

## Inverted *Wh*-exclamative Constructions: A Construction-based Perspective\*

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**Jong-Bok, Kim.** 2018. **The Inverted *Wh*-exclamative Constructions: A Construction-based perspective.** *Korean Journal of Linguistics*, 43-3, 465-484. Exclamatives in English are used in many different syntactic formats. This paper investigates the uses of inverted *wh*-exclamatives which the previous analyses have taken to be rare and favored only in the literature. Together with a corpus study of inverted *wh*-exclamatives, the paper offers a descriptive as well as theoretical perspective on the inverted *wh*-exclamatives in English. It shows that the inverted *wh*-exclamatives are another realization of the network system of constructions in the language, supporting the construction-based view of grammar. It in particular suggests that inverted *wh*-exclamatives share a certain property of interrogatives in asking the hearer's opinion (or agreement) about the situation at which the speaker is surprised. (Kyung Hee University)

**Key words:** *wh*-exclamative, inversion, construction grammar, *wh*-interrogative, degree expression, question, corpus-based

### 1. Introduction

Exclamative sentences are used to express the speaker's surprise, delight, or annoyance. Expressing that the speaker's judgement of a given situation is non-canonical, exclamatives in English can be realized in many different syntactic forms, as illustrated by the following attested examples (see, among others, Quirk et al. 1985, Michaelis 2001, Huddleston & Pullum 2002, Collins 2005).

- (1) a. What a shame it is! (*What*-exclamative)  
b. How sweet it is! (*How*-exclamative)

\* An earlier version of this paper was presented in the Corpora and Discourse International Conference held in June 30-July 2, 2016, at Pontignano Conference Centre, Siena University. My thanks go to the audiences for questions and feedback. I also thank three anonymous reviewers of the journal and Jungsoo Kim and Rok Sim for helpful comments and suggestions. All errors and misinterpretations are of course mine.

- (2) a. The first step toward democracy in Iraq! (Nominal exclamative)  
b. Boy, you are fast! (Sentence exclamative)  
c. Isn't that remarkable! (Inverted exclamative)  
d. Don't be stupid! (Imperative exclamative)

As illustrated in (1), exclamative sentences begin with *what* or *how*, or as in (2) they can be constructionally specified: nominal phrases, declarative sentences, yes/no question forms, or imperative forms can also be employed to express the illocutionary force of exclamative (see, McCawley 1973, Elliot 1974, Huddleston 1993, Michaelis & Lambrecht 1996, Zanuttini & Portner 2003). This paper focuses on *wh*-exclamatives introduced by *what* or *how*.

*Wh*-exclamatives are structurally similar to *wh*-interrogatives in allowing the fronting of a non-subject *wh*-phrase. Such formal similarities often give us ambiguities. For instance, sentences in (3) are ambiguous between a question and an exclamative reading in abstraction from prosody (Huddleston & Pullum 2002):

- (3) a. How much remains to be done?/!  
b. What strange people inhabit these parts?/!

The ambiguities are also found in the subordinate clauses (Collins 2005):

- (4) a. Every golfer knows what great shots feel like.  
b. She had not realized before how thin he was then.

One key syntactic difference lies in that only *wh*-exclamatives allow the presence of an indefinite article after *what* (Huddleston 1993, Trotta 2000):

- (5) a. What a great conference this is!  
b. \*What a great conference is this?

An additional constraint that has often noted by the previous studies (Elliott 1974, Quirk et al. 1985, Zanuttini & Portner 2003) is that exclamatives cannot be involved in the SAI (subject-aux inversion):

- (6) a. What lovely teeth you have!

- b. \*What lovely teeth *do you have*!  
 c. \*What a fast car *does John drive*?

However, a simple corpus search yields non-trivial uses of the inverted *wh*-exclamatives, as illustrated by the following examples:

- (7) a. When all's done, what a bubble is ambition! (COHA 1900 FIC)  
 b. What a strange thing is the mind! (COHA 1843 FIC)

If such inverted *wh*-exclamatives are often observable from attested data, the ensuing question is then when and how we use them. This paper aims at investigating how inverted *wh*-exclamatives are used in daily English. With the attested data extracted from corpora like COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English), COHA (Corpus of Historical American English), and GloWbE (Corpus of Global Web-Based English), the paper investigates syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties of the inverted *wh*-exclamatives. The paper then offers a syntactic analysis of the construction and discuss its semantic and pragmatic properties while comparing them with related constructions such as *wh*-interrogative constructions.

## 2. Corpus Findings

### 2.1. Corpora used in the study

To examine the real uses of inverted *wh*-exclamatives, we have used corpora available online:

Corpus size	Corpus
560 million words	Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)
400 million words	Corpus of Historical American English (COHA)
1.9 billion words	Corpus of Global Web-Based English (GloWbE)
2.75 billion words	TOTAL

Table 1: Corpora used in the study

COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English), a balanced corpus with five registers (e.g., spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers, and academic), contains 560 million words of text from 1990–2017 (90 million

from each of the five genres just mentioned). To check some historical aspects, we also used Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) containing about 400 million words of text from the 1810s–2000s. In addition to these two corpora, we also used GloWbE (Global Web-based English) with 1.9 billion words of text in English from twenty different countries.

The search methods we have adopted are simple string searches, as exemplified in the following<sup>1</sup>:

- (8) a. what (a|an) (j\*) [nn\*] AUX [np\*] |[p\*] |[at\*] [j\*] [nn\*] !  
 b. how [j\*] AUX [np\*] |[p\*] |[at\*] [j\*] [nn\*] !

With such string searches, we have identified the following number of tokens for the inverted *wh*-exclamatives<sup>2</sup>:

	Inverted <i>wh</i> -exclamatives
COCA	38 tokens
COHA	308 tokens
GloWbE	213 tokens
<b>Total</b>	<b>559 tokens</b>

Table 2: Raw frequency of the inverted *wh*-exclamatives

The following includes some of the corpus examples that we have identified as inverted *wh*-exclamatives:

- (9) a. What a longing do I suffer! (GloWbE GB)  
 b. But oh! what a change have I made for the worse! (COHA 1824 FIC)  
 c. What a companion would she be for him! (COHA 1860 FIC)

- (10) a. How fleeting are riches! (COCA 1999 ACAD)

<sup>1</sup> The POS tags used in these corpora mean that j=adjective, nn=noun, np=proper noun, p=pronoun, at=article, etc. The AUX represents one of the tags: verb.MODAL, verb.[BE], verb.[DO], verb.[HAVE].

<sup>2</sup> The raw frequencies of *what a/an* exclamatives in each corpus is as follows: COCA 2,196, COHA 7,136, and GloWbE 19,327. These frequencies are obtained from the collocation search of *what a* with the exclamation mark in the distance of 6.

- b. How good was life! (COCA 1990 FIC)
- c. How changeable is man! (COHA 1822 FIC)

The inverted *wh*-exclamatives have the following template:

- (11) Template of the Inverted *Wh*-exclamative:  
What/How + X + AUX + Y + Z!

In this template, X is an exclamative phrase expressing a degree, Y is the subject, and the optional Z is one that follows the subject. In what follows, we will discuss the status of these expressions in detail.

## 2.2. Types of the Auxiliary Verbs

Since the inversion in English is sensitive to the presence of auxiliary verbs (Kim & Sells 2008), we have first identified the tokens in accordance with the type of auxiliary verbs. Of the extracted examples, the inverted examples with the copula verb *be* are most frequently used ones (311 tokens out of the total 551):

- (12) a. What an easy prey **is** it to the enemy of souls! (GloWbE US)
- b. What a beautiful thing **is** this perspective! (COCA 1996 MAG)
- c. What a fate **was** his to play the hero, and die for it! (COHA 1822 FIC)

The auxiliary *have* inversion has the second most frequent uses (107 tokens):

- (13) a. What a strange condition **has** that got into now! (GloWbE US)
- b. O, what a relief **have** I witnessed in those sinful brethren! (GloWbE US)
- c. What a guardian **had** this poor family found! (COHA 1832 MAG)

The auxiliary verb *do* is also introduced with the subject followed (91 tokens):

- (14) a. And what a world **did** I enter upon! (COHA 1832 NF)
- b. What a poor repose **does** she find! (GloWbE US)

The final type of auxiliary verbs used in the inversion includes examples with modal auxiliary verbs like *would*, *should*, *will*, etc. We have identified total 42 tokens:

- (15) a. What a change **would** it make in the world (GloWbE US)
- b. What a condition **should** I be in! (GloWbE US)

As such, there are some differences in the frequencies of the inverted auxiliaries as in the following figure.

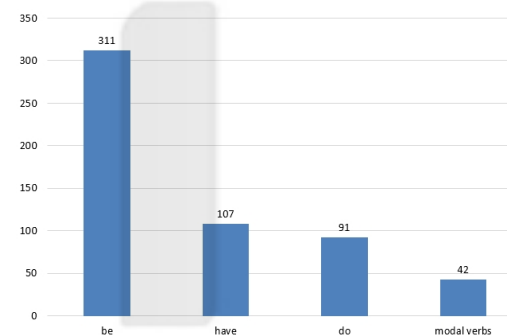


Figure 1: Frequency of auxiliary verbs in the inverted *wh*-exclamatives

Regardless of the difference in frequency, what we can observe is that all the types of auxiliary verbs are employed in the inverted *wh*-exclamatives. The uses of all inverted auxiliaries in inverted *wh*-exclamatives imply that they are just a type of SAI (subject-aux inversion) constructions. The figure also indicates that the uses of the copula verb *be* are predominant, implying that the inversion in exclamatives is rather formal properties, rather than representing modality (by modals) or aspectual properties (by *have*).

### 2.3. Formal Properties of the Exclamative Phrase

The *wh*-expression (*what* or *how*) offers an extreme degree interpretation together with the following nominal or adjectival X expressions. Note that the exclamative phrase *What/How* X is obligatory while the remainder is elliptical:

- (16) a. What a wonderful idea! (COCA 2011 FIC)  
b. How wonderful! (COCA 2017 FIC)

In expressing the degree that exceeds a contextually relevant standard, there is no overt degree morphology in X. The expression X after *what* can be either a singular NP or plural NP:

- (17) a. What a **power** is this, to say these things every morning to a whole nation. (COHA 1846 MAG)  
b. But what **words** are these! Your brother lunatic! (COHA 1827 FIC)

Even uncountable mass nouns can be used in the X position:

- (18) a. I could hardly believe-'Madam, what **nonsense** is this!' (COHA 1942 FIC)  
b. Ah, how I trusted him! what **love** was mine! (COHA 1875 FIC)

The following figure shows us the frequency of nouns in the X position:

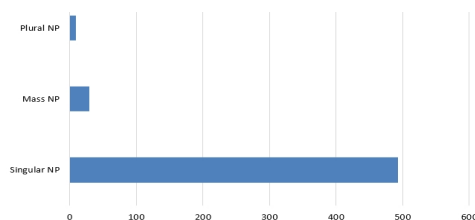


Figure 2: *What*-NP (X) distribution

The dominant use is a singular noun, but plural and mass nouns also occur in the X position. Even with the singular indefinite NP, we could observe that the NPs can be both gradable and non-gradable:

- (19) a. What a **pleasure** is it to draw near to God! (GloWbE US)  
b. What a **good** boy am I! (GloWbE GB)
- (20) a. What a **subject** is her mind and life for the finest novel! (COHA 1883 MAG)  
b. If what we read amounts to a wailing and a gnashing of teeth, what a **celebration** is its language! (COCA 2005 FIC)

The sort of gradable nouns and non-gradable nouns occurring in X include those given in the following:

- (21) Gradable nouns in the tokens: blessing, pleasure, fool, wretch, spectacle, difference, miracle, etc.
- (22) Non-gradable nouns in the tokens: thing, picture, vision, letter, day, system, creature, world, celebration, etc.

These data support the view that gradable expressions evoke degree interpretations from their lexical, conventional meaning, whereas non-gradable nouns can gain their degree property from *what* (see Bolinger 1972, Constantinescu 2011). For instance, the following examples do not have any degree expression, but the context provides us the extreme degree the speaker refers to:

- (23) a. What a job it is! (COCA 2007 FIC)  
b. What a time we will make! (COCA 1990 FIC)

The examples here have singular indefinite NPs that have a scalar effect of a set, rather than referring to a specific individual (see Bolinger 1972, Constantinescu 2011).

### 2.4. Properties of the Subject

We have identified that there are two structural variations in the inverted

examples, depending on whether the subject is final or not:

- (24) What X AUX Y[SUBJ]  
 a. What an opportunity is ours! (COCA 2008 FIC)  
 b. What [an opportunity] is [ours]!
- (25) What X AUX Y[SUBJ] Z  
 a. What [a contrast] does [this comparison] [present]!  
 b. But oh! what [a change] have [I] [made for the worse]!  
 (COHA 1824 FIC)

In our data, the subject final examples (311 tokens) are slightly more preferred than those with the subject non-final position (240 tokens). Collins (2005) suggests that the inverted exclamative is derived from the subject postponement. For instance, in (26), the subject Y is taken to be the result of postponing the subject to the sentence final.

- (26) [What [fun]] [t] was [the conference]!

This supposition, however, cannot hold for the examples where an additional expression occurs after the subject:

- (27) a. What [a poor repose] does [he] [find]! (GloWbE US)  
 b. What [a change] have [I] [made for the worse]!  
 (COHA 1824 FIC)

One standard requirement for the postposition (or extraposition) is the heaviness of the postposed expression, as seen from the following:

- (28) a. I gave to Bill [the books which the teacher left to me].  
 b. \*I gave to Bill it.

However, note that many inverted *wh*-exclamatives include a pronoun in the final subject position:

- (29) a. What a good boy am I! (COHA 1973 FIC)  
 b. What a monstrous solecism was it! (COHA 1848 FIC)

This implies that some of the inverted *wh*-exclamatives are not the result

of the subject post-ponement. They are simply the subject-auxiliary inversion.

Another fact we can observe from the subject Y is that the subjects in our examples are in most cases definite ones. This has to do with the semantic function of exclamatives that presuppose a specific subject (Abels 2009, Huddleston 1993).

- (30) a. What a beautiful man was [this master]! (COCA 1990 FIC)  
 b. What a beautiful man was \*[someone]!

The subjects in our data are all definite or generic but no indefinite (452 tokens for definite NP, 38 tokens for generic NP):

- (31) a. What a guardian had [this poor family] found! (COHA 1832 MAC)  
 b. What a thing is [poverty] among the fallen on evil days!  
 (COHA 1833 FIC)

Once again, the semantic restriction to the subject appears to follow from the factivity constraints on the construction, which we will discuss in what follows.

### 3. Syntax of the *wh*-exclamatives

As for the structure of *wh*-exclamatives, let us consider syntax of the non-inverted *wh*-exclamatives first:<sup>3</sup>

- (32) a. [What a happy life] he has \_\_ !  
 b. [How sad] she looks \_\_ !

The bracketed degree expression with *what* and *how* appears to function as the filler in the gap. Note that the *wh*-exclamative even allows a long-distance relationship between the filler and the gap (Ginzburg & Sag 2000, Huddleston & Pullum 2002):

- (33) a. [What an expensive ring] Mary tried to buy \_\_ !

<sup>3</sup> Most of the key ideas presented here are adopted from Ginzburg & Sag (2000).

b. [How fast] John thinks [Mary ate the pie ] \_ !

Following Ginzburg & Sag (2000), we take the *wh*-exclamative construction to be a sub-construction of the Head-Filler Construction, as represented in the following constructional constraints:<sup>4</sup>

(34) Head-Filler Construction (↑ *headed-cxt*):

$$S \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{head-fill-cxt} \\ \text{GAP} \langle \quad \rangle \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \text{XP}, \quad S \left[ \text{GAP} \langle \text{XP} \rangle \right]$$

(35) *Wh*-Exclamative Construction (↑ *head-filler-cxt*):

$$S \left[ \text{wh-excl-cxt} \right] \rightarrow \text{XP} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{unusual-rel} \\ \text{EXCL} + \end{array} \right], \quad S \left[ \text{SUBJ} \langle \quad \rangle \right]$$

The Head-Filler Construction, a type of headed constructions, licenses a variety of head-filler constructs including *wh*-interrogatives. As noted earlier, in terms of formal properties, *wh*-interrogatives and *wh*-exclamatives are similar in that they both allow the fronting of a non-subject *wh*-phrase (Collins 2005). The key difference from *wh*-interrogative is that the *wh*-exclamative allows only *what* and *how*, which we take to carry the positive non-local feature EXCL that evokes an *unusual-relation*, as exemplified by the following lexical specifications:

$$(36) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{FORM} \langle \text{what} \rangle \\ \text{SYN} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SEL} \langle \text{NP}_i [\text{DEF} -] \rangle \\ \text{EXCL} + \end{array} \right] \\ \text{SEM} | \text{unusual-rel}(i) \end{array} \right]$$

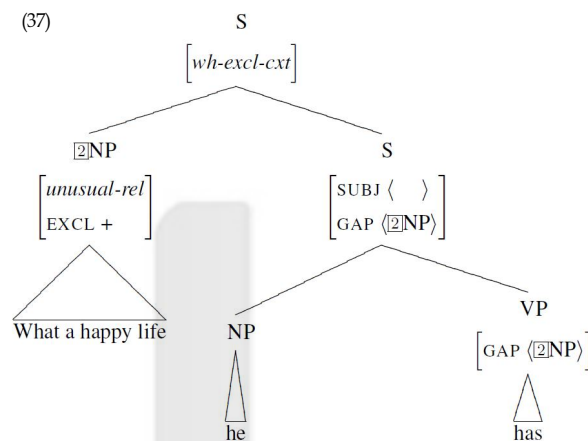
The lexical information indicates that what selects (SEL) a non-definite NP as its argument, ruling out examples like *\*What the happy boy he is!*<sup>5</sup> It is this expression that evokes an *unusual-rel* (relation) with the NP

4 The upward arrow (↑) indicates its super-construction. For instance, the Headed Construction is the super(mother)-construction of the Head-Filler Construction.

5 The feature SEL is different from other valence features such as SUBJ and COMPS,

(see Ginzburg & Sag 2000). This ensures that even its combination with a non-gradable noun can induce an extreme degree interpretation (e.g., *What languages he speaks!*).

The present system will then license the following structure for (32a):<sup>6</sup>



As represented here, the exclamative NP phrase *what a happy life* functions as the filler for the gapped S he has, forming a head-filler construct. The filler carries the EXCL value which is inherited from *what*. Note, as specified in (35), that the head daughter S requires its SUBJ value to be empty (or saturated). This constructional constraint correctly ensures that there are no *wh*-subject exclamatives, as the following contrasts indicate (data from Ginzburg & Sag 2000).<sup>7</sup>

in that the non-head functor expression bears this feature. This licenses the combination of a functor with its 'selected' head. For instance, the functor *what* and its head NP *a happy life* can be combined together in accordance with the Head-Functor Construction. See Kim & Sells (2011) and Sag (2012).

6 See Trotta (2000), Zanuttini & Portner (2003), and Radford (2004) for movement analyses where the *wh*-phrase in exclamatives is moved to the sentence initial position.

7 The condition on the empty SUBJ value needs to be loosened with the absence of

- (38) a. [How many birds] there are on the fence!  
 b. ?\*[How many birds] are on the fence!  
 (39) a. [What a nice guy] he is !  
 b. ?\*[What a nice guy] walked into the room!

Now, let us consider syntax of the inverted *wh*-exclamatives which share many properties with *wh*-interrogatives, as seen from the following:

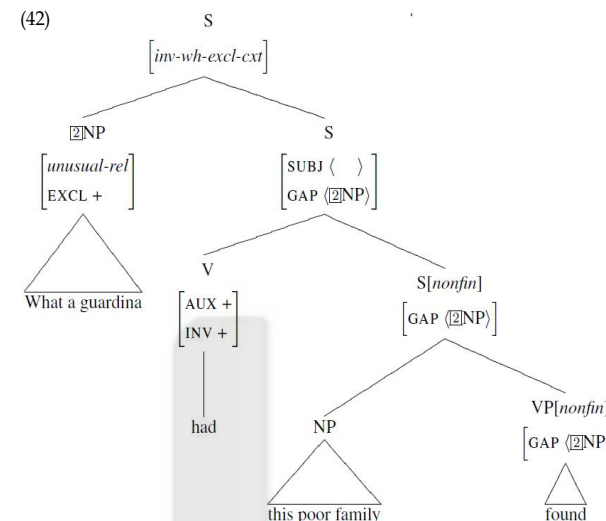
- (40) a. What damage have I done?  
 b. What a guardian had this poor family found!

The only difference from standard *wh*-exclamatives is that they involve inversion in the head daughter. This implies that the inverted *wh*-exclamative construction is a subtype of SAI (subject-aux inversion) while being a subtype of the Head-Filler and *wh*-exclamative Constructions. Its status as the sub-constructions indicates that it only requires its head S to be inverted:

- (41) Inverted *Wh*-Exclamative Construction ( $\uparrow$  *hd-fill-cxt* &  $\uparrow$  *sai* &  $\uparrow$  *wh-excl-cxt*):  
 $S[inv-wh-excl-cxt] \rightarrow XP, S[INV +]$

All the constraints of the construction will be inherited from its super-constructions, the Head-Filler, SAI, and *wh*-Exclamative Constructions. It introduces no significant formal constraints, other than pragmatic ones (see the following section). As being a construction interlinked with a family of constructions, it licenses a structure like (42). The structures shows that the inverted *wh*-exclamatives are minimally different from the *wh*-interrogatives. The difference is that the inverted *wh*-exclamative construction inherits properties from *wh*-exclamatives. Further differences concern their semantic/pragmatic aspects, which we will discuss in Section 4.

the indefinite article, as in *What ill-behaved children were on the tram today!* (see Quirk et al. 1985 too).



#### 4. Semantic and Pragmatic Properties

##### 4.1 Semantics and Pragmatics of the *Wh*-exclamatives

As noted earlier, exclamatives are taken to express a speaker's surprise at the extreme degree of the situation in question. In terms of semantics, as Ginzburg & Sag (2000) note, exclamatives have a fact-type meaning. This view is supported from the fact that exclamatives can be paraphrased as the outward appearance of declaratives:

- (43) a. Is Kim clever!  $\approx$  Kim IS CLEVER.  
 b. What a clever man he is!  $\approx$  He is [DEG] a clever man.  
 c. How clever he is!  $\approx$  He is DEG clever.

One supporting argument for a fact reading for exclamatives comes from the presuppositional meaning that exclamatives carry. Note that the exclamative, expressing the speaker's emotional reaction to the situation

in question, presupposes that the situation holds. This presuppositional (or backgrounded) property of exclamatives gives several related constraints. For instance, since exclamatives carry a presupposition of factivity, they are incompatible with non-factive verbs (Collins 2005, Rett 2011, etc):

- (44) a. I recall what fun the conference was!  
b. \*I believe what fun the conference was!

In a similar manner, since exclamatives presuppose that the situation in question is already given, one cannot question its happening.

- (45) a. A: Is it a good car? B: \*What a nice car it is!  
b. \*I wonder what a nice car it is.

Since exclamatives express the speaker's emotional reaction to a given situation (a fact), it is also inappropriate to directly challenge the exclamative or accept the exclamative (Huddleston & Pullum 2002, Chernilovskaya 2014). However, confirmation is possible, indicating that the hearer/responder shares the speaker's attitude.<sup>8</sup>

- (46) A: What a big crowd that is!  
B: #That's not right.  
B': #Okay.

- (47) A: What a big crowd that is!  
B: Yeap, Indeed.  
B: \*I believe what fun the conference was!

In representing such semantic/pragmatic properties of the *wh*-exclamatives, there have been two different views: degree and question approaches. The degree approach takes exclamatives to express a degree interpretation (Ginzburg & Sag 2000, Castroviejo-Miró 2006, Rett 2011), while the question approach says exclamatives have an underlying question semantics (Zanuttini & Portner 2003, Chernilovskaya 2014). Let us consider the following standard examples:

<sup>8</sup> As a reviewer points out, one might challenge an exclamative as in A: *What a nice man he is!* B: *No, he is not.* This is rather a disconfirmation to the fact expressed by the hearer, resulting in not sharing the common ground between the interlocutors.

- (48) a. How tall John is!  
b. What a sunset John painted!

Within the degree approach, (48a) is taken to express the speaker's emotion at the degree of John's tallness. In particular, this degree is out of the speaker's expectation. The degree approach gets further support for examples with non-gradable expression as in (48b). The example includes no gradable predicate, but it still expresses the extreme, unusual gradable property of the sunset John painted. In Section 2.3, we have seen that our corpus data include many tokens with non-gradable expressions in the X position. This degree approach is what we have accepted together with the semantic relation of *unusual-rel* triggered by *what* or *how*.

Different from the degree approach, the question approach does not place emphasis on the degree properties of the exclamatives. One strong argument for the question approach for *wh*-exclamatives stems from the formal similarities with *wh*-interrogatives. Within this approach, *wh*-interrogatives and *wh*-exclamatives have the same semantics:

- (49) [[What languages John speaks!]] ≡ [[What languages does John speak?]]

The difference lies in the pragmatic process of 'widening' (Zanuttini & Portner 2003). The process 'widening' broadens the quantification domain of the *wh*-word. That is, the *wh*-interrogative *What languages does John speak?* considers the set of regular answers but the *wh*-exclamative *What languages John speaks!* evokes the set of non-standard answers, i.e. the language 'Galactic Basic' spoken in the movie *Star Wars*. By allowing exclamatives to widen the possible answers, we could thus capture the notion of unexpectedness and extreme degree. We also accept the insights of this view, but assume that they are represented not in the semantics but in the pragmatics.

## 4.2. Semantics and Pragmatics of the Inverted *wh*-exclamatives

As we have noted, inverted *wh*-exclamatives are similar to *wh*-interrogatives in many formal properties, as observed from the following:



- (50) a. What song is that? (*wh*-question)  
 b. What (a) song is that! (*wh*-Exclamative)

In terms of semantics, they share certain semantic properties with rhetorical questions (Collins 2005). Consider the following rhetorical questions:

- (51) a. What has John ever done to help?  
 b. How many times do I tell you not to yell in the house?

We suggest that inverted *wh*-exclamatives are similar to *wh*-questions in seeking interactions between the speaker and the hearer: *wh*-interrogatives ask information from the hearer, while standard *wh*-exclamatives focus on expressing the speaker's stance, not seeking any interaction. Different from this speaker-oriented non-inverted *wh*-exclamatives, inverted *wh*-exclamatives seek a sort of interaction with the hearer. That is, even though inverted *wh*-exclamatives do not ask information from the hearer for the value of any variable, they ask the hearer a type of interactive agreement. The interactive use of inverted *wh*-exclamatives can be further supported from their frequencies in different registers. Among the five registers, the fiction and spoken registers are most favored by inverted *wh*-exclamatives, as seen from the following figure:<sup>9</sup>

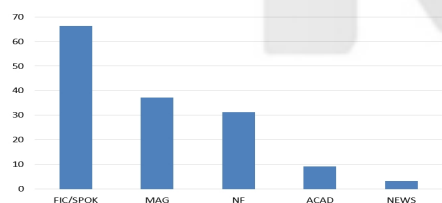


Figure 3: Frequency of the inverted *wh*-exclamatives in different registers

<sup>9</sup> The raw frequencies of *wh*-exclamatives in the five registers of COCA (Spoken 216, Fiction 1,187, Magazine 420, News 246, Academic 127 tokens) indicate no significant differences between spoken and written texts. A more detailed research is needed to understand the exact genre differences in the uses of inverted and non-inverted *wh*-exclamatives, but the current research at least shows us the preference of inverted *wh*-exclamatives in fiction and spoken registers.

For instance, the following examples illustrate that B's response expresses agreement to the speaker's stance:

- (52) A: Why! What a dotting idiot have I been!  
 B: True! (Coming forward.) (COHA 1838 FIC)

Corpus data show us that inverted *wh*-exclamatives invite the hearer to share the speaker's judgement or further asking the agreement. This does not mean that the hearer must respond to the speaker's invitation. Inverted *wh*-exclamatives can be further uttered toward implicit hearers. The speaker is just asking the involvement of the hearer in his or her judgement.

As Searle (1979) pointed out, the meaning of a sentence cannot be separated from its use and is linked to the illocutionary force of the utterance containing it. Searle suggests four conditions for the production of a felicitous speech act: propositional content, preparatory, sincerity, essential conditions. We can interpret the inverted *wh*-exclamatives accordingly, as given in the following:

- **Propositional content:** The speaker expresses the proposition *p*, predicating an emotional attitude toward a given situation.
- **Preparatory:** Different from non-inverted exclamatives, inverted ones intend to take the hearer into account.
- **Sincerity:** The speaker is committed to the truth of the proposition involved and of the emotional attitude expressed.
- **Essential:** The given situation is beyond the speaker's expectations.

All these indicate that inverted *wh*-exclamatives are interlinked to a family of constructions including *wh*-interrogatives and standard *wh*-exclamatives. That is, they inherit properties both from exclamatives and from interrogatives. This is possible because they are part of the network of constructions in grammar. The inverted *wh*-exclamatives are licensed in English, triggered by the speaker's calling for interactions with the hearer.

## 5. Conclusion

Typical *wh*-exclamatives are non-inverted as claimed by the previous observations. However, our corpus data imply that similar to *wh*-interrogatives, *wh*-exclamatives can be inverted too. Inverted *wh*-exclamatives resemble inverted *wh*-interrogatives in many syntactic and semantic respects. However, they differ in that inverted *wh*-exclamatives do not seek information from the hearer, but rather evoke interaction with the addressee while expressing speaker's affective stance. Inverted *wh*-exclamatives appear mostly in fiction or spoken register of corpus data, which proves the structure to be a construction of evoking an interaction between the speaker and the hearer.

The discussion we have made here supports the network system of constructions in the language where each construction is interlinked with a family of constructions (see, among others, Goldberg 2006, Sag 2012, Kim 2016). This network of constructions accounts for why the inverted *wh*-exclamatives share many grammatical properties both with exclamatives and with questions.

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Received: 24 July 2018  
Revised: 25 September 2018  
Accepted: 27 September 2018