutor or other persons.

On the other hand, it has been claimed (Paradis and Willners, 2006 and Giora et al., 2005) that irony can have mitigating effects, by attenuating the impact or effect of the speaker’s judgment or assessment of the addressee For example, we might utter (39) to ironically highlight that the addressee is somewhat late:

(39) ¡Qué pronto has venido!
‘How early you came by!’

Paradis and Willner (2006) claim that this is possible because the role of the implicit negative element would be similar to that of the role of an attenuating degree modifier when it is combined with an unbounded adjective or adverb such as wide or early. Scalar elements are normally not associated with a boundary and do not bisect a domain in an ‘either-or’ fashion. The higher values only tend toward the extreme degree, but they actually never reach an end-point. Thus, when an unbounded adjective or adverb is negated, the result is an attenuation of the negated property. In the case of (37) above, the effect of the implicit negation on the adverb, namely no pronto ‘not early’, would be to trigger an attenuated ‘less than early’ interpretation
and not the extreme or unmitigated ‘late/too late’ interpretation. Irony cancels the high degree implicature associated with exclamatives.

On the other hand, Brown and Levinson (1987) consider an ironic example such as (40) a case of positive politeness strategy. Since they see politeness in terms of conflict avoidance and a deviation of the Gricean Cooperative Principle, they claim that when a face-threatening act has to be performed, the speaker has to decide what strategy she is going to use: attend to the hearer’s positive face or attend to the hearer’s negative face.

(40) How about lending me this old heap of junk? (It’s new Cadillac)

In this case, the speaker is requesting her friend’s brand new Cadillac, which threatens the hearer’s face since she has to decide whether or not to lend the car to her friend. The speaker, conscious of the pressure that this situation is putting on their relationship, chooses to joke about the shape of the car and praises her friend using an apparent negative comment.

As Andueza & Gutiérrez-Rexach (2011) claim, irony is not always used to mitigate an assertion or attend to the hearer’s positive face. An ironic exclamative sentence could also be used with the opposite purpose, namely to insult, make fun of or even humiliate somebody. The associated interpretation tends to be that of the antonym of the evaluative element, which is located on the opposite side of the scale associated with the elicited adjective or adverb. For example, in a situation in which a
sergeant is tired of the mistakes of a very dumb soldier and he is being notified that the soldier forgot a folder with important documents in a restaurant, he may utter (39). What he intends to communicate is that the soldier behaved in a very stupid fashion:

(41) ¡Muy inteligente fue usted!
‘You really proved to be a smart guy’

Garmendia (2010) claims that, following Grice, ironic utterances always express criticism. To be critical of something is to have a propositional attitude. The speaker holds a valuation/evaluation of an opinion about some particular content. That opinion is necessarily negative in the case of criticism. In other words, being critical is to have a negatively evaluative attitude towards a proposition. It is—the attitude and not the proposition—that is negative.

However, there are many cases such as the following ones that do not express a critical attitude and they can still be considered ironic:

(42) Husband: My mom is coming for dinner
Wife: Nice!

(43) Employee: I am going on vacation next week
Boss: Of course, you are going on vacation next week, and the following too!
I conclude that not all ironic utterances express criticism. I argue that the negative implicatures are a consequence of the covert negation that not only affects the truth value of the uttered proposition but also the emotive attitude. This explains why an apparent surprise utterance can express other emotive attitudes.

I state that Grice’s idea that an ironic utterance implies its contradictory is still valid in explaining how irony works in rhetorical exclamatives: The implicated proposition “X is not fine’ implies the falsity of the elicited proposition “X is fine”. Therefore, the elicited proposition and the implied proposition are contradictory. The shared knowledge about the de re beliefs makes the addressee grasp the contradiction.

I agree with Garmendia (2010) that by being ironic the speaker tries to communicate something more, not because of the impression that the ironic utterance might result un-informatively (i.e. trivial), but because irony is a super pragmatic strategy that is used to express indirect speech acts\(^9\) of admiration, criticism and disappointment as we saw in the previous section. Since ironic utterances can convey an array of weak implicatures, the speaker can communicate a dissociative attitude toward the uttered content and therefore express speech acts indirectly. Recognizing the ironic intention is recognizing the intended illocutionary force. I conclude that the presence of an overt negation is not only responsible for the contradictory-ironic meaning but also affects the sincere conditions for illocutionary acts. Knowledge of

\(^9\)According to Searle (1969): "In indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer."
the contextual facts is crucial in figuring out which speech act a speaker intends to perform through the utterance. It is only by considering the relative status of the interlocutors in the situation in question and the information that they share, but also whatever the speaker’s emotive attitude is, we can still form a hypothesis about whether this constitutes a speech act of criticism, admiration, complaint, etc.

All the attempts to define irony seem to agree about the fact that: (i) Irony encodes criticism, and (ii) In order to grasp the ironic interpretation of an utterance, the speaker and the hearer must share some common knowledge. I devote the next section to offer an explanation of what I understand context to be.

4.5.4. The concept of context

I have claimed that the role of contextual facts is crucial to understanding exclamatives (rhetorical and non-rhetorical). However, many different concepts are included under this term: Often the term is used for anything in the indefinitely large scope of an utterance, from the intentions of the speaker to the previous topics of conversation to the object discernible in the environment.

According to Stalnaker (1974), context is a matter of common ground: shared beliefs that serve as common presuppositions for the interpretation of assertions. According to Stalnaker, the speaker’s presuppositions are, roughly, those propositions which she believes to constitute the accepted background information for the conversation in which she is engaged. Under the Stalnakerian approach, when the
speaker utters a rhetorical exclamative like (44), she presupposes that *The party was not nice*, is already on the common ground. According to Stalnaker, in the ideal situation, the presupposition of all discourse participants will match. That is, what Stalnaker calls a nondefective context. When discourse participants discover that the context is defective, they will try to eliminate observed discrepancies among their presupposition sets. The argument for this is based on communication efficiency. Since communication is the point of the enterprise, everyone will have a motive to try to keep the presuppositions the same.

Although I agree with Stalnaker that the primary goal of discourse is to discover and share with the other interlocutors "the way things are", i.e. to share information about our world, I contend that the context of exclamatives (rhetorical and non-rhetorical) cannot be understood as the speaker’s beliefs about the common ground prior to the utterance. When uttering an exclamative, the speaker is expressing her own emotive attitude towards the propositional content, and the addressee needs to start an inferential process to understand the speaker’s presuppositions, accept them (if she decides to go along with them) and finally accommodate them. The surprise emotive attitude depends on the speaker’s assumptions/expectations that might follow from common-ground norms and socially-accepted standards, but also could be expectations reflecting her personal assessment. When uttering an exclamative the speaker is not assuming that her personal assessment is common ground; rather, she assumes that it could be accepted and added to the common ground, but this would depend only on the hearer’s process of accommodation. I argue that to interpret
exclamatives, we need a context understood as common ground which is interpreted not as a set of accepted presupposition but as the interlocutor’s intentions and assumptions (Grice 1967). In the case of rhetorical exclamatives, we need a context where the hearer can recognize that the intended content contradicts the proffered content. That is, a context where the intended content (not the uttered one) will update the context felicitously and will be added to the common information if the addressee accepts its truth. In order to facilitate this task, a cooperative speaker should utter a presupposing sentence only if she believes that her addressees has, or can construct an information state updatable by the utterance and she has to overtly show her assumptions/presuppositions.

The context should encode in some form various metaprinclences governing the flow of information. In that context the interlocutors should assume that the speaker is competent and cooperative and therefore that her utterance is clear, unambiguous, and relevant to the topic under discussion as well as containing the appropriate amount of information for the purposes of the interlocutors' current goals. In addition, I claim that to interpret rhetorical exclamatives we need to consider the world of evaluation (the real world). If the locutionary content is fixed by the actual contextual facts, the hearer has to consider these facts in order to realize that the speaker's intended locutionary content may not be the locutionary content of the utterance she produces. According to this, a rhetorical exclamative such as (44) will be interpreted as follows: The proffered proposition *The party was nice* will be true if and only if there is an $x$ (an individual, i.e. the party) and $y$ (a property) such that the speaker of $u$
(utterance) attributes $x$ to $y$; otherwise, it will be false. If these conditions are not met in the referential/actual world, the hearer might conclude at this point that the presupposition is false. However, the failure to resolve a presupposition leaves the interlocutors without an understanding of the proposition expressed. Since the hearer assumes that the speaker is being cooperative and wants to make a relevant contribution to the conversation, she must conclude that the actual contextual facts point to the speaker’s intentions, and that the intended content is *The party was not nice*.

(44) ¡Bonita fiesta me organizaste!

‘Nice party you arranged for me’

I conclude that interpreting rhetorical exclamatives consists of resolving the problem that the encoded presupposition is false by checking the information provided by the contextual facts. If the presupposition that we had to resolve had been *The party was nice*, the context would have not contradicted this presupposition. In other words, the intended content constrains the context in which a rhetorical exclamative can be uttered.

In summary, context is constrained by the speaker’s presuppositions and is constituted by contextual facts (i.e. background information, *de re* beliefs evidence) that contradict ‘what is said’ and guide the hearer to find out what the speaker’s communicative intentions are.
4.5.5. The role of the addressee

With indirect speech acts the inferential process carried on by the hearer is crucial for a successful communicative exchange. So, we need a theory that includes the role of the address in the process of interpreting the speaker’s intentions. In cases where ‘what is said’ is not ‘what is implicated’; that is, when ‘what is implicated’ contradicts ‘what is said’ as is the case with of rhetorical exclamatives.

4.5.6. Grice

Within Grice’s framework (Grice, 1967), a speaker’s communicated meaning consists of ‘what is said’ and ‘what is implicated’. ‘What is said’ corresponds to the truth-evaluable propositional content of an utterance, while ‘what is implicated’ corresponds to additional aspects of speaker-intended meaning beyond what is said. For Grice, ‘what is said’ is determined by the conventional meaning of the words a speaker utters, while ‘what is implicated’ is determined by additional pragmatic factors. According to Grice, the ‘calculation’ of what is implicated is grounded on common knowledge of what the speaker has said, such as the linguistic and extra-linguistic context of the utterance, general background information, and the consideration of the Cooperative Principle (CP):
(45) Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. (Grice 1967, 1989)

The CP is implemented in the plans of speakers and understanding of hearers by the following maxims:

(46)

- **Quantity**

  Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).

  Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

- **Quality**

  (Supermaxim): Try to make your contribution one that is true.

  (Submaxims): Do not say what you believe to be false.

  Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

- **Relation**

  Be relevant.

- **Manner**

  (Supermaxim): Be perspicacious.

  (Submaxims): Avoid obscurity of expression.

  Avoid ambiguity.

  Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
Be orderly.

If we follow Grice’s maxims we are able to explain rhetorical exclamatives as non-literal implicatures, more precisely as particularized implicatures, and also establish that the addressee, by considering the situation, concludes that the speaker is violating several conversational maxims, such as: The quantity maxim; the manner maxims and the quality maxim. Therefore, the speaker is not being as cooperative as she should. Unfortunately, Grice (1961) left the relevance maxim unexplained and therefore we cannot explain why the speaker chooses not to be cooperative and how the inference process to understand the communicative intentions of her interlocutor should proceed.

However, I would like to show how far we can go with this theory because I believe it can provide useful insights to explain the process of understanding rhetorical exclamatives.

4.5.6.1. Conversational implicatures

Grice (1975) distinguishes between generalized and particular implicatures. The difference between them is that the former are context independent; the latter, on the other hand, are context dependent. Recognizing them requires a consideration of the utterance in terms of a context. Rhetorical exclamatives generate conversational implicatures, more precisely, particularized implicatures since their non-literal use relies on contextual circumstances.
Several authors (McCafferty 1987, Thomason 1990, Welker 1994, and Roberts 1996) have argued that such implicatures may be explained as contextual entailments. For example, a rhetorical exclamative like (43) is *prima facie* irrelevant since both the speaker and the hearer know that the speaker did not call when she said she was going to, therefore a metapresupposition of relevance and reasonable assumptions about the speaker's goals and intentions would lead us to infer that she meant more than she said. For instance, A has to know that B was waiting for the call because A was supposed to take B to a dinner party. Since A never called, B could not go to the party, and therefore A can assume that B is pretty upset, and that B's intentions are to communicate her disappointment:

(47) ¡Conque me ibas a llamar!

‘So you were going to call me’

Felicity then drives the update of the context with the intended meaning over and above the proposition literally expressed. In order for this type of account to work, context would need to reflect the fact that the interlocutors are committed to something like the Gricean maxims; It should also contain information about the interlocutors' goals and intentions.

4.5.6.2. Idiomaticity
There is a group of rhetorical exclamatives, such as (44) and (45) that might be considered idioms at first sight:

(48) ¡Simpático comentario el de tu madre!
‘Nice comment your mother made’

(49) ¡Bonita fiesta me organizaste!

I claim that idiomaticity is a matter of degree and, following, Searle (1998: 625), I argue that the former-unlike the latter- are not idioms for several reasons: In their use as indirect utterances they admit literal responses that show that they are uttered literally. Thus, (48) admits as a reaction an utterance such as (50) or (51):

(50) Sí, la verdad es que no fue muy agradable
‘Yes, you are right. Her comment was not very nice’

(51) ¡Tampoco fue para tanto!
‘It’s not such a big deal’

Further evidence that these types of rhetorical exclamatives are not idioms is that, whereas a word-for-word translation of any idioms into other languages will not produce a coherent meaning, the translation into other languages of a RE such as the
one above will produce an exclamative with the same indirect illocutionary as the Spanish example:

(52) Simpatico il commentario di tua madre! (italian)
(53) Sympa le commentaire de ta mere! (french)
(54) Simpatico o comentario da sua mae! (portuguese)

However, some rhetorical exclamatives can be idiomatic. This is the case of (45), since synonyms of ‘bonita’ would not have the same indirect illocutionary force, as we can see in the following examples:

(55) ??¡Bella/ atractiva/ preciosa fiesta me organizaste!

In sum, if we follow Grice’s theory, we can assume that (i) the speaker is being cooperative and that she is following the maxims and (ii) conclude that rhetorical exclamatives constitute particularized conversational implicatures. However, this is not enough to interpret rhetorical exclamatives, since we also need to explain the speaker’s intentions and how these constructions are connected to the context, to previous assumptions and what their contextual effects are.

4.5.7. Relevance theory
As Strawson (1964) points out "stating is not a gratuitous and random human activity". We do not direct isolated and unconnected pieces of information at each other. Statements are not generally self-sufficient units, free of any reliance upon which the audience has assumed already. The requirements that utterance content connect with existing assumptions and that the speaker takes account of the hearer's current cognitive condition are met by the more inclusive and fully cognitively-grounded Communicative Principle of Relevance, which is at the heart of Sperber & Wilson's Relevance Theory. Pragmatic relevance, according to them, is a property of utterances as a particular case of inputs to cognitive processes:

(56) An input is relevant to an individual when it connects with available contextual assumptions to yield POSITIVE COGNITIVE EFFECTS: for example, true contextual implications, or warranted strengthening or revisions of existing assumptions. (Sperber & Wilson 2005: 7)

The relevance of an input for an individual is a matter of degree. In general, the greater those positive cognitive effects with the smaller mental effort to get them, the greater the relevance of the input for the individual. This idea is expressed in the first (cognitive) principle of relevance:
(57) Human cognition is geared towards the maximization of relevance (that is, to the achievement of as many contextual (cognitive) effects as possible for as little processing effort as possible).

However, it is important to notice that for a communicative act to be successful, the speaker needs the addressee's attention; since everyone is geared towards the maximization of relevance, the speaker should try to make her utterance relevant enough to be worth the addressee's attention. This leads us to the second communicative principle of relevance:

(58) Every act of ostensive communication (e.g. an utterance) communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

By ‘ostensive’ relevance theorists make reference to the ‘overt’ or ‘public’ nature of the speaker's communicative intentions in acts of communication. Communication will be successful when the addressee recognizes those intentions. This process is mostly inferential, which means that the addressee starts the inferential process with a presumption that the input is not only relevant, but as relevant as it can be, *ceteris paribus*. Then, when someone utters something with a communicative purpose, she does it, according to relevance theory, with the presumption of optimal relevance. An input (a sight, a sound, an utterance, a memory) is relevant to an individual when it
connects with background information she has available to her and which allows to yield conclusions that matter to her. The presumption of optimal relevance states that:

(59) (a) The ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it be worth the addressee's effort to process it.

(b) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

According to Carston (1996), clause (a) captures both sufficiency of cognitive gain and sufficiency of cognitive economy (that is, the stimulus is low enough in the effort expenditure it demands from the hearer so as not to detract from the level of overall relevance); clause (b) sets an upper limit on both, one that captures the fact that an utterance may be more than merely adequate in its contextual effects.

However, that which makes an input worth picking out from the mass of competing stimuli is not just the cognitive effects it achieves. In different circumstances, the same stimulus may be more or less salient, the same contextual assumptions more or less accessible, and the same cognitive effects easier or harder to derive. Intuitively, the greater the effort of perception, memory and inference required, the less rewarding the input will be to process, and hence the less deserving of our attention. In relevance-theoretic terms, other things being equal, the greater the processing effort required, the less relevant the input will be. Thus, relevance may be assessed in terms of cognitive effects and processing effort:
a. Other things being equal, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.

b. Other things being equal, the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.

The speaker starts the inferential process when she perceives an ostensive stimulus and stops when her expectations of relevance are satisfied, that is, when she has the most relevant hypothesis (the one with the most positive cognitive effects at the least processing costs) about the speaker's communicative intention. By "expected level of relevance", we understand that the hearer is entitled to expect a level of relevance which is at least sufficient and which is as high as is compatible with the speaker's means and goals.

In the case of a rhetorical exclamative such as (61), the relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure applies as follows: Parallel to decoding the exclamative and getting the proposition expressed, the hearer starts an inferential process:

(61) ¡Bonita fiesta me organizaste!

She takes the exclamative as an input and the proposition ‘the party was nice’ as a premise with which she starts the inferential process. Then she connects it with the background information: among all the contextual facts or the shared knowledge
between the speaker and the hearer the most relevant implicature to interpret the exclamative utterance is the known fact that the party was not nice). By making this connection, the hearer realizes that there is a mismatch (implicated assumption) between the uttered content and the implicated content, which leads to the conclusion (implicated conclusion) that there is a contradiction. Assuming that the speaker is being cooperative and that her goals are to be relevant, the hearer will strengthen the assumption (positive effects) that the uttered proposition ‘the party was nice’ is a false proposition, and following the path of least resistance, the hearer arrives at an interpretation that *The party was not nice*, and is the most relevant alternative to her.

So far, we have what Sperber and Wilson call explicature\(^{10}\) but we need to get to the final level, that is, we need to know what emotive attitude the speaker is communicating: Is she expressing criticism, disappointment, anger or a combination of all? As an indirect speech act, the implicatures derived are more than one, the inferential process might be bigger than the one involved in a direct speech act but the cognitive effects are richer.

In summary, the hearer needs to consider contextual assumptions to get to the expected level of relevance compatible with the speaker’s goals: in the case of (61), since the speaker and the hearer share *de re* beliefs about the facts that have triggered the exclamative, when the addressee hears the uttered information, *The party was

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\(^{10}\) According to Sperber and Wilson (1995) an explicature is a sub-task in the overall comprehension process that consists in constructing an appropriate hypothesis about explicit content via decoding, disambiguation, reference resolution, and other pragmatic enrichment processes.
nice, new information for her, she connects that information with the already processed information, The party was not nice. So, the contextual effect of the new information is to contradict previous information. In this particular context, the literal interpretation of the exclamative is not an option unless the addressee ignores the contradictory facts or the speaker fails in her attempt to communicate a rhetorical (contradictory) utterance which causes the communication to fail. So, the background information and the relevance principle guide the inference process carried out by the speaker and constrain the speaker’s intentions.

However, from the point of view of the effort required, due to the fact that the intended communicative content is The party was not nice at all, the effort to interpret What a nice party! (a contradictory utterance) will not be bigger than interpreting a statement such as What a terrible party! (a non-contradictory one) since the context will guide the inferential process: strengthen some implicatures and block the irrelevant ones. Then, why did the speaker choose to utter What a nice party! Instead of What a terrible party? According to Sperber and Wilson, who interpret a case like this as an ironic one, the reason to select the former is because the attitudes conveyed may be very rich and varied. By uttering a rhetorical exclamative as indirect speech acts, they can encode multiple possible interpretations; for instance, by uttering (61), the speaker might intend to communicate that she is puzzled, angry, amused, intrigued, skeptical, and so on, or any combination of these.
4.5.8. Scalar implicatures

According to Grice (1961: 132), “one should not make a weaker statement rather than a stronger one unless there is a good reason for so doing”. In the case of rhetorical exclamatives, the speaker picks the strongest element in the scale while referring to the weakest. In a Gricean framework, scalar implicatures are all derived from Grice’s first Maxim of Quantity. An utterance employing a stronger value on such a scale provides more information than a similar utterance using a weaker value. Scalar implicatures are generated when a speaker selects a weaker value on the scale, thus implicating that stronger values on the scale are false.

On the other hand, the post-griceans Horn (1984) and Gazdar (1979) claim that scalar implicature involves the ordering of scalar values according to an entailment relation. If a sentence containing a stronger value on the scale is true, this will entail the truth of a corresponding sentence with a weaker scalar value substituted. For instance, the informational stronger element, ‘John bought three books’, entails the truth of the weaker claim ‘John bought two books’.

Doran et al. (2002) claim that scalar implicatures associated with gradable adjectives are less likely to be incorporated in the truth-conditional meaning of utterances containing these values due to the fact that the values on gradable adjective scales tend to be interpreted non-exclusively. Therefore, scalar values that are interpreted less exclusively are correspondingly less likely to favor the “exact” interpretation.
Hirschberg (1991)'s work on scalar implicatures marks a considerable widening and deepening of formal and computational work in the area while maintaining an essentially Gricean framework. Hirschberg (1991) provides an account of scalar implicatures that extends to cases in which an entailment relation does not hold among scalar values. It had been previously noted that conventional rankings, such as legal classifications (tort, misdemeanor, felony, capital crime), which are not ordered on the basis of entailment relations, can also generate scalar phenomena. Hirschberg develops the notion of a partially ordered set, or poset. Namely, if a set of linguistic expressions can be ranked according to some metric which orders alternate values as higher or lower, a poset can support scalar implicatures provided that the ranking metric is salient to both speaker and hearer. This broader notion of a partial ordering allows not only for orderings that do not support entailments but also for orderings that are much more context- or domain sensitive. Hirschberg distinguishes four types of scalar implicature stimuli: cardinals, ranked orderings, quantifiers and modals and gradable adjectives. Hirschberg (1991) claims that inferences may arise not only from a speaker's affirmation of a given value but also from a speaker's denial or assertion of ignorance of a given value. Denial of a value implicates the truth of alternate values.

We saw in chapter 1 that one of the characteristics that define Exclamative sentences is the presence of a scalar implicature that marks a high point in a contextually determined scale, thus triggering the high-degree reading. For instance, in an exclamative such as (52), the standard level of intelligence (standard degree) is
established by the speaker’s expectations (Gutiérrez Rexach, 1997), and John’s intelligence (reference degree) is located in a point higher than the standard one in the relevant scale of intelligence:

(62) ¡Qué inteligente es Juan!
‘How intelligent Juan is!’

I claim that in rhetorical exclamatives the negation of the highest value implies the truth of alternate values; the context determines (as Hirschberg (1991) proposes) that the alternate value will refer to the lowest one. Since standard measurement is normally not pre-established, the standard degree is usually determined by the speaker’s expectations or by the common ground they share. I argue that rhetorical exclamatives give rise to a negative implicature; positive predicates entail negative exclamations (63) and negative predicates entail positive exclamations (64):

(63) ¡Fea esa Claudia Schiffer! = ‘Not-ugly Claudia Schiffer, ie Claudia Schiffer is very pretty’

(64) ¡Guapo el amigo que te presenté! = ‘Not-handsome the friend I introduced you’ The friend I introduced you is very ugly’

When a negative adjective is used, the speaker will express an emotive attitude of a “positive” evaluative nature, such as astonishment or admiration. On the other hand,
when a positive adjective is used in a rhetorical exclamative construction, the emotive attitude that is expressed is ‘negative’ in nature: criticism, disappointment, etc.

4.6. Semantic characteristics

4.6.1. Vague Meaning, Standard Measures and Opposite Polarity Relations

The adjectives licensed in rhetorical exclamatives are evaluative adjectives that are normally characterized by having a vague meaning. This means that they can be true or false depending on the context (Kamp & Partee, 1995). For instance, a sentence such as (65) is felicitous in a hypothetical situation where the addressee is someone who, contrary to what was expected of her, has been able to fix a problem with the lock of the interlocutor’s door:

(65) ¡Muy listo eres tú!
‘You are such a smart guy!’

This sentence would probably be infelicitous if the addressee was a skilled mechanic and attributing this unique characteristic to her would not create the appropriate context for a standard exclamative but would be appropriate for a rhetorical interpretation. In short, the interpretation of a given sentence with a gradable adjective may vary according to the features of the common ground.

There are additional constraining factors on evaluative scalar adjectives in rhetorical exclamatives. Their extreme-degree interpretation is only approximate and
actually never reaches an end-point. They are normally not associated with a boundary and do not bisect a domain in an ‘either-or’ fashion, according to Paradis and Willner (2006). For example, (66) and (67) are felicitous:

(66) Juan es más bien tonto que listo
‘Juan is rather more stupid than smart’

(67) La fiesta fue más bien aburrida que divertida
‘The party was boring, not entertaining’

Evaluative adjectives do not normally participate in opposite polarity relations. Thus, we cannot claim that this is how the high degree of the scale of opposite polarity emerges. Sentence (68) does not capture what is intended when uttering (61):

(68) ¡Tú no eres muy listo!
‘You are not very smart!’

Evaluative adjectives are characterized not only by having a vague meaning, but also an undetermined one. This explains why when we negate the fact that somebody is not clever, it is not necessarily implied that this person is in fact stupid. What may be inferred is that she is absent-minded (in a situation where this person has forgotten her keys), or too innocent (in a situation in which the addressee has been cheated because of an excess of self-confidence), it could also mean that the interlocutor has
not been anticipating enough, or is just less intelligent than the speaker thought at first.

In the same fashion, we cannot claim that the interpretation of the following rhetorical exclamative in (69) is necessarily ‘You are very clever!.

(69) ¡Tonto eres tú!
‘You are such an idiot!’

There can be several possible interpretations, such as ‘You are not an innocent person!’, ‘You do not waste your time!’, etc. It could also be understood rhetorically as ‘You are right!’, in a situation where the addressee is presenting a new idea to the speaker, or something that the speaker did not think about before. The speaker, with admiration (or any other attitude congruent with the situation or the preceding discourse), may then felicitously utter (65) as a rhetorical exclamative. As we have stated before, in rhetorical exclamatives, evaluative adjectives do not necessarily participate in opposite polarity relations, even if the negated adjective belongs to the lowest position of another scale. In general, it is not possible to determine a priori which scale is the appropriate one just by considering the meaning of the adjective. In the case of (65), no-tonto ‘not stupid’ may belong to the scale of intelligence, audacity or innocence. Inferences from the common ground will guide the conversation participants in figuring out which scale is the relevant one.

4.6.2. NPI non-licensing
Rhetorical exclamatives differ from rhetorical questions in not allowing NPIs, as can be seen in the following examples.

(70) *¡Bonito regalo le has hecho a nadie!  
‘*Nice present you gave to nobody!’

(71) *¡Bien que has leído libro alguno!  
‘lit. Well you have read any book!’

(72) *¡Simpática fue persona alguna en la fiesta!  
‘lit. Nice was nobody at the party!’

(73) *¡Qué rápido has comido nada!  
‘*How fast you have eaten nothing!’

(74) *¡Lista es lo más mínimo!  
‘*Intelligent she is very little!’

Verbless exclamatives, which tend to be interpreted rhetorically, never allow NPIs, as the contrast between (75) and (76) illustrates:

(75) a. ¡Muy listo, este Pepe!  
‘Very clever, Pepe!’

b. ¡Muy graciosa, la niña!  
‘Very funny, this girl!’

(76) a. *¡Muy listo, estudiante alguno!

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‘Very clever, none of the students!’

b. *¡Buen regalo, para nadie!

‘Good present for nobody!’

There are several apparent exceptions to the incompatibility between rhetorical exclamatives and NPIs. For example, certain rhetorical questions have an exclamatory content and can express an emotive state (surprise, anger, etc.) In this subtype of questions, NPIs are allowed:

(77) ¡/¿Cuándo he dicho yo nada parecido!/?

‘When did I say nothing like that?!’

(78) ¡/¿Cómo iba a venir nadie!/?

‘How come nobody was coming?’

In general, these expressions are mostly construed as rhetorical questions (intonation varies). When the prevailing content is interrogative, NPIs are licensed:

(79) ¿Cómo que va a levantar un dedo por ti?

‘How come he is going to lift a finger for you?’

On the other hand, when the exclamatory content prevails, NPIs are not allowed:
From this data, we can conclude that NPIs are not licensed in rhetorical exclamatives. Recall that the negative element we postulated above cannot be able to be a legitimate licenser of NPIs given the fact that it lacks wide scope. The hypothesis that we want to advocate here is that the absence of NPIs in rhetorical exclamatives is related to two aspects: (i) The fact that negation is active at a pragmatic level and (ii) the factive nature of exclamatives.

4.6.3. Narrow scope negation

It has been observed that when negation occurs in an exclamative sentence, it tends to be expletive (Espinal 1997, Zanuttini & Portner 2000, Villalba 2004). In other words, it makes no effective contribution to the interpretation of the whole sentence:

(81) a. ¡Cuántas mentiras no nos habrá dicho Juan!
b. ¡Cuántas mentiras nos habrá dicho Juan!

‘The lies that Juan has told us!’

The two exclamative sentences above have the same meaning: ‘Juan has told us a lot of lies’. According to Espinal (1997), the negative head, which is selected by the head of a non-lexical Intensifier Phrase, is logically absorbed by it at the LF level of
syntactic representation. According to her, the relevant derivation is as follows: The verb moves first to the head of the Modal Phrase, then to the head of Tense Phrase, and finally to Agr Phrase for morphological checking. Further movement of this complex constituent to the head of Neg Phrase and to the head of CP is not allowed because no morphological or syntactic information is checked on the verb form. However, before LF is reached, this complex constituent must move to the head of NegP, CP and finally to Int for logical reasons. The temporal opacity of the verb, the expletive reading of the negative marker, and the nonspecific reading of the wh-expression are relative to the intensional frame and linguistic instructions codified by Int. For example, sentence (82) refers to a past event whereas (83) denotes a non-specific past. This explains the incompatibility of the exclamative with specific time expressions as in (84):

(82) A las artes que no le fueron dispensados muchos privilegios
‘Many privileges were not given to the arts’

(83) ¡Qué de privilegios no fueron dispensados a las artes!
‘Arts were given a lot of privileges!’

(84) *¡Qué de privilegios no fueron dispensados a las artes ayer!
‘*Arts were given a lot of privileges yesterday!’

In rhetorical exclamatives, when negation appears explicitly in the sentence it is always expletive:
(85) ¡No es listo el tío!
‘Boy, that guy is smart!’

(86) ¡Qué hambre no tendrá Juan!
‘Boy, Juan is hungry!’

Examples (85) and (86) respectively refer to the high degree in the scale of intelligence of the relevant individual and to the high degree of Juan’s hunger. Therefore, negation does not reverse the polarity of the proposition and the interpretation of these exclamatives is equivalent to their non-negated counterparts, (87) and (88):

(87) ¡Es muy listo el tío!

(88) ¡Qué hambre tiene Juan!

However, in the majority of cases, I claim that there is a covert negation, and this is responsible for the negative implicatures, active at the pragmatic level, with a narrow scope over the Adj/Adv Phrase (the DegP) that, as I show in 4.4, is in Focus position.

I find strong evidence that the negation works at a pragmatic level and not at a syntax level. If negation is present at a syntactic level, it is forced to appear in a lower
level than Focus Phrase, not only in matrix sentences but in embedded sentences as well:

(89) TONTO no es ese tío

(90) *No TONTO es ese tío

(91) Es sorprendente qué TONTO no es

(92) *Es sorprendente qué no TONTO es

Having a narrow scope over the constituent in focus position explains why it cannot affect the whole proposition, and since it cannot constitute a downward-entailing environment, it cannot license NPIs. Thus, rhetorical exclamatives remain as factive environments.

**4.6.4. Factivity and NPIs**

It has been claimed (Elliot 1974, Grimshaw 1979 and Zanuttini and Portner 2003) that complements of a particular semantic type will be selected by predicates of the same type. Therefore they conclude that EXCs can be embedded only by factive predicates, such as *be surprised* or *be amazed*, and that EXCs themselves constitute factive constructions. From a semantic perspective, it seems that factive predicates do not allow NPIs, as is shown in the following contrast: Non-factive epistemic verbs like *wonder* license NPIs, whereas an epistemic factive verb such as *know* excludes NPIs:
(93) John is wondering whether Bill said anything

(94) *John knows that Bill said anything

Although there are important differences between Spanish and English with regard to the embedability of exclamatives, it seems that in this respect they behave alike, as we can see in the following ungrammatical examples:

(95) *Juan se sorprende de haber visto animal alguno

‘*Juan is surprised about having seen any animal’

(96) *Juan se asombra de haber levantado un dedo

‘*Juan is amazed of having lifted a finger’

In chapter 2, I mentioned briefly that according to Giannakidou (2006), following Linebarger (1987), factive environments are veridical and not downward-entailing expressions and therefore they block the occurrence of NPIs. Giannakidou (2006: 588) claims that a propositional operator $F$ is veridical iff from the truth of $Fp$ one can infer that $p$ is true according to some individual $x$ (i.e. in some individual $x$’s epistemic model). This inference is typically an entailment of the sentence where $F$ occurs, but it can also be given by a presupposition of that sentence, as will turn out to be the case with factive verbs and determiners. If inference to the truth of $p$ under $F$ is not possible, $F$ is nonveridical. She defines (non)veridicality for propositional operators as follows:
(97) a. A propositional operator $F$ is veridical iff $Fp$ entails or presupposes that $p$ is true in some individual’s epistemic model $ME(x)$; otherwise $F$ is nonveridical.

b. A nonveridical operator $F$ is ANTIveridical iff $Fp$ entails that NOT $p$ in some individual’s epistemic model: $Fp \neg p$ in some $ME(x)$.

As we can see, when we utter a sentence like (98a) we infer that the presupposition *You bought a car* is true. Furthermore, we can state that predicates such as *surprise* are not downward entailing environments. In downward entailment contexts, expressions denoting sets can be substituted for expressions denoting subsets *salva veritate*. That is not the case with predicates like *surprise*, as example (98) shows, since (98a) does not entail (98b):

(98) a. I am surprised that you bought a car

b. I am surprised that you bought a Honda

An apparent exception occurs when the NPI is focused and in a sentence-initial detached position, a fact which supports the idea proposed by Lance (1999) that some NPIs, like *either*, are sensitive to focus position:

(99) ¡Un dedo, voy a levantar yo!

‘A finger, I am going to lift’

(100) ¡Un duro, voy a dar yo por ese coche!
'A red cent, I will pay for this car'

Linebarger (1987) claims, following Klima (1964)\textsuperscript{11}, that most NPIs are licensed because “the sentence containing the NPI must contain an overt negation c-commanding the NPI,” and that a sentence without this overt negation which contains an NPI has a “negative implicatum”. As I have been contending in this work, there is a covert negation at a pragmatic level that generates, as Linebarger suggests, negative implicatures, but in order to license a NPI, this has to occur in the immediate scope of negation. In other words, (101) and (102) can be paraphrased as follows:

(101) It is not the case that I am going to lift a finger
(102) It is not the case that I am going to pay a red cent for this car

Other apparently exceptional instances are those in which nada ‘nothing’ occurs in exclamative constructions. This would support Giannakidou’s (2006) claim that there are some NPIs (\textit{any}-type such as any, anything, nothing) that are more liberal than other NPIs and that can be rescued (or indirect licensed) in the scope of a veridical\textsuperscript{12} expression if that operator additionally makes a non-veridical inference available in the global context of the sentence. The author defines the rule of ‘rescuing by nonveridicality’ as follows:

\textsuperscript{11}The history of what is commonly called “polarity sensitivity” starts with Klima (1964), who gives perhaps the earliest attempt to account for the observation that certain words can only occur in so-called “negative” contexts, and others in “positive” ones.
\textsuperscript{12}Zwarts (1995) a veridical operator is one that preserves truth; a non-veridical operator is one that fails to; an averidical operator, similar to a downward entailing context, is one that reverses the factuality.
(103) A Polarity Item can be rescued in the scope of a veridical expression in a sentence if:

a) the GLOBAL context C of S makes a proposition S’ available which contains a nonveridical expression.

b) the PI can be associated with a veridical expression in S’.

The global context of a sentence is the set of propositions that arise from S without necessarily being entailed by it. So the global context contains the assertion (entailments and presuppositions) and possible pragmatic inferences (conversational and conventional implicatures). This is the case of the following example where nada appears in a veridical context, and the non-veridical inference is ‘Somebody did not bring anything to eat’:

(104) ¡Han venido con/SIN?? nada para comer!

‘They came with nothing to eat!’

One important consequence of rescuing is that it places pragmatic information outside the syntax, outside the LF, whereas the licensing takes place in the syntax. This implies a view where LF contains only the truth-conditional aspects of meaning and not global pragmatic information.
I claim in Chapter 2 that not all of the exclamatives denote degrees but that there are exclamatives that can also denote a propositional content. These are the cases of propositional exclamatives that I analyzed in section 2.5.1. of the first chapter of this dissertation. In short, the types of exclamatives that cannot be introduced by a *wh-*word: lack a high degree implicature, can constitute the answer of a question, can appear in comparative constructions, and can license the presence of an external negation in ForceP ((101)-(102):

(105) ¡Vaya que sí le importa un bledo!

..Go-SUBJ that yes to him matters a damn

‘Of course, he gives a damn!’

(106) ¡Venga que voy a levantar un dedo por él!

Come-SUBJ that I am going to lift a finger for him

‘Like I am going to lift a finger for him!’

Consequently, in propositional exclamatives with rhetorical readings, the covert negation affects the whole proposition. It behaves as propositional operator and its scope becomes a downward-entailing environment, which is the appropriate one to license NPIs.

4.7. Conclusions
I have shown that the presence of a covert negation in the Spec of Focus Phrase that reverses the scale associated with the Adj/Adv is not only responsible for understanding exclamatives as utterances in which ‘what is said’ contradicts ‘what is implied’ but also changes the felicitous requirements for the multiple illocutionary speech acts associated to rhetorical exclamatives, and due to its narrow scope does not license NPIs. As indirect speech acts, the successful communicative exchange requires the active participation of the addressee who will consider not only the context constrained by the speaker’s intentions and presuppositions but also that the speaker is observing certain principles of cooperative conversation, and also that the utterance is relevant to what is going on at the moment of the utterance.
Chapter 5: rhetorical utterances

5.1. Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to compare both rhetorical structures, Rhetorical Questions and Rhetorical Exclamatives. In section 5.2.1, I show that both rhetorical utterances constitute complex indirect speech acts. In section 5.3, I contend that the motivation to use rhetorical utterances is a question of politeness. In the first part of this section, I review the main theories about politeness and in the second part I apply them to the case of rhetorical utterances. In section 5.4., I explain the role of negation in both rhetorical utterances. Finally in section 5.5., I prove that rhetorical utterances can update the context.

5.2. Indirect speech acts

One of the striking similarities between rhetorical questions and rhetorical exclamatives is that both constitute indirect speech acts.

Searle (1969) defines indirect speech acts as utterances in which one illocutionary speech act is performed indirectly by performing another. As we saw in chapter 3, it has been claimed (Sadock 1971, 1974, Han 2002, Gutiérrez-Rexach 1998) that Rhetorical Questions are not information seeking questions rather they have the illocutionary force of an assertion. Namely they perform indirectly a declarative
speech act by performing an interrogative speech act. That is the case of RQs such as the following which are interpreted as *I did not tell you that writing a dissertation was easy* (1) and *I told you that writing a dissertation was easy* (2) respectively:

(1) Did I tell you that writing a dissertation was easy?

(2) Did not I tell you that writing a dissertation was easy?

According to Han (2002) that is due to the presence of a covert negation that makes the algebra collapse motivated by the pragmatic principle of informativeness which establishes that the negative answer is more informative than the positive.

On the other hand, I showed in chapter 4 that Rhetorical exclamatives, like rhetorical questions, constitute indirect speech acts, since they perform directly a surprise speech act but they perform indirectly an emotive speech act of criticism, disappointment or amazement. Therefore, they show discordance between the uttered content and the speaker’s communicative intentions. For example, when the speaker says something like (3), what she says is that “the party was nice” but what she implies is that “the party was not nice at all”.

(3) ¡Bonita fiesta me preparaste!

‘Nice party you arranged for me!’
According to Grice (1967, 1989), the linguistic meaning of an utterance is explained in terms of the speaker meaning:

(4) ‘A intended the utterance of x to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention”

I contend that the meaning of rhetorical utterances depends not only on speaker’s communicative intentions but also on the receiver’s interpretation. Searle (1969: 47) claims that we succeed in doing what we are trying to do by getting our audience to recognize what we are trying to do. In the case of rhetorical questions, the speaker’s intention is to make the receiver believe that the only possible answer is the one implicated by the speaker. The addressee, on the other hand, has to recognize these intentions and accept the speaker’s assumptions. In the case of rhetorical exclamatives, the speaker’s intention is to express a false proposition, and share her emotive attitude towards the proposition with her interlocutor. The addressee’s role is to recognize the falsehood of the utterance by correlating the exclamative with the contextual facts and infer the right speech act according to the circumstances. The inferential process will end when the hearer’s recognizes that the only possible answer for a RQ is the one assumed by the speaker, and in the case of a RE the inferential process will end when the hearer recognizes that the presupposition encoded in the uttered exclamative is false. In other words, the rhetorical interpretation will fail if the hearer is incapable of inferring the speaker’s intentions or if she rejects the speaker’s
assumptions, but the conversation will still be successful just by recognizing them. For instance, if in a context in which the speaker finds the party boring, she utters (5) ironically that does not entail that the addressee has to assume and believe that the party is boring if she does not think so. Her role consists in recognizing that the speaker is being ironic and, subsequently goes along with her assumptions/beliefs:

(5) ¡Qué fiesta más divertida!

‘What a fun party!’.

Although both RQs and REXCs constitute indirect speech acts, I claim that they constitute different kind of indirect speech acts: RQs are indirect speech acts because the speaker performs indirectly a declarative speech act by performing an interrogative speech act. So they show a mismatch of two incompatible illocutionary forces. Rhetorical exclamatives, on the other hand, keep the illocutionary force of an emotive speech act, but by expressing a surprise speech act, the speaker is performing indirectly a different emotive speech act of admiration, criticism, disappointment, etc. Thus there is no mismatch of two incompatible illocutionary forces but two emotive illocutionary forces.

Asher & Lascarides’ (2006) analyze indirect speech acts, not from an illocutionary point of view, as Searle proposes, but from a semantic level. They claim that indirect
speech acts such as (6) are a particular sort of complex semantic type (i.e. dot type\textsuperscript{13}) that is formed by two incompatible types (question•request). The constituent type of the complex reflects the dual communicative role of an indirect speech act like (1) and explains why it can be interpreted as a question or as a request:

(6) Can you pass the salt?

I claim that this theory can be applied in a pragmatic approach too. Searle (1988: 626) also claims that indirect speech acts still have their literal meaning and that they are uttered with and as having literal meaning. He finds evidence of this in the fact that responses that are appropriate to its literal meaning are appropriate to its indirect speech act:

\begin{itemize}
  \item a. The book has a purple cover.
  \item b. The book is hard to understand.
  \item c. The book is 500 pages long and documents in detail the theories of Freud.
\end{itemize}

Physical objects and abstract objects are typically incompatible types in lexical hierarchies. Formally, we assume an operation on types which takes two distinct types and combines them into a complex type: if $t_1$ and $t_2$ are types, then so is $t_1 \bullet t_2$ (even if the meet of $t_1$ and $t_2$ isn’t defined). This complex type $t_1 \bullet t_2$ can then be exploited in various ways in the composition of an utterance meaning. Pustejovsky (1995) demonstrates that by assigning the lexical entry book the complex type phys object • abst object, semantic composition in the grammar can exploit this typing to predict that predicates in the logical form can modify phys object, as in (16a), abst object, as in (16b), or both constituent types, as in (16c).

\textsuperscript{13}Pustejovsky (1995) uses dot types to analyze copredication, where coordinatedvps select for arguments of incompatible semantic types. Consider the word book. The type of object that this word denotes can be understood from several perspectives: as a physical object (e.g. (16a)); or as an abstract object of information content (e.g., (16b)). And indeed, it can be understood as both at the same time, as in (16c), which is an example of copredication:
(7) A: Can you pass the salt?
B: No, sorry I cannot, it’s down there at the end of the table
B: Yes, I can (here it is)

Following this idea, a RQ should be interpreted as a question and as an assertion; and in the case of REXC, as a veridical emotive utterance and as non-veridical emotive utterance. Searle (1998: 621) argues that:

(8) The inferential strategy is to establish, first, that the primary illocutionary point departs from the literal, and second what the primary illocutionary point is.

However, I contend that (i) a sentence is uttered with one and only one intention thus it receives one possible interpretation and (ii) the speaker does not need to start the inferential process by interpreting first the literal meaning since depending on the context (i.e. shared background information) some implicatures will become stronger but other implicatures will become weaker and eventually will be blocked. The inferential process of indirect speech should not be longer than interpreting literal utterances. Let’s take the case of the RQs. I argue that in the following situation the illocutionary implicated force is the illocutionary force of an assertion not of a question. Because of the context in which (9) has been uttered, this RQ has only one possible answer, that is, *I did not tell you that writing a dissertation was easy.*
(9) A is tired and desperate because it is the third time that her adviser is making her rewrite the second chapter of her dissertation. B, a friend who finished his dissertation two years ago, says to A:

Did I tell you that writing a dissertation was easy?

Even if A answers the question by saying (8) or (9), she is not answering it, rather she is either reinforcing the truth value assigned to the implicated assertion (10) or rejecting its truth value (11) respectively:

(10) No, you did not tell me that it was going to be easy

(11) Yes, you did!

However, in the following context, the same question can be interpreted as a real question and in that case the possible answer (10) and (11) can not be considered as reinforcements or rejections of the speaker’s assumptions but as real answers to the question in (12):

(12) A is complaining about all these people who told her that writing a dissertation is a piece of cake, and that it can be written in 5 months. B, who is not sure if he is one of these persons, asks A:

Did I tell you that writing a dissertation was easy?
The same reasoning can be applied to REXCs. In the following context, (13) can only be interpreted as a rhetorical exclamative:

(13) A and B are in the kitchen preparing breakfast and toasting some bread. All of a sudden the toaster catches on fire, and B, instinctively act, throws a glass of water on it. The fuses of the house blow, the smoke detector alerts the entire building and the fighters arrive. At this moment A says:

What a fantastic idea!

However in the following context, the exclamative can only be interpreted as a standard exclamative:

(14) A and B are in the kitchen preparing breakfast and toasting some bread. All of a sudden the toaster catches on fire. A, who had a glass of water when the fire started, was going to throw it on the toaster, when B in a fast move, took the fire extinguisher and put out the fire. Looking with admiration at B, A says:

What a fantastic idea!

In summary, rhetorical utterances as indirect speech acts produce many inferences however the context will provide clues about what inferences remain and what inferences are blocked. To grasp the most relevant inferences is to grasp the speaker’s intentions.
5.2.1. Inferential process

I distinguish two main groups of rhetorical utterances: conventionalized indirect speech act and non-conventionalized. In the case of the former the information to infer the speech act of the utterance comes from the lexicon (i.e. NPIs, idioms); in the case of the latter the information comes from the contextual information and the pragmatic reasoning (i.e. the relevance principle and the cooperative principle). However, even in the case of conventionalized rhetorical utterances an inferential process is still required. Thus, interpreting indirect speech acts, even conventionalized speech acts, is a question of intention and/or interpretation. For instance, in the case of a rhetorical question which rhetorical interpretation is due to the presence of an NPI, the addressee has to interpret that (i) the expression of ‘lift a finger’ means ‘make the minimum effort to do something’ and (ii) that this expression requires negation. Therefore in a context in which A is trying to convince B that her friends are not good friends, the presence of this item implies that none of B’s friends were able to make even the minimum effort to help her:

(15) ¿Quién levantó un dedo para ayudarte?

‘Who lifted a finger to help you?’

The inferential process of a rhetorical utterance has the same goal as in any other conversation, that is, the recognition of the speaker’s communicative intentions. The starting point in interpreting both rhetorical sentences is to assume that the content is
relevant and connected with some background information, and to assume that the speaker is cooperative and competent.

Both rhetorical utterances may seem to flout the Relevance Principle at first sight, so they require getting the addressee’s attention by uttering information that can be relevant to the her and by making her start an inferential process. The role of the speaker in the inferential process is to make her intentions overt and explicit. The speaker needs to remember that the greater the effort of perception, memory and inference required, the less rewarding the input will be to process, and hence the less deserving of our attention. In relevance-theoretic terms, other things being equal, the greater the processing effort required, the less relevant the input will be. Thus, relevance may be assessed in terms of cognitive effects and processing effort. Even though the rhetorical utterances express indirect speech acts, they have to be clear, unambiguous, and relevant to the topic under discussion and they should contain the appropriate amount of information for her purposes.

In both rhetorical utterances the context plays an important role in guiding the hearer in the inferential process and constrains the implicated meaning. A cooperative speaker would not make a rhetorical utterance in a context in which the interlocutors would not have any clue about her intentions. For instance, if the speaker utters the following exclamative out of the blue, the addressee will probably grasp its literal meaning by default:

(16) ¡Qué fiesta más divertida!
‘What a fun party!’

5.2.2. Common background information.

In order to facilitate the receiver’s task of grasping the speaker’s intentions, these intentions must be wholly overt, that is why the role of background information is crucial not only to utter but also to interpret indirect speech acts like rhetorical utterances successfully. Notice that as we have seen in chapter 2 most RQs are relational, that is, they are either related to some prior utterances or to the context: they provide an indirect answer to a previous question, like (17), or a commentary built upon a previous utterance, like (18):

(17) a. A: Is Clinton a liberal?
   b. B: Is the Pope Catholic?

(18) You should stop saying Luca did not like the party last night. After all, who was the only one that was still dancing at 3 am?

Rhetorical exclamatives are relational too, they are always related to contextual facts, since, like standard exclamatives, unexpected facts are always the trigger of exclamative speech acts. A REXC like (19) is uttered as a reaction to the evidence that the hearer is not very intelligent:
(19) ¡Muy listo eres tú!

‘You are very smart!’

Therefore rhetorical utterances are constrained by the content of the previous sentence or the contextual facts. The role of the hearer is to compute the relation between the two utterances in the case of RQs; and the utterance and the facts, in the case of REXCs, and assuming that the speaker wants to keep the dialogue coherent finds out the communicative intentions.

5.2.3. Why indirect speech acts instead of direct speech acts?

According to Searle (1998) when using directive speech acts speakers tend to use indirect speech acts for politeness reasons since indirect speech acts seem to present a free act rather than an imposition. I claim that politeness is also the reason to use rhetorical utterances.

Traditional theories of politeness (Lakoff 1973, Brown and Levinson 1978/1987, Leech 1983) analyze politeness phenomena from a clearly Gricean and speech-act theoretic perspective in which everything revolved around the speaker’s intention. Robin Lakoff (1973, 1990) was the first one to analyze the concept of politeness. She defines the term as “a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange” (Lakoff 1990: 34). The politeness rule, according to her, attends to social issues. She connects politeness and Grice’s Cooperative Principle, and
claims that if the hearer notices that speakers do not seem to be following the Gricean maxims, they search for a plausible explanation in the politeness rule. The first polite rule is “do not impose”; the second, “give options; and the third is “make A feel good, be friendly”. These three rules are applicable more or less depending on the type of situation as understood by the speaker. However, Lakoff left unexplained how the speaker knows what level of politeness is required.

Like Lakoff, Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory (the most influential) explains politeness in terms of conflict avoidance however they view linguistic politeness as a formal, deductive and predictive system. They claim that most speech acts threaten the hearer’s or the speaker’s face, and politeness redresses the threats allowing the speaker or hearer to ‘save face’. They postulate the existence of a Model Person endowed with rationality and face. Rationality in this context refers to "The application of a specific mode of reasoning [...] which guarantees inferences from ends or goals to means that will satisfy those ends" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 64). Face, on the other hand, consists in a) negative face, understood as the basic claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition and b) positive face, or the desire that one's wants be appreciated and approved of in interaction (Brown & Levinson 1987).

14 However, a number of linguists undermine the universality of Politeness Principles (Wierzbicka (1985), Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1994), Liao (1994), Janney and Arndt (1993), Chen (1993), Kasper (1990), Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993), Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Wierzbicka (1991), Watts et al. (1992), to name a few. The second criticism of B&L is that their distinction between negative politeness and positive politeness is dubious (Meier 1995:384). This problem, according to Meier (1995:385), has arisen from the fact that Brown and Levinson categorize many FTA’s as threatening both negative and positive face.

15 According to Brown and Levinson (1987), ‘face’ is the public self image that every person tries to protect. A face threatening act is one that inherently damages the face of the addressee.
Based on the notion of face, Brown and Levinson introduce the concept of Face Threatening Acts (FTAs), that intrinsically threaten the speaker's or the hearer's face. When planning the performance of an FTA, the speaker is faced with a choice of five strategies ranging from (1) bald-on-record to (5) non-performance of the FTA, passing through (2) on-record with positive redressive action, (3) on-record with negative redressive action and (4) off-record:

(20) Do the FTA on record: 1. without redressive action, baldly
   with redressive action: 2. positive politeness
   3. negative politeness
   4. off record

5. Do not do the FTA

According to Arundale (1999), conversants can and do attend to their own and other’s face even when redressing a threat is not an issue. However, there are other occasions in which: speaker wants to flout the gricean maxims and be impolite (even provoke or insult the hearer for whatever reasons) and the conversation can still be successful. I also agree that the central criterion for communication is the receiver’s recognition of the speaker’s intentions. Besides that, speech acts are not isolated or bound in the communication process; they are related with previous utterances and
with the contextual facts. So when the speaker talks she considers not only her own face or the addressee’s face but these other facts surrounding the utterance moment. Moreover, I contend that there are not inherently polite speech acts. A command such as (21), which according to Brown and Levinson’s theory is a speech act that imposes the speaker’s will, can be considered a case of positive politeness, for instance, by someone who does not feel intimidated if her mother-in law tells her how to cook lamb for Christmas, because she judges that her mother-in law is not criticizing but trying to help or advise her:

(21) Next time, do not cook lamb with olive oil. Use lard instead.

On the other hand, a compliment (22) can be understood as a negative politeness speech act, for example, in a situation in which a grandmother happy to see her granddaughter says to her that she looks very pretty because she has gained some weight. For the granny, it is a compliment according to the aesthetic standards of her time but for the teenager is an offence:

(22) You look so pretty. I bet you have gained some weight, haven’t you?

So, there are occasions in which the distinction between positive and negative politeness is not clear.
Brown and Levinson (1987) claim the amount/kind of politeness required is constrained by the perceived power difference between hearer and speaker or the social distance between them. However as we can see in the following examples, the same rhetorical question can vary the degree of politeness even when the interlocutors are the same:

(23) Situation 1: A is telling B that her brother is upset because she has decided not attend a family meeting to discuss how to help A’s little sister. A does not want to go to the meeting because she has just started to recover from serious debts of her own. B who thinks that A’s family is unfair for asking such a thing of A, utters the following rhetorical question to express empathy and agreement with A:

B: Después de todo, ¿quién levantó un dedo por ti el año pasado?
‘After all, who lifted a finger for you last year?’

(24) Situation 2: A is telling B that her brother is upset because she said that she would not attend a family meeting to discuss how to help A’s little sister. A regrets having said that, and is telling B that she might end up going. B who thinks that A’s family is unfair for asking her to do such a thing says (23) in an attempt to convince A not to go.
(25) situation 3: A is telling B that her brother is upset because she said that she would not attend a family meeting to discuss how to help A’s little sister. A regrets having said that, and is telling B that she is going to cancel her vacations and she is going to give the money to her little sister instead. B who thinks that A’s family is being unfair after trying without success to convince A of not going, finally says (23), overtly disapproving A’s behavior.

According to Brown and Levinson’s theory, in the first situation, the RQ is understood as an expression of agreement. A positive politeness strategy to make A feel good about herself and her decision not to go to the meeting. In the second situation, the RQ is interpreted as a warning which threatens A’s negative face. That explains why B, in order to avoid her imposition, is using an off-record (indirect) strategy and is trying to convince A that going to the meeting is not a good idea. Finally, in the last situation, B implies that A is wrong, irrational or misguided in what constitutes an expression of disapproval that can damage B’s positive face, however B decides not to minimize her criticism because her intention is to make A react and open her eyes (bald on-record strategy).

Thus, it is clear that there are not inherently polite speech acts and it is not the social relationship between the interlocutors that establishes the degree of politeness. Moreover, it seems unclear who decides what kind of speech act is uttered in different

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16Terkourafi (1999) shows in her work about the different usage of diminutives in Standard Modern Greek and Cypriot Greek that there are not either inherently polite linguistic forms and there are cases in which the strategies are so intertwined that it is very difficult to bound the limits among them.
occasions: is it the speaker or the addressee? or both? I contend that although politeness can be considered as a culturally-defined phenomenon (which could be group-wide or can even have universal norms and rules), the examples above (23)-(25) show that what is actually considered a polite utterance sometimes depends on the individual criterion of the interlocutors. Thus, politeness is not only a question of intention but also a question of interpretation on the addressee’s part, that is, it requires an inferential process. I find strong support of this claim in Mcdonald’s (2007) work (among many other studies: Kaplan et al. 1990, Tompkins and Mateer 1986, Happe, Brownell & Winner 1997) in which it is claimed that the difficulties that patients with damage to the right hemisphere of the brain have in interpreting sarcastic comments is not due necessarily to a failure to recognize the attitude or emotional state of the speaker but can be a failure of inferential reasoning regarding the possible meaning behind a counterfactual comment.

I agree with Arundale (1999) that politeness is a question of interaction among the interlocutors that has to be understood as a dialectical exchange that takes into account the social and physical environment and also the cognitive state of the interlocutors. Speech acts are not isolated; in the course of the conversation the interlocutors exchange information that modifies the information state of the receiver but it constrains what is said as well.

Eelen (1999) points out that at least three types or kinds of ideology about politeness have to be distinguished: The first could be called the {{commonsense}} ideology of politeness, and refers to the set of stipulations or norms which determines
what is ‘polite’ and what is ‘impolite’ in everyday ordinary interaction. This kind of ideology applies to ordinary speakers, and comprises evaluations of social acts as well as the rules and mechanisms that inform such evaluations. The second type of ideology comprises scientific ideologies of politeness, and refers to the different ways in which science has tried to make sense of politeness phenomena. This ideology thus involves scientific concepts and theoretical constructs, and describes how scientists see politeness. Finally, the third type of ideology is social ideology, which refers to beliefs having to do with certain aspects of social organization or social structure and their associated values. This ideology consists of elements that make up what could be called a ‘social worldview’, such as notions of right and wrong, of good and bad. According to Eelen, all of these ideologies are closely interconnected, thus we need studies that by analyzing personal judgments shed some light on the generalizations proposed by scientific and social approaches.

### 5.2.4. Politeness and rhetorical utterances

Contrary to the idea proposed by Searle (1998) that the use of an indirect speech act is for politeness reasons, I contend that rhetorical utterances show that indirectness is not linked exclusively to politeness, since as we have already seen; they can express either politeness or impoliteness.

With regard to rhetorical questions, Burguera (2009) claims that as a mechanism of mitigation in interactive conflicts, by uttering a RQ the speaker regulates the argumentative force of her utterance because she is able to channel her message; she
offers the hearer an open utterance with alternatives to react, and also offers to the hearer the opportunity to cancel the assertive implicature in case the hearer disagrees. However, RQs can also be interpreted as impolite mechanisms when the speaker does not offer chances to react to the addressee. According to Burguera (2009) this is the case of RQs used in the political debate in which the speaker tries to protect her own image and disqualify her adversary.

In the case of rhetorical exclamatives that express criticism, irony is used in accordance with the Politeness Principle posited by Leech (1983):

(26) "If you must cause offence, at least do so in a way which does not overtly conflict with the PP [Politeness Principle], but allows the hearer to arrive at the offensive point of your remark indirectly, by way of implicature" (Leech 1990: 82). Irony is one option of conveying hidden criticism.

Leech aims to explain this phenomenon of hidden criticism by claiming that an ironical utterance "enables a speaker to be impolite while seeming to be polite" (Leech 1990: 142), as we can see in the following example:

(27) "You are a natural-born story-teller." (uttered to a person obviously unable to tell stories)
The direct but the rude version of (27) *I do not want listen to you anymore. You are simply unable to tell stories* would likely cause a more negative effect in the addressee.

This type of ironic remark is referred in Dew’s et al. (2007) as an ironic criticism (‘Great game’ after a losing game). However, according to them irony can also take the form of a negative statement used to convey a positive evaluation (‘Terrible game’ after a winning game). This form is referred as an ironic compliment. As I argue in chapter 4 not all rhetorical utterances express criticism, they can also express disappointment or reproach. In any of these cases, ironic rhetorical exclamatives when expressing a negative implicature, help to moderate the effect of the criticism but we cannot say that it is a polite usage of irony because the goal is not to make the hearer feel good (positive face) or feel free (negative face) but it mitigates the hearer’s reaction:

(30) ¡Qué bien cuentas las historias!
"You are a natural-born story-teller." (uttered to a person obviously unable to tell stories)

The direct but rude version of (30) for example *I do not want listen to you anymore. You are simply unable to tell stories* would provoke a more ‘violent’ reaction than the rhetorical exclamative.
Furthermore, when the speaker’s intention is to scorn and/or even provoke her interlocutor, it is clear that the speaker has the intention of being impolite a have a negative effect on the hearer:

(30) Context: A soccer fan of Barca’s team is talking to a Real Madrid soccer fan after a match in which the Barca’s team scored 5 goals and the Real Madrid’s team did not score at all:

A: ¡Terrible partido!

On the other hand, there are rhetorical exclamatives with positive implicatures. I contend that in these cases the chief motivation is politeness. As indirect speech acts, rhetorical utterances can express politeness. In a context where only the speaker and the hearer share the experience of having worked together, the speaker by uttering a rhetorical exclamative such as (28) is remembering a good time in the past when they did not have to work hard, and she is looking for ‘enhancing’ with the hearer and emphasize their close relation:

(28) ¡Qué vida más dura nos hacía llevar el jefe anterior!

‘What a hard time our previous boss used to give us!’

In the following example, the speaker might think that praising the addressee is embarrassing so to protect her face, she chooses an indirect speech act; or because she
wants to protect the addressee’s face if she knows that it is embarrassing for the addressee:

(28a) ¡Terrible amigo eres tú!- uttered meaning
(28b) ¡Eres un gran amigo!- intended meaning

Thus it seems that the fact that the implicatures associated with rhetorical utterances are not expressed directly reduce the force of the positive or negative attitudes entailed by them in order to protect the speaker’s or the addressee’s face. As we can see in the following examples, it does not have the same force saying (28a) indirectly that (28b), directly and the same can be applied to (29a) and (29b):

(29a) ¡Gran amigo eres tú!- uttered meaning
(29b) ¡Eres un amigo terrible!- intended meaning

Having said that rhetoricity is chosen by the speaker for politeness reasons, I have to say that there are other uses of rhetorical utterances that respond to impolite motives. These are the cases of sarcastic questions and exclamatives. For instance, it cannot be claimed that an example such as (30), in spite of the fact that the speaker is using a negative adjective, entails a positive and polite attitude toward her addressee, rather her intention is to scorn and/or even provoke her interlocutor:
(30) Context: A soccer fan of Barca’s team is talking to a Real Madrid soccer fan after a match in which the Barca’s team scored 5 goals and the Real Madrid’s team did not score at all:

A: ¡Terrible partido!

I consider these types of ironic utterances to be sarcastic. Whereas ironic utterances are generally defined as the use of words to express something other than the opposite of the literal meaning, sarcasm is characterized as a bitter, caustic use of an ironic sentence that is usually directed against an individual (the addressee) with the attitude of derision and the purpose of humiliating and making him feel bad. Thus by resorting to a sarcastic utterance, the goal of the speaker is to be impolite.

The term impoliteness like the term politeness has received many definitions\(^\text{17}\), such as the following ones, which put the focus on the speaker’s intention:

(31) Impoliteness is behavior that is face-aggravating in a particular context (Locher and Bousfield 2008:3)

(32) [rude behavior] does not utilize politeness strategies where they would be interpreted, in such a way that the utterance can only almost plausibly be interpreted as intentionally and negatively confrontational (Lakoff 1989: 103)

\(^{17}\)This series of definitions comes from Culpeper (2011).
impoliteness occurs when the expression used is not conventionalized relative to the context of occurrence; it threatens the addressee’s face…but not face-threatening is attributed to the speaker by the hearer (Terkourafi 2008:70)

However, my view of impoliteness is close to Culpeper’s\textsuperscript{18} definition (2005) or to another proposed by Holmes et al. (2008) since as I show in the example (22) the speaker can offend also accidentally:

Impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2) (Culpeper 2005: 38)

verbal impoliteness [is] linguistic behavior assessed by the hearer as threatening her or his face or social identity, and infringing the norms of appropriate behavior that prevail in particular contexts and particular interlocutors, whether intentional or not (Holmes et al. 2008)

Culpeper (2011) concludes after analyzing his data that intentionality is not an essential condition for impoliteness since people can still take serious offence in the absence of intention. He provides the following example which the informant took as a huge insult and felt embarrassed and fat even though the other person was not

\textsuperscript{18}Culpeper (2011) rejects the role of the hearer and bases his understanding of impoliteness on the notion of ‘face-attack’.
malicious. According to Culpeper, the same conclusion is also reflected in Gabriel (1998):

(36) Went to meet a friend who I hadn’t seen for a long time, the first thing he said was: ‘you’ve got more ‘curves’ than you used to have! Have you put some weight on? You’ve got a right J-Lo bum now.

Moreover, it can be claimed that intentionality, although it can increase the degree of impoliteness, on some occasions is not enough. For instance, if we take the example of the sergeant (repeated here as (41) in chapter 4), as a counterexample of (22), we can find contexts in which, although it is clear that the sergeant’s intention is to humiliate the soldier, he might not feel offended since rudeness is part of the normal interaction between superiors and soldiers:

(37) A sergeant is tired of the mistakes of a very dumb soldier. He is being notified that the soldier forgot a folder with important documents in a restaurant. In this situation the sergeant says:

¡Muy inteligente fue usted!

Therefore, when (im)politeness is analyzed, a distinction should be made between that which is intentional and, that which is accidental depending on the addressee’s interpretation.
5.3. Scalar implicature.

Lee-Goldman (2006) proposes a new type of rhetorical questions, designated as wrong-opinion rhetorical questions, which express a refutation to a previous claim. Lee-Goldman maintains that the speaker chooses to use the scale of adjective that she wants to refute and points to a degree that does not reach the standard limit. We have seen in chapter 3 that when NPIs occur in questions the rhetorical reading is triggered easily. As observed by Krifka (1991), NPIs can be considered members of contextually determined scales since NPIs obey the following constraint:

(38) Bottom of scale principle: strong NPIs always denote elements at the bottom of the contextually associated scale. Weak NPIs may also denote bottom-of-scale elements.

In the sentence below, the presence of the NPI ‘lift a finger’ brings in the entailment that John did not perform even the minimal action necessary to help Bill.

I claim in chapter 4 that when uttering a rhetorical exclamative the speaker picks the strongest element in the scale though she is referring to the weakest. Namely, she mentions the highest point because exclamatives are characterized as high degree constructions, and as I explain in chapter 2, in order to express a surprise utterance the degree predicated by the properties has to exceed the degree expected. However unlike standard exclamatives the implicated interpretation is that the speaker is
pointed to the lowest degree of the elicited property due to the effect of the covert negation.

Therefore, both rhetorical utterances refer to the bottom element of a scale which is formed by a negation: a scale formed by the set of possible answers in the case of RQs and by a scale of degrees in the case of REs. This negation affects the pragmatics (not the truth) conditions of rhetorical utterances, that is the conditions in which rhetorical sentences can be uttered felicitously.

4.3.1. Scope of negation and NPIs

There seems to be an agreement (Linebarger (1987), Progovac (1993), Lee (1995), Gutiérrez Rexach (1988, 1997), Han (2002)) that when NPIs occur in questions the rhetorical reading is triggered easily. Ladusaw (1979) claims that NPIs are licensing when they occur in the scope of a decreasing operator. According to some proposals (Ladusaw 1979, Progovac 1993, Han 2002) the covert negation at the LF level is the licenser of the NPIs within its scope. However, Gutiérrez-Rexach (1998) claims that the licenser of NPIs is the question operator?which is a decreasing operator:

(39) ¿Quién levantó un dedo por ti?
‘Who lifted a finger for you?’

(40) ¿Quién daba un duro por ese jugador?
‘Who gave a damn about this player?’
On the other hand, exclamatives allow NPIs only if they occupy the focus position and therefore they are under the local scope of negation (41)-(42). Otherwise since negation is active at a pragmatic level and has no scope over the entire utterance, the exclamative remains as a factive utterance (that is, non-downward entailing) and it can not license NPIs (43)-(44):

(41) ¡Un dedo, voy a levantar yo!
‘A finger, I am going to lift’
(42) ¡Un duro, voy a dar yo por ese coche!
‘A red cent, I will pay for this car’

(43) *¡Bonito regalo le has hecho a nadie!
‘*Nice present you gave to nobody!’
(44) *¡Bien que has leído libro alguno!
‘ lit. Well you have read any book!’

The fact that rhetorical questions remain as downward entailing environment and rhetorical exclamatives as a non-downward entailing environment supports the claim that rhetorical utterances are complex sentences formed by a question and an assertion in the case of rhetorical questions; and by a veridical exclamative and a non-veridical exclamative in the case of the rhetorical exclamatives.
5.5. Rhetoricity and discourse

Gunlogson (2001) claims that rhetorical questions are uninformative. According to him, an utterance informs a participant’s commitment set if the commitment set does not already entail it. If the commitment is entailed, as it is with rhetorical questions, the utterance generates no commitment updates. In the same vein, Rohde (2006) defines RQs as redundant utterances because they receive obvious answers. According to him, RQs are used to synchronize common beliefs among the interlocutors. Gutiérrez-Rexach (1998) claims that in Rhetorical questions, the speaker already knows the answer to the question but calls the hearer’s attention to a thought or proposition that is being expressed by the question. More specifically, the relevant thought is already in the information state of the speaker and the rhetorical question makes this fact apparent to the hearer. The represented thought or proposition is held as a presupposition in the information state of the speaker. Further, Illie (1995) and Schaffer (2005) both agree on the idea that the answer of a RQ is obvious and implicit. Namely the interlocutors share some information that is based on cultural or self evident knowledge, such as obvious truth or falsehood. In the same vein, Rhode (2006) and Caponigro and Sprouse (2007) claim that both the speaker and the addressee are committed to mutual beliefs and therefore both know or might be able to derive the answer to a RQ. However this idea of uninformative is against the principle of relevance and the cooperative principle. The fact of saying something is relevant itself. The speaker says something because she wants to modify the cognitive state of the addressee and because she wants to be cooperative and make the
communicative act successful. Moreover, as relational utterances RQs can be used to answer previous questions (45) or rhetorical questions that express a refutation to a previous claim (46), as we show in chapter II, which proves that they can update the context:

(45) A: Does Ed McMahon drink?
   B: Is the Pope Catholic?

(46) Previous claim: *You can certainly lift that suitcase on your own, because it is very light*
   Rhetorical question: How light do you think the suitcase is?

On the other hand, Lee-Goldman (2006) and Burguera (2009) both agree that the use of a RQ does not always imply that the answer is presupposed or that it is part of the common ground *a la* Stalnaker. In his analysis of RQs in political debates, Burguera (2009) shows that by uttering a RQ the speaker adds to the discourse indirect propositional content which allows her to defend or refute the thesis she indirectly asserts, and also to introduce relevant information into the discourse:

(47) Por idénticas razones, combatiré toda forma de xenofobia que pretenda encontrar amparo en sucesos recientes- ¿es que no han muerto con los de nuestro
país, decenas de hijos de otras naciones? y condenaré así mismo toda utilización política de terrorismo (…)

‘For the same reasons, I will fight any kind of xenophobia that tries to find protection in recent events- along with those from our country, haven’t dozens of children from other nations died? I will condemn as well all political usage made by terrorists (…)

Regarding exclamatives, Castroviejo (2006) concludes that standard exclamatives are uninformative which explains why they are infelicitous in contexts (i.e. the casa of the basketball agent case and that of the history teacher case) in which a piece of information is required:

(48) #Que alt que es en Paul!
‘How tall Pau is!’
(49) #Que poderos que era l’Imperi Roma!
How powerful the Roman Empire was!’

However, I claim in chapter 2 that (i) these exclamatives are infelicitous not because they are uninformative but because in order to accept, or reject, the presupposed content of an exclamative the addressee, as well as the speaker, needs to have de re beliefs about it. In other words, she needs to have access to the evidence that triggers the exclamative in order to create her own state of information; (ii)there
is a group of exclamatives (i.e. the propositional exclamative) that can provide new information (50) and even constitute the answer to a question (51):

(50) Context: Ana and María are planning to go out for dinner, but it has been raining a lot all day long. María asks Ana to look through the window and check the weather. Ana goes to the window and says:
Llover no llueve, pero ¡cómo nieva!!
‘It is not raining but it is snowing like hell!’

(51) A: ¿Qué tiempo hace?
B: ¡Cómo nieva!

Rhetorical exclamatives do not add propositional content to the context but it updates it by communicating the speaker’s assumptions/beliefs toward the uttered proposition, as we have seen in examples such as (52):

(52) ¡Muy listo eres tú!
‘You are such a smart guy!’

5.6. Conclusions

I have shown that rhetorical utterances are complex indirect speech acts that can be interpreted with their literal meaning and with their indirect meanings. The shared background information guides the addressee in grasping the speaker’s intentions
which is translated as the utterance’s meaning. Rhetorical as indirect speech acts are used for politeness reasons in cases in which the rhetorical utterance originates both negative and positive inferences since uttering something indirectly produce the effect of reducing the impact of the illocutionary force. However, rhetorical utterances can be used also for impolite reasons, whether the impolite effect is intentional or accidental. I have explained that even though negation plays a crucial role in rhetorical interpretations, the scope of this negation constitutes downward entailing environments in the case of rhetorical questions whereas in the case of rhetorical exclamatives, due to the fact that the negation has a narrow scope, they remain factive contexts (that is, non-downward entailing environments). Finally, I demonstrated that rhetorical utterances entail relevant information therefore they can update the context.
Chapter 6: conclusions

In this thesis I analyze the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics of a subtype of exclamatives in Spanish called rhetorical exclamative. To do so, I compare them with standard exclamatives and with rhetorical questions. I summarize previous proposals on both standard exclamatives and rhetorical questions with the purpose of unify various ideas and approaches.

6.1. Concluding remarks

I have argued that exclamatives can be considered surprised constructions which allow us to explain not only degree exclamatives and non-degree but also rhetorical exclamatives. I have showed that the main difference between standard exclamatives and rhetorical exclamatives is that in order to achieve the proper rhetorical interpretation, we have to posit a hidden negative element, which would reverse the relevant pragmatic scale, so the sentence would be true of the opposite of simpatico ‘nice’, i.e. no-simpatico ‘not-nice’. Additionally, I have proposed that negation in rhetorical exclamatives does not affect the whole proposition. It has narrow scope either over the adjective or the adverb elicited. Due to the local effect of negation, and the fact that negation in exclamative sentences does not license downward inferences,
NPIs are not licensed in rhetorical exclamatives (Andueza and Gutiérrez-Rexach, 2008):

(1) *¡Bien que habías hablado tú con nadie!*

‘*Sure, you have talked to anybody!*’

I have explained the main ideas proposed by different approaches on the rhetorical questions and unified data from previous studies that showed the variety of rhetorical constructions. Furthermore I have clarified that it is not the concept of common ground a la Stalnaker the key concept in interpreting rhetorical questions but the concept of background information. Using the framework of Relevance Theory, I have shown how the inferential process is carried out by the speaker and her crucial role in the success of a rhetorical interpretation.

I have proposed that Rhetorical exclamatives as standard exclamatives express an emotive attitude toward an unexpected fact and that the word order is sensible to Focus position. However the presence of a negation at a pragmatic level which has a narrow scope over the adjective/adverb in Focus, not only reverse the scale associated but also alters the felicitous conditions to utter this type of exclamative sentence. Furthermore, the presence of this negation explains why ‘what is said’ contradicts ‘what is implied’.

Finally, I have shown that rhetorical exclamatives differ from rhetorical questions in the fact that negation in rhetorical exclamatives has scope only over the focused
element (i.e. the adjective or the adverb in focus position), whereas in rhetorical questions seem to have scope over the entire proposition. That explains one of the main differences between the two rhetorical structures such as the licensing of NPIs:

(2) ¿Quién da un duro hoy por ese jugador?
   ‘Who gives a damn about this football player now?’
(3) *¡Simpática fue persona alguna en la fiesta!*
   *So nice was anybody at the party!*

This shows that whereas rhetorical questions remain, like standard questions, as a downward entailing environment, rhetorical exclamative remain, like standard exclamatives, as a non-downward environments. I will be concerned with the scope of negation. However, the presence of this negation explains why both rhetorical utterances seem to say something but imply the opposite.

An interesting aspect of this thesis is the interpretation of both rhetorical structures as indirect speech acts. Namely both perform indirectly an illocutionary act by performing another illocutionary act. I have shown that the chief motivation to choose indirect speech acts over direct speech acts is (im)politeness.

Finally, I have defined rhetorical utterances as complex structures that entail indirect speech acts in which ‘what is said’ contradicts ‘what is implicated’ due to the presence of an underlying negation. Moreover I have shown that Rhetorical utterances make use of the metapragmatic strategy of (im)politeness to reduce the force of the
speech act that is intended in order to protect the interlocutor’s faces or to reinforce the impact of the illocutionary force if the purpose is to insult, humiliate or despise the hearer.

6.2. Advantages of this proposal

One of the main contributions of this thesis is that it widens the concept of exclamatives and conceives them as surprise constructions. More specifically, I have proposed that there are more types of exclamatives than the ones proposed in previous studies. I distinguish two groups of exclamatives: degree and non-degree exclamatives. Furthermore, the idea of treating exclamatives as surprise constructions (i.e., a relation between the presuppositions of two contradictory propositions and an individual) license us to go back again to the idea of exclamatives as sets of propositions without resorting to the semantics of interrogatives. Second, I have argued that non-degree exclamatives besides the emotional attitude they can add propositional content to the context. I have compared the felicitous and infelicitous contexts of both groups of exclamatives following the idea of factivity proposed by Kratzer (2002). Third, I have shown that the behavior of exclamatives in regard with negation and NPIs is not as homogeneous as it might seem. Finally, I have proposed a solution for the problem of cross-linguistic embeddability of exclamatives.

I have shown that all the explanations suggested before explaining rhetorical questions as a pragmatic phenomenon can be unified under Sperber and Wilson’s Relevance Theory. According to this theory, by uttering a RQ the speaker wants to
persuade two goals: (i) get the hearer to recognize that she utters an assertion and not a question (i.e. an indirect speech act), (ii) the speaker finds her utterance relevant, and (iii) the speaker accepts her assumptions without objections. That explains why most of RQs are uttered in contexts where the inferential process will not require too much effort, and where the context and the Relevance Principle will guide the interpreter in the process of identifying the relevant assumption among the many potential assumptions easily.

I have offered the characterization of a subtype of exclamatives from a syntactic, pragmatic and semantic point of view and a definition of the concept of rhetoricity.

6.3. Open issues

Admittedly, at the end of this thesis several questions have remained unanswered. For instance, a cross-linguistic study would add more types of rhetorical exclamatives. And additional research project would be to analyze the speaker’s attitudes from an experimental pragmatic. It would be interesting to analyze whether rhetorical utterances have a close set of pragmatic functions or whether these pragmatic functions can be deduced from the discourse. Another issue that can be the topic of further experimental research is the relation between rhetoricity and politeness.
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