How pseudo-questions and the interpretation of *wh*-clauses in English

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Abstract

Where interrogative form is associated with a function other than the canonical one of questioning, the issue arises as to whether this non-canonical force should be regarded as a pragmatic effect, or instead attributed to structural differences. Although there has been debate on this issue (see McCawley (1973), Huddleston (1993)), the focus on 'core syntax' in much recent minimalist and generative-transformational work has frequently been at the expense of an investigation of such 'peripheral' issues. In this dissertation, I explore this topic in relation to a class of utterances in English which I term *how* pseudo-questions (HPQs). The surface strings of HPQs, such as *How healthy am I!*, often resemble *how* degree questions (HDQs). However, HPQs seem to contribute the speaker's evaluation, rather than acting as requests for information. They differ from HDQs in other respects too, most notably with regard to their semantic behaviour, where HPQs pattern with canonical exclamatives rather than interrogatives.

I suggest that if one accepts the hypothesis that meaning is derived compositionally, one must also assume that HPQs differ structurally from HDQs. Having presented the formal properties of HPQs, I apply and modify existing approaches to the syntactic encoding of force to attempt to account for these. Whilst I do not offer a single definitive analysis, I conclude that positing semantically-contentful null elements in the syntax shows considerable potential in explaining the behaviour and interpretation of HPQs, and outline directions for future research to refine and develop the proposals made here.

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1. Introduction

<u>1.1 Core syntax</u>

Exclamative clauses have not received much attention within recent minimalist or generative-transformational work. Much of the research carried out as part of these approaches to syntax has focussed on what has been called 'core' or 'narrow' syntax, with other 'peripheral' phenomena seen to be of less interest and significance. This often seems to equate to an emphasis on the mechanics of particular properties (agreement, movement) of basic declarative clauses alone.

There are of course exceptions to this, with certain researchers[1] making the case that such a distinction is unhelpful, as so-called 'peripheral' phenomena can in fact give equally interesting insights into syntactic structure. The focus of this work will be upon a structure which, as it does not seem to belong clearly to either the core class of interrogatives or that of exclamatives, might be deemed more marginal still. In the course of this dissertation I hope to demonstrate that what I term *how* pseudo-questions (henceforth HPQs) provide further support for the idea that 'peripheral' phenomena also deserve attention.

<u>1.2 Introduction to the syntax and semantics of *how* pseudo-questions</u>

I use the term *how* pseudo-question (HPQ) to refer to a class of utterances which have surface strings which closely resemble those of *how* degree questions (HDQs). This is inspired by Munaro and Obenauer's (1999: 184) use of the term 'pseudo question' to refer to both 'non-standard questions (i.e. interrogatives which are not pure requests for information) and certain nonquestions i.e. certain exclamatives' in Italian. HPQs seem to belong to one or other of these categories: assessing which will be a main concern of this dissertation.

(1a) represents a HDQ which contains a *how*-phrase comprising *how* and an adjective, *healthy*, and is followed by verb and subject in inverted ('question') order. (1b) shows the corresponding HPQ, which is composed of the same elements in the same order. From this example alone there may seem little reason to separate the

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[1] See, for example, Culicover (1999).

two. However, the contrast between (2a) and (2b) gives an initial indication of why one may wish to view them as distinct. Whilst the insertion of an adverbial intensifier, such as *very*, into (1a) results in the ungrammatical (2a), the result of inserting such an item into (1) b. is the perfectly well-formed (2b). In this respect, HPQs seem to resemble more closely canonical exclamatives such as (3), where intensifying adverbials are also perfectly acceptable. The syntactic properties of HPQs will be discussed in Chapter 2, when HPQs will be measured against both HDQs and exclamatives. They will be shown to share certain properties with each of these clause types, but also to have their own distinctive behaviour.

1) a.   *How healthy am I?*   b. *How healthy am I!*

2) a.   **How very healthy am I?*   b. *How very healthy am I!*

3) *How very healthy I am!*

Throughout this dissertation I shall use the convention of punctuating true HDQs with a single question mark, as in (1a), and HPQs with a single exclamation mark, as in (1b), unless presenting an attested written example, in which case the original punctuation will be retained. There is in fact a considerable degree of variability with regard to punctuation, which can be seen to reflect uncertainty as to the status of HPQs. Whilst in written form the surface strings of HPQs and HDQs are not always distinguished, even by punctuation, in speech there are usually clear prosodic differences between the two. The phonological properties of HPQs will be discussed briefly in Section 2.3 and their punctuation in Section 2.4.

There are also semantic and pragmatic differences between HPQs and HDQs. Whilst HDQs are used by the speaker to seek information from the addressee regarding the degree to which the property in question holds, HPQs seem to express the speaker's belief that this property obtains to such a great extent that it is worth commenting upon. In this respect, they resemble exclamations, and indeed, when their semantic properties are explored in depth in Chapter 3, they will be shown to behave as such. Thus it is that an information-providing response such as B is perfectly appropriate in response to the HDQ (4a), yet pragmatically odd for a HPQ such as (4b). Conversely, a reply such as B', where the addressee offers agreement, is suitable for (although not

required by) the HPQ, but pragmatically ill-formed in response to a HDQ. Thus HPQs clearly involve a non-typical use of a question, if indeed a question is what they express. For this reason, HPQs will be compared to other non-standard questions, including structures in English which have been identified as rhetorical questions (RQs), although they will be shown to differ in significant respects.

4) a. A: *How healthy am I?*   b. A: *How healthy am I!*
     B: *You're actually fairly healthy.*   B: #*You're actually fairly healthy.*
     B': #[2]*That's so true! I'm impressed!*   B': *That's so true! I'm impressed!*

1.3 Methodology

To some extent I rely on my intuitions as a native speaker of English when judging the syntactic and semantic behaviour of HPQs. Similar judgements seem to hold for my other native-speaker informants, who include speakers of American, Australian and Scottish Standard English. However, I have also compiled a small informal corpus of 50 examples which I came across or had reported to me in the course of my research, supplemented by data from an informal internet search using the Google search engine where a particular property of HPQs was not (sufficiently well) attested. These can be found in Appendix 1. This is by no means an exhaustive record of the behaviour of HPQs, but does provide illustration of some of their diversity. Reasonable care was taken to establish, as far as is possible, that the examples included were all produced by native English speakers.

1.4 HPQs in use

HPQs seem to be a relatively recent innovation, which are particularly prevalent amongst younger speakers. They occur principally in informal spoken and written language, and are found in many varieties of English. In spoken form they appear in the material of comedy stand-up acts, scripted comedy shows and plays, as well as occurring naturally in conversation. In written form, they are particularly common in comments posted on internet discussion forums and social networking sites, and in

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[2] Throughout this dissertation I will use the symbol '#' to indicate sentences which are pragmatically ill-formed, that is to say, sentences which are infelicitous in the given context, but which are not ungrammatical. Ungrammatical sentences are those which are disallowed by the grammatical system of the language, and hence are unacceptable in any context. These will be marked, as is standard practice, with the symbol '*'. '?' and '??' mark sentences which are degraded but not wholly ungrammatical.

instant messaging conversations, but examples are also attested in journalistic prose, in as diverse a range of publications as the *Metro* free newspaper, the *Daily Mirror*, *the Guardian* and the BBC news website. Nor are HPQs limited to the English language. Structures which closely resemble HPQs are found in German and in Scandinavian languages (Swedish, Norwegian). However, the focus of this dissertation is upon *how* pseudo-questions in English.

Their prevalence has ensured that, like many other linguistic innovations, HPQs have elicited popular comment and criticism. The structure '*How ___ is that...?*' is listed by a contributor to the Urban Dictionary as one of the 'current phrase-viruses'[3] of the English language. However, HPQs concern far more than just a particular, stigmatised construction. They represent a productive pattern which raises interesting syntactic questions and, to the extent of my knowledge, have not previously been discussed in the linguistic literature.

1.5 Research goals

The aims of this research are twofold. Firstly, I will document key syntactic and semantic properties of HPQs. Secondly, I will explore possible analyses for HPQs, for their interest lies not only in their novelty, but also in the fact that they touch upon significant syntactic issues. As the examples in (1) show, HPQs often have a surface string which closely resembles that of canonical interrogatives. Yet the data in (4) suggest that their clausal force differs from that typically associated with interrogative form. This immediately raises questions. If HPQs do not have the force of questioning, then what force do they have? Is this the sole force, or does their syntactic form entail that the force of questioning is also still present? Is the difference in interpretation to standard questions a pragmatic effect, or a result of underlying structural differences? This in turn touches on the broader issue of whether, and how, clausal force should be syntactically encoded.

I will argue that, assuming an approach under which meaning is compositional, the stability with which the core meaning of HPQs arises suggests that it is not merely a pragmatic effect, but something which must be encoded semantically, and hence

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[3] http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=tell+me.... Accessed on 09/08/2009.

syntactically. Working within a framework of generative-transformational syntax, in Chapter 4 I will explore possible representational accounts for the syntactic and semantic properties of HPQs. In Chapter 5 I will conclude that whilst the analyses offered here appear to have potential, further research into both the properties of HPQs and, more generally, the issue of how clausal force arises is likely to lead to refinement or reconsideration of the specific structures proposed here.

2. The surface form and syntactic properties of HPQs

2.1 Clause type and clausal force

The importance of distinguishing between clause type and clausal force has been made clear by Huddleston (1994) amongst others (see for instance Sadock and Zwicky (1985)). I will follow his approach in distinguishing between 'interrogative' and 'exclamative' as clause types differentiated (from each other and from declaratives) by syntactic properties, and 'question' and 'exclamation' as categories defined on semantic rather than syntactic grounds. Thus whilst interrogative form may commonly be associated with questions, there is no expectation that this must always be the case.

Given this separation of clause type and clausal force, it is necessary to evaluate *how* pseudo-questions independently on both these counts. In this chapter, I will assess whether HPQs can be seen to have the formal properties of interrogatives. Although the main focus will be upon their surface form and syntactic behaviour, their phonology and punctuation will also briefly be discussed. In Chapter 3, I will then turn my attention to the semantics of HPQs. It may be the case that they behave differently to HDQs on one or both of these counts. Alternatively, they may differ in their behaviour in neither respect, in which case any differences between HPQs and HDQs must be purely pragmatic.

2.2 Syntactic properties of HPQs

Often HPQs have a corresponding string-identical HDQ. This is illustrated below in examples (1)-(3), where the (a) examples are attested HPQs and the (b) examples are corresponding HDQs.

1) a. *How healthy am I!* (HPQ1)[4]   b. *How healthy am I?*
2) a. *How bad was that play!* (HPQ10) b. *How bad was that play?*
3) a. *How fancy are they!* (HPQ35)   b. *How fancy are they?*

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[4] Where examples are drawn from my corpus, they are cross-referenced to Appendix 1, where all such examples have been coded and catalogued. So, for example, HPQ1 corresponds to the first entry in the corpus.

However, not all HPQs correspond directly to HDQs. In (4) and (5) the HDQs in (b), corresponding to the HPQs in (a), are unacceptable.

4) a. *How totally weird is that!!?!?* (HPQ45)   b. **How totally weird is that?*

5) a*. How not cool is that?* (HPQ43)   b. **How not cool is that?*

Each of the above cases (1)-(5) involves *how* + adjective, followed by inversion of the subject with copula BE, a word order pattern typically associated with interrogatives. In discussing the syntax of HPQs, I will begin by focussing on the structure of the *how*-phrase, before continuing to look at properties of the clause as a whole.

2.2.1 Properties of the *how*-phrase

a) Adjectives in the *how*-phrase

A particularly common make-up of the *how*-phrases of HPQs is the combination *how* + adjective. (6) seems to be the most frequently used HPQ, although examples such as (7) and (8) show firstly that HPQs with less frequently-used adjectives are equally acceptable, and secondly that there does not appear to be any restriction on the length of the adjective which occurs. Appendix 1 gives some idea of the creativity in use of HPQs. In Section 3.7, the semantic behaviour of adjectives in HPQs is discussed.

6) *How cool is that!*

7) *How grotesque is that?* (HPQ32)

8) *How badly-organised is that!* (HPQ3)

Furthermore, it is not only adjectives, but adjectival phrases which can occur in the *how*-phrase, as the examples below illustrate. (9) involves an adjectival use of the past participle of a phrasal verb, whilst (10) has a prepositional phrase with a metaphorical interpretation, with a meaning close to 'uninformed'.

9) *How sexed up is this play!* (HPQ22)

10) *How out of the loop am I!* (HPQ25)

Other less frequent patterns involve the occurrence of more than one adjective. In (11) these are coordinated by the conjunction *and*, while in (12) the initial adjective, *brazen*, is supplemented by the addition of the *even*-clause. (13) is different in that the second adjective is appended to the entire HPQ clause, making it seem rather like an afterthought. Whilst conjunction with *and* is also possible in HDQs, structures such as those in (12) and (13) do not appear to be characteristic of HDQs – it is possible to imagine a context where the string in (11) could be used as a HDQ, but not those in (12) or (13).

11) *How speedy and efficient was that?* (HPQ11)
12) *How brazen, even defiant, is this?* (HPQ21)
13) *How cool is that, not to mention, efficient.* (HPQ26)

Although not attested in my corpus, HPQs can also involve what Van Eynde (2007) terms 'the big mess construction', whereby *how* + adjective is followed by an indefinite NP introduced by *a(n)*[5]. (14) shows that this pattern can be realised in HPQs (a), HDQs (b) and exclamatives (c). (15a) shows that the similar pattern involving *what (a(n))* + adjective + noun is ungrammatical as a pseudo-question. However, it never seems able to be followed by subject and verb in inverted order, as HDQs such as (15b), are also excluded, whilst uninverted exclamatives such as (15c) are acceptable. Although *how* and *what* are the two English *wh*-words which can occur in both exclamatives and interrogatives, it seems that there is no comparable structure with *what* to English HPQs.

14) a. *How good a deal is that!*
   b. *How good a deal is that?*
   c. *How good a deal that is!*

15) a. **What a good deal is that!*
   b. **What a good deal is that?*
   c. *What a good deal that is!*

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[5] For more on this structure, see Hendrick (1990).

b) Adverbs in the *how*-phrase

The structure *how* + adverb is also permitted for the *how*-phrase of HPQs, although it occurs less frequently. As is the case for HPQs with adjectives, HPQs with adverbs often resemble HDQs, as (16) and (17) illustrate. The only example in my corpus of a HPQ with an adverb in the *how*-phrase is presented below as (18). Although the string *How bad* may appear to be another case of *how* + adjective (and indeed, it is used as such in the attested example (19) below), the context in (18) makes clear that the use is adverbial, with *bad* modifying the phrasal verb *cut out*, which here occurs in past participle form as part of the passive structure. This adverbial use of *bad* is particularly common in American English, and indeed this is the speaker of (18)'s variety of English.

16) a. *How badly did we play!*   b. *How badly did we play?*
17) a. *How well does she dress!*   b. *How well does she dress?*

18) *How bad are they cut out?*   (HPQ12)   adverbial *bad*
19) *How bad was that play!*   (HPQ10)   adjectival *bad*

c) Quantifiers in the *how*-phrase

Although unattested in my corpus, HPQs with the quantifiers *much* and *many* in the *how*-phrase are also grammatical, as (20) and (21) below illustrate. The (a) examples are expressed to comment upon the remarkably large quantity which was drunk or eaten respectively, in contrast to the HDQs in (b) which ask for a value for the amount consumed, but which are neutral with respect to whether this may be high or low.

20) a. *How much did you drink last night!*
    b. *How much did you drink last night?*
21) a. *How many cakes did he eat!*
    b. *How many cakes did he eat?*

The string *how much* is also found in comparative HPQs such as (22a) and (23a), which again correspond to the HDQs given in (b). When HPQs contain an explicit *than*-clause, as is the case in (24a) and (25a), they appear slightly less natural,

although this is likely simply to be because there seems to be a general preference for shorter HPQs. As HPQs often exclaim about something which obtains in the present situation, the target of the comparison is often apparent without explicit reference.

22) a. *How much cooler are we!*
    b. *How much cooler are we?*

23) a. *How much slower did he run!*
    b. *How much slower did he run?*

24) a. ?*How much cooler than the rest of the students are we!*
    b. *How much cooler than the rest of the students are we?*

25) a. ?*How much slower than all the other athletes did he run!*
    b. *How much slower than all the other athletes did he run?*

d) Intensifiers

In the *how*-phrase of HPQs it is also possible in some instances for the adjective (or adverb) to be separated from *how* by an intensifier, as is the case in (4) above, repeated below as (26a), along with other similar examples given in (27a), (28a) and (29a). This is a point in which HPQs deviate sharply from HDQs, as the (b) examples in (26)-(29) are all unacceptable. An interesting point to note in this regard is that intensifiers are also permitted in the *how*-phrase of exclamatives, as (30) illustrates.

26) a. *How totally weird is that!*   b. **How totally weird is that?*
27) a. *How really exciting is that!*   b. **How really exciting is that?*
28) a. *How ridiculously cool is that!*   b. **How ridiculously cool is that?*

29) a. *How very well did we play!*   b. **How very well did we play?*

30) *How very/ridiculously tall she is!*

Interestingly, however, intensifiers do not seem to be excluded altogether from HDQs. It appears that in certain specific discourse contexts, they can occur. (31)

illustrates such a use of *ridiculously*. (31) seems to incorporate an exclamation-like sense of surprise similar to that found in HPQs, yet it is also a clear request for information (and does not have the intonation pattern of a HPQ). This suggests that perhaps a sense of speaker evaluation or exclamativity is required in order to license the occurrence of such intensifiers. If this is the case, then the fact that intensifiers can occur more readily in HPQs than HDQs would seem to stem from their semantic or pragmatic, rather than syntactic, properties.

31) A: *I mean, she can't even find clothes to fit her and she has to stoop to fit through doorways…*
    B: *How ridiculously tall is she?*

Expletives such as *fucking* and *bloody* are also permitted in HPQs, as (32) and (33) illustrate. There do not appear to be any equivalent information-seeking degree questions.

32) a. *How fucking cool is that!*
    b. **How fucking cool is that?*

33) a. *How bloody boring was that!*
    b. **How bloody boring was that?*

An interesting question, which cannot be done justice here, is what determines the precise combinations of intensifier and adjective which are permitted in HPQs. For example, taking the adjective *gross*, besides its occurrence without an intensifier in (34), an internet search returns numerous attested examples of (35), but only one for each of (36)-(38). Different patterns are revealed for different lexical items which are commonly found in the basic pattern of *how* + adjective, e.g. *cool*, *weird*. With certain other lexical items for which the basic HPQ pattern is attested in my corpus, such as *dirty,* none of the patterns in (35)-(38) are attested. Overall, native speakers appear to accept most readily intensifiers such as *totally* and *ridiculously*, which seem best to fit the predominantly informal tone of HPQs, and to convey the greatest

degree of speaker evaluation[6]. What is of importance, however, is that even if not all combinations of intensifier and adjective are acceptable, a sufficiently wide range is attested to show that these represent a productive pattern.

34) *How gross is that!*
35) *How totally gross is that!*
36) *How very gross is that!*
37) *How really gross is that!*
38) *How ridiculously gross is that!*

e) Constituent negation

In some instances the adjective in the *how*-phrase of a HPQ can also be negated, as in the example (5a), repeated below as (39a). It is more or less equivalent in meaning to (40). At least for the adjectives under consideration here, analytic negation in HPQs is no more unusual than morphological negation with the negative prefix *un-* attached to the adjective. However, in the corresponding HDQs, those with analytic negation are degraded in contrast to those where negation is synthetic. Note that although (39a) might appear to be the negative counterpart of the positive HPQ in (43a) (for which the corresponding HDQ is given in (43b)), whilst (41a) is perfectly acceptable, without negation the HPQ given as (44a) seems odd (contrary to the completely natural HDQ in (44b)). Note that the exclamative equivalent to (44a), given in (45) does not seem to be degraded either.

39) a. *How not cool is that?* (HPQ43)   b. ?*How not cool is that?*
40) a. *How uncool is that!*   b. *How uncool is that?*
41) a. *How not fair is that!*   b. ?*How not fair is that?*
42) a. *How unfair is that!*   b. *How unfair is that?*
43) a. *How cool is that!*   b. *How cool is that?*
44) a. ??*How fair is that!*   b. *How fair is that?*

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[6] *Very* is less frequently attested in HPQs, despite being perfectly acceptable in *how*-exclamatives. Differences between HPQs and exclamatives in the adjective-intensifier combinations permitted would be another interesting topic for future research. The modifiers *pretty* and *fairly* are unacceptable in both HPQs and *how*-exclamatives, presumably again for semantic or pragmatic reasons because they clash with the sense both utterances convey that there is something remarkable enough to merit commenting upon.

45) *How fair that is!*

The possibility for the negative particle and intensifier *so* to occur simultaneously in HPQs is illustrated in (46a) and (47a). The corresponding HDQs in (46b) and (47b) are unacceptable. Without negation, *so* does not appear to be able to modify the adjective in HPQs either, as the ungrammaticality of (48a) suggests, whilst in a declarative context such as (49) this is acceptable.

46) a. *How so not cool is that!*   b. **How so not cool is that?*
47) a. *How so not fair is that!*   b. **How so not fair is that?*
48) a. **How so cool is that!*   b. **How so cool is that?*

49) *That's so cool/not cool/uncool.*

2.2.2 Properties of the HPQ clause

The most common pattern for HPQs, and that which is found in the majority of examples in my small corpus of attested examples involves the use of main verb BE, where the *how*-phrase is predicated of the post-verbal subject. The basic structure of this pattern is given below in (50). (i) covers simple tenses, where BE is inflected and inverts with the subject. (ii) covers compound tenses, where the inflected auxiliary inverts with the subject, which is in turn followed by BE in its infinitive form. These patterns are no different to those found in HDQs.

50) i. *how* + adjective + (inflected)BE + subject
    ii. *how* + adjective + auxiliary + subject + (infinitival)BE

I will first discuss the range of subjects which can occur in HPQs, then the range of verbs and verb forms, before considering the interaction of subject and verb.

a) Subjects of HPQs

A range of subjects can occur in HPQs. The examples below illustrate these. (51), (52) and (53) involve personal pronouns. All personal pronoun forms are able to occur in HPQs, with the exception of *one*, which seems to be excluded because it is associated only with very formal registers of English, where HPQs are not found. Personal pronoun *it* is found only rarely, but is nevertheless attested in (53). The infrequency of its occurrence can perhaps be explained by the fact that *it* cannot receive heavy stress, which usually falls on the subjects of HPQs (see section 2.3 below). Thus examples such as (53) do not receive the stress pattern which is typical of HPQs.

   51) *How healthy am I?* (HPQ1)
   52) *How vigilant are they not!* (HPQ5)
   53) *How big is it!* (HPQ53)

It seems that whilst *it* is considerably more common as a subject in HDQs than in HPQs, pronominal *that*, illustrated in (54) and (55), is found more frequently in HPQs than in HDQs. It is the most frequently-occurring subject form, and usually takes its reference from the context. The preponderance of deictic forms seems to reflect the frequent use of HPQs by the speaker to highlight something noteworthy that obtains in the current situation. However, it is also possible for *that* to take its reference as a subject from an extraposed clause occurring later (56) or earlier (57) within the discourse.

   54) *How cool is that?* (HPQ4)
   55) *How frustrating is that!* (HPQ23)

   56) *How cool is that, meeting Brad Pitt on you first day in the U.S.*
   57) *Still waiting on teams from Wembley - how rubbish is that?* (HPQ27)

(58) and (59) show that the combination *that* + noun is also possible as subject. The use of *this*, as occurs in (60) and (61), is found much less commonly as subject than *that*. *This* can also occur with a following noun as (62) illustrates. DPs without *this* or *that* are also possible, often, as in (63), with a possessive pronoun, although not

exclusively, as the bare noun in (64) illustrates. As (65) shows, expletive-subject *it* can also occur in HPQs, although, as is the case for personal pronoun *it*, it seems to be disfavoured because it is not compatible with the usual HPQ stress pattern. The presence of the post-copular adverbial *today*, which is capable of bearing heavy stress, may help to admit (65). In examples such as (66), it seems hard to get a HPQ reading, although *it* seems to be able to occur more easily when there is a dependent clause, as in (67), perhaps for reasons of intonation. Expletive-subject *there* is not attested in my corpus of HPQs, and seems odd in examples such as (68). However, just as for cases with expletive *it* as subject, examples with expletive *there* are improved by the addition of a dependent clause, as (69) shows.

58) *How bad was that play!* (HPQ10)
59) *How great was that milk!* (HPQ34)

60) *How great is this*! (HPQ24)
61) *How wierd* [sic] *is this-my fiance works with you dad!* (HPQ18)

62) *How sexed up is this play!* (HPQ22)

63) *How great is my man!* (HPQ15)
64) *How exciting is gold!* (HPQ14)

65) *How sweaty is it today!* (HPQ50)
66) ??*How funny would it be!*
67) *How funny would it be if we had someone like that on our course!* (HPQ31)

68) ??*How many people were there!*[7]
69) *How many people would there be if they all turned up!*

b) Licensing of Negative Polarity Items (NPIs)

Another type of subject which is disallowed in HPQs, although admitted in HDQs are the quantificational expressions *anyone* or *anything*, as the data in (70) and (71)

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[7] Incidentally, where *there* is understood as a locative expression, rather than an expletive subject, then (68) can be understood as an exclamative, but this is not relevant to the present discussion.

show. This is particularly significant as Fitzpatrick (2005: 140) takes the inability of such items to occur under *how come* as evidence that, in contrast to other *wh*-words, *how come* does not license negative polarity items (NPIs). This is a point which I shall return to in section 3.4s and 4.4.2.

70) a. *How honest is anyone!*
    b. *How honest is anyone?*

71) a. *How important is anything!*
    b. *How important is anything?*

c) Theme verbs and modal verbs

(72), (73) and (74) show that in HPQs with adjectives in the *how*-phrase, verbs other than BE can occur, although these are from the limited class of theme verbs, which take adjectival complements. (75) shows that modals can also appear in the pattern (50) ii. Patterns of behaviour with modal verbs in HPQs are complex, and space constraints prevent me from exploring this issue here fully.

72) *How fat has he become!*
73) *How bad do they feel!*
74) *How great does this look!*   (HPQ41)

75) *How sick must he be!*

d) Transitivity

HPQs can include intransitive (76), monotransitive (77a), and ditransitive (78a) verbs. However, with transitive verbs, a preference is usually shown for structures such as (77b) and (78b), which follow the basic pattern of *how* + adjective + copular BE + subject, where the subject is a relative clause composed of the direct object of the lexical verb, the subject of this verb, and the verb itself (followed by the indirect object for intransitive verbs).

76) *How well does she sing!*
77) a. *How funny a man did we see!*

b. *How funny was the man we saw!*

78) a. *How strange a book did he give me!*

b. *How strange was the book he gave me!*

e) Tenses

Whilst present tense examples are the most numerous for HPQs, attested examples of the patterns in (50) realised with various tenses are given below in examples (79)-(82). Although not attested in the corpus, examples such as (72) show that perfect tenses are also acceptable.

79) *How cool am I?!* (HPQ8)   Present Simple

80) *How nice was that!* (HPQ7)   Past Simple

81) *How great will that be!* (HPQ19)   *Will*-Future

82) *How funny would it be if it we had someone like that on our course!*
   (HPQ31)   *Would*-Conditional

f) Inversion

The inverted word order in HPQs seems to exemplify subject-auxiliary inversion (SAI), as is found in HDQs, rather than, for example, predicate inversion, which is exemplified in (83) (Heycock and Kroch's (1998) (33c)).

83) *Voting for the amendment were the senators from Maine.*

The diagnostics given in Haegeman (1996: 64) for differentiating predicate inversion from SAI make clear that HPQs involve the latter. Whilst in SAI the subject may be a pronoun, in predicate inversion this is not possible. As discussed in section (a) above, and illustrated in (51) and (52), many HPQs have pronominal subjects. Furthermore, when more than one auxiliary is present (where copular BE is seen as an auxiliary), the order found in HPQs is the auxiliary-subject-auxiliary order typical of SAI, as is outlined in (50)ii, and exemplified by the attested examples in (84) and (85). The auxiliary-auxiliary-subject order of predicate inversion, illustrated in (86) (Haegeman's (1996: 63) (6a)), is disallowed for HPQs, as (88) and (88) show.

84) *How nice would it be if it worked out for me to work for Human Rights Watch after I graduated!* (HPQ16)

85) *How great will that be!* (HPQ19)

86) *Complicating matters will be cost.*

87) **How nice would be it if it worked out for me to work for Human Rights Watch after I graduated!*

88) **How great will be that!*

g) DO-support

(89) and (90a) show that DO-support occurs in HPQs which contain lexical verbs when no other auxiliary is present. This is less frequently the case for HPQs which have adjectives in the *how*-phrase than for those which have adverbs, because copular BE is by far the most common verb in the former type. The presence of DO-support is thus common to HPQs, such as (90a) and HDQs, like (90b), in contrast to *how*-exclamatives such as (90c) where it is not found.

89) *How well does she dress!*

90) a. *How badly did we play!*

b. *How badly did we play?*

c. *How badly we played!*

h) Sentential negation

Sentential negation occurs in the attested example presented here as (91a), giving the HPQ overall negative force. The corresponding HDQ in (b) is ungrammatical, as is the *how*-exclamative in (c). However, sentential negation in HPQs seems rare and is rejected by most native speakers, who generally use a negative or negated adjective rather than sentential negation to give a HPQ negative force. Thus (92a) and (b) are used and accepted by native English speakers, whilst (c) and (d) were rejected by the native speakers I consulted.

91) a. *How vigilant are they not!* (HPQ5)

b. **How vigilant are they not?*

c. **How vigilant they are not!*

92) a. *How uncool is that!*

    b. *How not cool is that!*

    c. **How cool is that not!*

    d. **How cool isn't that!*

i) *Wh*-in-situ

Another difference is that, in contrast to HDQs, it seems impossible to have *wh*-in-situ in HPQs. The (b) examples with *wh*-in-situ are perfectly acceptable for the HDQs in (94) and (96), whilst in (93) and (95)) the *wh*-in-situ (b) equivalents of the (a) HPQs are ungrammatical.

93) a. *How cool is that!*

    b. **That's how cool!*

94) a. *How cool is that?*

    b. *That's how cool?*

95) a. *How bad was that play!*

    b. **That play was how bad!*

96) a. *How bad was that play?*

    b. *That play was how bad?*

j) Multiple *wh*

The occurrence of multiple *wh*-phrases within one HPQ seems unacceptable, as (97a) and (98a) illustrate. Ono and Fujii (2003: 166 f.n. 4) state that 'at least in English, multiple exclamatives are disallowed while multiple interrogatives are allowed'. However, in this specific case it appears that multiple-*wh* is also disallowed in HDQs, as (97b) and (98b) are also ungrammatical[8].

97) a. **How expensive is what!*

    b. **How expensive is what?*

98) a. **How tall is who!*

    b. **How tall is who?*

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[8] Or, more precisely, they cannot have a reading similar to that of (i), which asks for a pair-list response (e.g. *John ate cake, Sam ate tomatoes*). (98b) and (99b) can be understood as echo-questions, but this is a separate issue to the one pursued here.

    (i) *Who ate what?*

k) Long-distance extraction

Similarly, long-distance extraction seems possible only from HDQs and not from HPQs – the surface strings in (99) and (100) can be interpreted only as the former. Ono and Fujii (2006: 163) present (101) (their (3)), to show that exclamatives, like interrogatives, display unbounded dependency for *wh*-movement.

    99) *How cool did he say that was?*

    100)   *How bad do you believe that play was?*

    101)   *How brave everyone must think you expect me to believe he is!*

l) Embedding

It is not possible to determine whether or not HPQs can occur in embedded contexts. Keeping an open mind at present as to whether HPQs should be considered to be questions or exclamations, I will demonstrate the difficulties which arise using both an interrogative and an exclamative predicate[9]. With an interrogative predicate such as *wonder* in (102), it is structurally impossible to tell whether what has been embedded is the HDQ (103) or the HPQ (104). On the assumption that, as was argued in section (f) above, the inversion shown by HPQs is SAI, in both cases an uninverted word order in embedded clauses is to be expected. However, semantically, the only interpretation possible seems to be that of the HDQ in (103), where the degree to which she is *tall* is open and can be wondered about.

    102) *He wondered how tall she was.*

    103)   *How tall was she?*

    104)   *How tall was she!*

With embedding under an exclamative predicate, such as *to be amazed* in (105) it is altogether impossible to tell whether what has been embedded is the true exclamative (106), with no change in word order, or the HPQ in (104) with the characteristic loss of inverted word order found when embedding an interrogative-like structure. As

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[9] For more on embedded interrogatives and exclamatives see Grimshaw (1979) and d'Avis (2002).

both HPQs and exclamatives may contain intensifiers, this cannot be used by way of differentiation. As the only surface feature to distinguish HPQs from exclamatives is the SAI found in the former, which disappears when embedded, and as HPQs seem to have a meaning not incompatible with an exclamative predicate, it does not seem possible to establish whether or not HDQs can be embedded in such cases.

105) *He was amazed how (incredibly) tall she was.*

106) *How tall she was!*

2.3 Phonological properties of HPQs

The intonation pattern of HPQs is one of their most striking properties and, to the extent of my knowledge, is particular to them alone. In the absence of any other distinguishing features, intonation is usually sufficient to mark a particular utterance as a HPQ rather than a HDQ. Whilst HDQs typically have the falling intonation characteristic of *wh*-questions, normally in HPQs, after a fall on the *how* + adjective phrase, the intonation rises for the verb and subject. Furthermore, in HPQs the main stress is usually on the sentence-final subject, in contrast to in HDQs where the main stress falls on the adjective.

However, HPQ intonation is not a necessary condition for HPQ interpretation, as it was shown in section 2.2.2 (a) that HPQs can occur with expletive subjects which are not able to bear heavy stress, and in such instances the typical HPQ intonation pattern is absent. I do not have the phonological expertise to provide a more in-depth analysis, or to comment upon the reasons for deviations from this standard pattern, but leave these matters open for further investigation.

2.4 Punctuation: HPQs in written form

It is important to be cautious about drawing any conclusions on the basis of the punctuation of HPQs alone. In contrast to the clear differentiation from HDQs which intonation frequently provides for the spoken form, punctuation is not a reliable way of distinguishing the written form of HPQs and HDQs, for there is considerable variability in this area.

Sometimes HPQs are punctuated identically to HDQs, with a single question mark. Sometimes they receive a single exclamation mark. On other occasions, a full stop (or comma, as appropriate) is used. However, there are also many creative variations, for example multiple exclamation marks, or combining various numbers of question marks and exclamation marks in various orders.

In the light of the preceding discussion, such variability is not surprising, as HPQs have been shown to share properties with both interrogatives and exclamatives. Given that HPQs cannot straightforwardly be categorised using the criteria put forward by linguists, it is hardly surprising if there is more widespread uncertainty as to their classification, and hence as to the appropriate punctuation.

2.5 The syntax of HPQs: summary

Many surface and syntactic properties of HPQs have been discussed in this chapter. Table 1 summarises the similarities and differences in behaviour of HPQs, HDQs and *how*-exclamatives according to these. The final column compares the behaviour of HPQs to *how*-interrogatives and *how*-exclamatives. 'Ex' indicates that HPQs behave as exclamatives with regard to the property in question, and 'Q' that they behave as HDQs. Thus, 'Ex, Q' shows that the property is shared by all three types of *how*-clause, whilst a blank field indicates that HPQs behave unlike either of the other types.

From the table it is apparent that HPQs share many properties with both types of *how*-clause. For example, all can involve a full range of adjectives and adverbs, a variety of verbs and tenses and various different subject forms. However, the properties which are most revealing, and which I will focus on when I attempt to offer an analysis for HPQs in Chapter 4, are those where the behaviour of HPQs diverges from that of other *how*-clauses. HPQs share with exclamatives the ease with which intensifiers can occur, the fact that NPIs are not licensed and the fact that *wh*-in-situ is disallowed. Yet at the same time they share with HDQs the presence of subject-auxiliary inversion and, correspondingly, DO-support with full lexical verbs.

HPQs differ from both exclamatives and HDQs in certain respects too, although the only such property I will consider in any depth is the inability for the *how*-phrase to

be extracted. As regards the other differences, I hypothesise that register has a significant part to play in modification of the adjective with (*so*) *not*, but leave this tentative suggestion to be confirmed by further investigation.

In this chapter I have merely observed certain aspects of the syntactic behaviour of HPQs. In Chapter 4 I will return to some of these observations in more depth as I assess whether or not they reflect representational differences between the underlying syntactic structures of HPQs and HDQs. However, first I will turn my attention to the semantic properties of HPQs in the next chapter, Chapter 3.

Table 1: Summary of the key syntactic properties of HPQs, HDQs and *how*-exclamatives

	HPQs	HDQs	*how*-exclamatives	Pattern of behaviour of HPQ
Structure of the *how*-phrase				
full range of adjectives/adjectivals permitted	yes	yes	yes	Ex, Q
adverbs permitted	yes	yes	yes	Ex, Q
quantifiers (*much*/*many*) permitted	yes	yes	yes	Ex, Q
intensifiers permitted	yes	?no	yes	Ex
negation of the adjective with *not*	yes	no	no	
modification of adjective with *so* – adjective negated with *not*	yes	no	no	
modification of adjective with *so* – without negation	no	no	no	Ex, Q
Structure of the clause				
range of subject forms can occur	yes	yes	yes	Ex, Q
NPIs licensed	no	yes	no	Ex
theme verbs can occur	yes	yes	yes	Ex, Q
modal verbs can occur	yes	yes	yes	Ex, Q
intransitive, monotransitive and ditransitive verbs can occur	yes	yes	yes	Ex, Q
full range of tenses can occur	yes	yes	yes	Ex, Q
subject-verb inversion	yes	yes	no	Q
DO-support found with full lexical verbs	yes	yes	no	Q
sentential negation	?no	no	no	Ex, Q
wh-in situ	no	yes	no	Ex
multiple-*wh*	no	no	no	Ex, Q
long-distance extraction of *how*-phrase	no	yes	yes	
clause can be embedded	??	yes	yes	??

3. The semantic and pragmatic properties of HPQs

3.1 Rhetorical questions

As Obenauer (2006: 247) remarks, '*Wh*-interrogatives, as is well known, are not exclusively interpreted as 'requests for information', that is, as requests to specify the value(s) of the variable bound by the *wh*-quantifier'. Where this is the case in English, they are commonly classified as rhetorical questions (RQs). Intuitively, a HPQ may be regarded as an RQ, at least whilst a very general definition of RQs as structures which resemble interrogatives and yet which do not require an answer is maintained. Yet providing a more precise definition is far from simple. There is no consensus in the literature as to how the class should be delimited, and indeed as to whether RQs are differentiated from information questions (IQs) by pragmatic usage alone, or by semantic or syntactic factors, or indeed by a combination of the above, points both raised by Frank (1990: 724).

Often, however, RQs are considered to be a type of indirect speech act (ISA), where the understood force of the utterance is different to that which is prototypically associated with its form. In such instances, this 'literal force' (Levinson (1983: 263)) i.e. that which is encoded in the syntactic form of the utterance, is assumed to be co-present along with the understood force which is induced by the context. HPQs have certain formal similarities to interrogatives, as was discussed in Chapter 2, yet do not seem to have the typical force of a question. In this chapter I will consider whether this interpretation arises as a pragmatic effect, as it is often assumed to in RQs, or whether it stems from the semantic properties of HPQs.

3.2 HPQs and rhetorical questions

A frequently-cited property of RQs is that they are understood as assertions of the opposite polarity to that of the surface string of the RQ[10]. Han (2002) sets out a formal semantic account of how this comes to be. Whilst this applies to RQs such as (1) and (2), it is clear that the HPQs in (3)-(5) do not have this property. (3) is understood as the speaker emphasising that their (current) behaviour is 'healthy', not unhealthy, and whilst (4) can be used sarcastically, it most often indicates something

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[10] '[Rhetorical] question-word questions can have the effect only of an assertion of opposite polarity' Sadock (1971: 224).

the speaker genuinely deems 'cool'. Similarly, (5) is understood to mean that the speaker feels the play was genuinely – and particularly – 'bad'[11]. The very fact that such properties seem to be presupposed in HPQs may explain why readings corresponding to negative assertions are impossible for HPQs: as Fitzpatrick (2005: 140) argues for *how come* questions, a positive presupposition clashes with the negative bias of RQs.

1) *Who buys music on cassette these days? (≈No-one buys music on cassette these days.)*
2) *What kind of an answer is that? (≈That's no kind of an answer.)*
3) *How healthy am I!*
4) *How cool is that!*
5) *How bad was that play!*

Han (2002: 216 f.n. 5) does note that there are some positive yes/no questions which seem not to correspond to negative assertions, but deems these 'exceptional', and able to occur only under certain discourse conditions, whereas it is quite clear from Chapters 1 and 2 that HPQs are widespread and productive. Similarly, whilst HPQs are distinguished from HDQs by the intonation pattern, unlike RQs it is not the case that they have the 'intonational contour of an assertion' (Han (2002: 215)).

This suggests a further way in which HPQs differ from RQs, at least as the latter have previously been defined in the literature. Whilst, like RQs, HPQs seem to contribute content to a conversation rather than requesting it, it is not clear that what HPQs provide is 'a statement' (Schmidt-Radefeldt (1977: 378)). Zanuttini and Portner (2003: 48) present the example in (6) (their (21)) to show that, unlike declaratives, exclamatives cannot serve as answers. As (7) shows, neither can HPQs. This is particularly interesting as Schmidt-Radefeldt (1977: 387) claims that '"rhetorical" questions can be used as answers to genuine questions since they are

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[11] RQs involving *how* which correspond more or less to negative assertions can occur. (i)a. conveys more or less the same as (i)b.
(i) a. *How difficult can it be?*
     b. *It can't be so very difficult!*

pseudo-statements'. Thus also by his classification, HPQs are excluded from the class of RQs.

6) A: *How tall is Tony's child?* B: **How very tall he is!*
7) A: *How tall is Tony's child?* B: **How tall is he!*

Rather than assertions, HPQs often seem closer to exclamations in the way they present the speaker's evaluation of a situation. A HPQ such as (4) appears to remark upon something which the speaker genuinely deems 'cool' enough to merit commenting on and pointing out to others. Thus, overall, it appears that even though HPQs share with RQs the property of resembling interrogatives, yet not being used to seek information, HPQs have their own distinctive behaviour, which is at odds with the way the class of RQs is often characterised.

3.3 Types of non-standard question

It would appear instructive to look more closely at the range of structures classified as RQs, and to attempt to identify different types of non-standard questions. Whilst such an approach has not been favoured for English, several sub-types of non-standard questions have been identified for Italian. Interestingly, certain of these seem to better capture the properties of HPQs than the definitions often given of English RQs. Munaro and Obenauer (1999: 218) discuss various types of pseudo-question in the Italian dialect of Bellunese, in all of which 'the speaker, in the lively expression of a feeling of surprise/annoyance/disapproval, conveys his personal evaluation of the event referred to'. For Garzonio (2004), rhetorical questions are just one of the five types of non-standard questions he identifies in the Italian dialect, Fiorentino, which he discusses. Of greatest relevance to a discussion of English HPQs is the 'exclamative interrogative' type which is illustrated in (8), which is characterised as having the key semantic property that the event in question is remarkable in some respect, and hence worth pointing out. This seems very similar to the observations made above for English HPQs.

8) *O quanto   piove?*
   'o how much rains'
   "How much does it rain?", "What a rain!"

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Schmidt-Radefeldt (1977: 389) does make reference both to the idea that RQs 'may contain an evaluation' and to 'the sometimes mentioned affinity between exclamation and rhetorical questions', stating that 'rhetorical questions are uttered in an exclamatory way' (Schmidt-Radefeldt (1977: 378). Yet the regularity with which a sense of exclamativity is associated with HPQs suggests that this is potentially a stable property of the sentence, which one may wish to encode semantically (and hence, perhaps syntactically), rather than regarding it as a pragmatic property of the utterance.

McCawley (1973: 370) has previously argued that Exclamatory-Inversion Sentences (EISs) such as (9) and (10) 'must be analysed as something entirely different from Yes/No questions', noting that they have similarities to exclamatives, although she stops short of classifying them as exclamations. However, Huddleston (1993) argues that, semantically, such structures are still questions, and hence any exclamation-like interpretation arises pragmatically. Thus, whether or not HPQs should be analysed as structurally distinct from HPQs seems to depend to a large extent upon their semantic behaviour.

9) *Is syntax easy!*
10) *Am I hungry!*

3.4 HPQs and exclamativity

I will therefore consider how HPQs perform when assessed against the (semantic) criteria for exclamatives outlined by Zanuttini and Portner (2003) (henceforth ZP). These are particularly pertinent as ZP (41) explicitly state that they are of use in determining the correct classification of non-core cases of exclamations. To demonstrate this, they assess the RQ in (11) (which meets Han's criteria of corresponding to an assertion of opposite polarity, as shown in (12)) and conclude that it is not exclamative. Thus, if HPQs perform differently with regard to the diagnostics, this may provide further evidence that they should be differentiated from the class of RQs, at least as it is currently defined.

11) *Who could be cuter than you?*
12) *Nobody could be cuter than you.*

The first semantic property which ZP (50) identify is factivity, 'a presupposition that the propositional content of the exclamative is true'. Yet as the two tests which they provide for this involve embedding under factive predicates, they cannot be applied to HPQs, for it is unclear whether or not these can be embedded at all, as was discussed in relation to the data in 2.2.2 section (l). However, Fitzpatrick (2005: 141) takes the inability of NPIs to be licensed under *how come* as indication of the factivity of this *wh*-expression, given that NPIs also cannot occur under factive predicates. As the same NPIs also fail to be licensed in HPQs, this could suggest that they are also factive.

The second property which ZP discuss is 'scalar implicature'. According to ZP (47), '[e]xclamatives introduce a conventional scalar implicature to the effect that the proposition they denote lies at the extreme end of some contextually given scale', hence why they seem to convey 'that something is surprising or noteworthy in some way'. On the basis of (13) a., their (14) a., they reason that 'it must be a conventional, rather than a conversational, implicature because it is nondefeasible…and detachable'. They offer the example given here as (13) b., their (15) b., to illustrate their claim that the implicature is not tied to the semantic content of the utterance. HPQs seem to behave exactly like other exclamations with regard to conventional scalar implicature – (14) appears just as odd as (13) a.

13) a. ??*How very cute he is! – though he's not extremely cute.*
    b. *He's quite cute! – though not extremely cute.*

14) ??*How cute is he! – though he's not extremely cute.*

The third property which ZP (47) identify as characteristic of exclamatives is their inability to occur in question/answer pairs. Particularly relevant to the current discussion is their remark that 'Obviously, interrogatives characteristically serve to ask a question. Exclamatives may not do so'. To illustrate this point they provide the examples given below as (15) and (16), which are their (17) and (18) respectively, with additions made to the set of responses they give in B. (17) shows a HPQ with the same responses. It again seems to pattern with the exclamative rather than the HDQ, in that the natural response is not an answer (following Huddleston (1994) in

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reserving the term 'answer' for responses which provide information which has been requested, whilst a 'response' is any verbal acknowledgment). However, I will mark *seven feet* as pragmatically ill-formed rather than ungrammatical, as it seems it is marginally possible for it to occur in response to a HPQ, but only if B, whether unintentionally or deliberately, interprets A's utterance as a HDQ rather than as an HPQ. As Schmidt-Radefeldt (1977: 381) observes for RQs, 'In case all the formal indicators are deleted in the surface structure of sentences (utterances) which are intended as rhetorical, the rhetorical speech act can fail insofar as it is interpreted as a genuine question'.

15) A: *How tall is he?*　　　B:　*Seven feet.*
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Very tall.
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*He really is!
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*Indeed!
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*No he's not!

16) A: *How very tall he is!*　　B:　**Seven feet.*
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*Very tall.
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　He really is!
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Indeed!
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　No he's not!

17) A: *How tall is he!*　　　　B:　*#Seven feet.*
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Very tall.
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　He really is!
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Indeed!
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　No he's not!

The possibility for *very tall* to occur as a response to (17) might be construed as suggesting that HPQs can in fact be answered. Yet its function 'can be viewed as agreement to the propositions implied in the questions', as Frank (1990: 733) proposes for RQs, just as for the other acceptable responses in (17)B, rather than as an answer to a question. Thus, to the extent that HPQs are question-like, they seem to

ask for agreement, not information. In this respect, there seems to be a resemblance to negative EISs such as (18) and positive declaratives with negative tags such as (19)[12]. Nevertheless, they are distinguished from these structures and from RQs by other important semantic properties.

18) *Isn't he tall!*
19) *He's tall, isn't it?*

The impossibility of *very tall* occurring in response to the exclamative (16) is because the intensifier *very* is already present in the exclamative – when it is omitted, the response becomes acceptable as agreement in this case too. Similarly, *very tall* is an unacceptable response to an HPQ which already includes the phrase *very tall*.

3.5 HPQs and questions

The issue of how HPQs can be responded to is thus a complex one, and a full investigation of these patterns is beyond the scope of this dissertation. What is important to note here is that when the speaker utters a HPQ, they seem to put forward a complete proposition, and are not searching for an answer. As noted above, a key aspect of meaning in contrast to HDQs seems to be the speaker's evaluation of a particular entity, idea or situation. (20) does not make sense unless *how cool is that* is seen to convey the idea that what is described is particularly 'cool', with the final sentence seeming to presuppose such an evaluation.

20) Wow! How cool is that?! Not only did they seek the information but when the[y] couldn't find it online they chose to do some primary research! (HPQ46)

Sadock (1971: 225) claims that questions may not be followed by a *yet*-clause. As (21) shows, HPQs are not subject to this restriction. However, neither are RQs, according to Han (2002: 204). Thus it is not clear that this is a semantic rather than a pragmatic restriction.

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[12] See Sadock (1971: 227) for a discussion of the similarities between structures such as (18) and (19).

21) *How bad was that play! Yet we stayed right to the end anyway.*

However, ZP present further data which suggest that HPQs do not involve questions at all. The contrast between examples (22) and (23) (their (19) and (20)) is indicative of the fact that interrogatives like (22) introduce a question into the discourse, thus allowing a second phrase to restrict the set of possible answers. This cannot occur in (23) where there is an exclamative, hence no question and, consequently, no set of answers to be restricted. Once again, the HPQ in (24) seems to pattern like the exclamative rather than the interrogative. The fact that *Quite tall or very tall* is just as unacceptable as *Seven feet or eight feet* shows that it is not merely the provision of specific numeric values which is ruled out. This is particularly interesting, as the ability to define a set of answers was the criterion Huddleston (1993: 230) used to determine that EISs such as (9), (10) and (18) were still questions, even if not used as inquiries (i.e. to seek information), and subsequently the grounds upon which he argued that EISs were not structurally distinct from the string-identical polarity questions. Overall, whilst HPQs have certain similarities to non-standard uses of questions, in many respects they seem semantically closer to exclamations.

22) *How tall is he? Seven feet or eight feet?*
23) *How very tall he is! *Seven feet or eight feet?*
24) *How tall is he! *Seven feet or eight feet?*
               Quite tall or very tall?

3.6 Quantifier scope

HPQs show interesting semantic properties above and beyond their behaviour in relation to ZP's criteria. One such case is their behaviour with regard to quantifiers[13]. There are two possible readings of the HDQ in (25), one in which the quantifier *all* has narrow scope, and one in which it has wide scope, and thus takes scope over *how cool*. In the former case, a single value is requested for the students as a group, and therefore B is an appropriate response. In contrast, the latter case has a pair-list interpretation, and hence B`, where a separate value is given for each member of the group, is an appropriate response. For HPQs, only the reading where *all* has narrow

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[13] Thanks to Gary Thoms for bringing this to my attention.

scope is available, as is also the case for exclamatives. Responses such as B` to (26) are pragmatically odd, but are acceptable to the extent that they can be interpreted as disagreement with the whole of A's claim, just like B, and not as answers equivalent to (25) B`. The same is the case for exclamatives, as (27) shows.

25) A: *How cool are all the students?* wh > ∀ , ∀ > wh

B: They're a bunch of losers/They're not as cool as Essex students.

B`: John is pretty cool, so is Kevin, but Steve isn't quite so cool and James doesn't even know what cool is.

26) A: *How cool are all the students!* wh > ∀ , *∀ > wh

B: They're not cool, they're a bunch of losers!

B`: #John is pretty cool, so is Kevin, but Steve isn't quite so cool and James doesn't even know what cool is.

27) A: *How cool all the students are!* wh > ∀ , *∀ > wh

B: They're not cool, they're a bunch of losers!

B`: #John is pretty cool, so is Kevin, but Steve isn't quite so cool and James doesn't even know what cool is.

3.7 Evaluativity

Whilst HPQs often convey an evaluation which is clearly either positive (28a) or negative (28b), they can equally be used to remark upon a perceived extreme, without the sense that the speaker views this is as either positive or negative, as is the case for the examples in (29), depending on the lexical content of the adjective and the context. In general, there do not appear to be any greater restrictions on the range of adjectives which can occur in HPQs in comparison to those found in HDQs.

28) (a) *How healthy am I!*
     (b) *How unhealthy am I!*

29) (a) *How deep is that!*
     (b) *How shallow is that!*

However, HPQs are differentiated from HDQs with regard to the 'evaluativity' of these adjectives. For the examples in (30) and (31) below (where in (30) the negative form *unhealthy* is morphologically derived from the positive form *healthy*, while the antonyms in (31) are morphologically unrelated), the (a) examples are neutral questions, for which the respective answers could just as felicitously be towards the 'unhealthy' or 'shallow' ends of the scales, as in the 'healthy' or 'deep' range of values[14]. In contrast, the (b) examples are only felicitous with some kind of appropriate preceding context – the property of the adjective must already have been suggested to hold, by the previous discourse or real-world context. In the HPQs (28) and (29), discussed above, this contrast disappears, as it is understood for both the (a) and (b) examples that the speaker is drawing attention to the fact that the property denoted by the adjective holds (to a noteworthy extent). The same appears to be the case for exclamatives such as those in (32).

30) (a) *How healthy am I?*
    (b) *How unhealthy am I?*

31) (a) *How deep is that?*
    (b) *How shallow is that?*

32) (a) *How deep it is!*
    (b) *How shallow it is!*

Such intuitions have been formalised by Rett (2007) [15], who characterises the difference in terms of the property of 'evaluativity'. Rett (2007: 1) states that '[a] construction is evaluative if it makes reference to a degree that exceeds a contextually specified standard'. Although she makes no reference to HPQs (or, for that matter, exclamatives), she does discuss and formalise differences similar to those identified above. Rett classifies HDQs such as (30) and (31) as Polarity-Sensitive constructions, for the reason that whether or not they are evaluative is dependent on

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[14] Huddleston and Pullum (2002) observe this distinction, although they do not construe it in terms of evaluativity.
[15] Thanks to Hazel Pearson for bringing this paper to my attention. The page numbers refer to the PDF version of this paper which can be downloaded from
http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/rett/SALT17.pdf. Accessed on 08/08/2009.

the polarity of the adjective. Thus the (b) examples, containing negative antonyms, are evaluative [+E], whilst the (a) examples, with positive antonyms, are non-evaluative [–E].

Unlike HDQs, HPQs appear to be Polarity-Insensitive [+E], because in (28) and (29), both the (a) and (b) examples are understood to be evaluative. The polarity of the adjectives has no influence on evaluativity. This also seems to apply to the exclamatives in (32). Despite having the same surface strings, (28a) and (29a) are differentiated from (30a) and (31a) with regard to the property of evaluativity – the latter (HDQs) are Polarity-Sensitive [–E], whilst the former (HPQs) are Polarity-Insensitive [+E]. This formalises the intuition that a stable feature of HPQs is speaker evaluation.

3.8 HPQs and inverted exclamatives

Given the numerous semantic similarities between HPQs and exclamatives outlined in this chapter, one possibility to consider is that HPQs are simply exclamatives which show SAI. Huddleston (1994: 422) presents the examples given below in (33) to show that, if infrequent, inversion of subject and auxiliary in exclamatives is acceptable. He argues thus that the key distinction is not the absence of SAI in exclamatives and its presence in interrogatives but rather the fact that 'in the former the triggering of inversion in main clauses is optional, in the latter obligatory' (Huddleston (1994: 423)). Thus, uninverted equivalents to the examples in (33) are also acceptable, as illustrated in (34).

33) a. *What a row would there have been if they had realized you were here!*
   b. *How very much better would it be if you went yourself!*

34) a. *What a row there would have been if they had realized you were here!*
   b. *How very much better it would be if you went yourself!*

However, my personal judgement is that the examples in (33) are considerably less natural as exclamatives than those given in (34). Furthermore, there are other instances where I find SAI unacceptable in exclamatives: I cannot interpret (35a) as an exclamative, whilst the uninverted equivalent (35b) is perfectly acceptable.

Similarly I can interpret (36a) as a HPQ, but not as a canonical exclamative equivalent to (36b). (37a), on the other hand, can be understood as either an inverted exclamative equivalent to (37b), or as a HPQ.

35) a. *How late was it!*
   b. *How late it was!*

36) a. *How mad is that!*
   b. *How mad that is!*

37) a. *How great is he!*
   b. *How great he is!*

This is significant because it suggests that for all their semantic similarities, HPQs must still be distinguished from canonical exclamatives in certain respects to allow for the two interpretations of (37a). In speech they are differentiated by their pattern of intonation. Yet there also seems to be a subtle difference, if not in meaning, then at least in emphasis. Whilst HPQs and *how*-exclamatives hold in common the contribution of an evaluation to the discourse, HPQs seem to be associated with a greater sense of speaker involvement in this evaluation. The HPQ in (38a) conveys a stronger sense that it is the speaker who deems the man 'nice', whilst the exclamative in (38b) seems to present this as a more generally accepted belief. The heightened sense that in using a HPQ the speaker is searching for agreement with their view could then perhaps be related to this as a pragmatic effect, rather than entailing that HPQs semantically involve a question.

38) a. *How nice is that man!*
   b. *How nice that man is!*

For now this distinction between HPQs and exclamatives shall be left as an imprecise and informal observation, which requires refinement in further work. However, the point I wish to make is that, for all their semantic similarities to exclamatives, HPQs are distinguished, at least phonologically and pragmatically, from inverted exclamatives.

3.9 The semantics and pragmatics of HPQs: summary

Several semantic properties of HPQs have been discussed in this chapter. Table 2 summarises their behaviour, in comparison to that of RQs, HDQs and *how*-exclamatives. As for Table 1, the final column compares the behaviour of HPQs to the other utterance types, with 'Ex' indicating a property shared with exclamatives, 'RQ' with rhetorical questions, and 'Q' with HDQs.

The only semantic similarities HPQs show to HDQs are the fact that they can elicit a response, which is trivial insomuch as it applies to all of the utterance types, and that they do not correspond to assertions of the opposite polarity and cannot serve as answers, properties also shared by exclamatives, which differentiate all of these from RQs (pseudo-statements). There are no properties shared only by RQs and HPQs. There are however several properties which are shared by HPQs, RQs and exclamatives: they all provide, rather than request information, can be followed by a *yet*-clause, appear to be exclamation-like, can be responded to with agreement and do not allow a reading where a lower quantifier takes scope over the *wh*-phrase. With the exception of the latter, these similarities might appear to be pragmatic.

Yet the properties which HPQs have in common with exclamatives alone seem to be true semantic distinctions. Rather strikingly, HPQs show exactly the same behaviour as canonical exclamatives on all the criteria they were tested against here. Contrary to certain pragmatic accounts of RQs (Schmidt-Radefeldt (1977), Frank (1990)), and Huddleston's (1993) assessment of EISs, it seems that HPQs may not in fact put forward a question into the discourse at all. This throws into question the strict divide of interrogatives as questions vs. exclamatives as exclamations which Zanuttini and Portner (2003) impose. What may have begun as a rhetorical use of a question seems to have grammaticalised into a structure which has its own properties, distinct both from those of true questions and from rhetorical uses of other questions and, to a lesser extent, exclamatives. Unlike certain rhetorical questions which have become almost idiomatic, HPQs constitute a productive pattern used innovatively by native speakers of English. In the next chapter, Chapter 4, I will consider the implications of the semantic properties noted here for a structural analysis of HPQs, in combination with the syntactic observations made in Chapter 2.

Table 2: Summary of the key semantic and pragmatic properties of HPQs, RQs, HDQs and *how*-exclamatives

Semantic property	HPQs	RQs	HDQs	*how*-exclamatives	Pattern of behaviour of HPQs
Request information	No	No	Yes	No	Ex, RQ
Provide information	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Ex, RQ
Correspond to an assertion of the opposite polarity	No	Yes	No	No	Ex, Q
Can serve as answers	No	Yes	No	No	Ex, Q
Appear to be exclamation-like	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Ex, RQ
Sense of exclamativity semantically encoded	Yes	No	No	Yes	Ex
Can elicit a response	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ex, RQ, Q
Agreement is a suitable response	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Ex, RQ
Can elicit an answer	No	Yes	Yes	No	Ex
Can be followed by a *yet*-clause	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Ex, RQ
Question semantically encoded	No	Yes	Yes	No	Ex
a lower quantifier can take scope over the *wh*-phrase	No	No	Yes	No	Ex, RQ
Interpreted as evaluative irrespective of the polarity of the adjective	Yes	n/a	No	Yes	Ex

4. Analysis

4.1 HPQs vs. HDQs: a syntactic/semantic or pragmatic distinction?

The observations made in Chapters 2 and 3 make clear that, despite certain surface similarities, HPQs are differentiated from HDQs in a number of respects. The question which remains, and which I now wish to explore, is whether these distinctions reflect differences in the underlying structure, or whether HPQs and HDQs are differentiated by pragmatic context alone.

Unlike the non-standard questions in Fiorentino (discussed in section 3.3), which are marked 'by the modal particle *o*' (Garzonio (2004: 9)), there is no consistent overt syntactic reflex of non-standard questions in English. This is not to say, however, that the two types of question should not be distinguished, for as Obenauer (2008: 1) observes, 'the overt differences between standard wh-interrogatives…and… special wh-questions…are rather unobtrusive in a number of well-studied languages'. This seems to be the case for English, where the surface forms of HPQs and HDQs are sometimes identical. The discussion in Chapter 2 makes clear, however, that HPQs are not always string-identical to HDQs, so at least in such cases the interpretation of a particular utterance as a HPQ and not a HDQ does not rely on pragmatic determination alone. Levinson (1983: 267) discusses how the literal force hypothesis (LFH), which would categorise HPQs as questions on the basis of their surface similarities to interrogatives, fails to account for the 'apparent interaction between syntax and indirect illocutionary force'. The syntactic reflexes of exclamativity in HPQs are inexplicable if this force is seen to arise only as a pragmatic effect.

It is of course theoretically desirable to have a single coherent account for both those HPQs which have the same surface strings as HDQs, and those which do not, providing that there is empirical evidence in favour of such a view. There does in fact seem to be a convincing case to support the position that HPQs and HDQs are not differentiated by context alone, even when they are string identical. In section 2.3 it was noted that HPQs have an intonation pattern which appears stable, and distinct from those associated with both HDQs and RQs. The most compelling evidence in favour of viewing HPQs as structurally distinct from HDQs comes, however, from the semantic differences observed in Chapter 3. Here it was shown that the sense of

exclamativity found in HPQs does not arise merely as a pragmatic effect, as is often argued to be the case for RQs, but seems to be semantically encoded, just as it is in canonical exclamatives.

Assuming the hypothesis of compositionality, that is to say, the idea that 'in language, interpretation depends on the way the strings of words are composed' (Haegeman (2006: 11)), and given that the difference in interpretation between HPQs and HDQs has been shown to be a stable semantic property and not merely a pragmatic effect, this must then reflect a distinction in underlying syntactic structure between the two types. One could similarly argue that such a structural distinction is necessary in order for the correct intonational pattern to be assigned when the syntactic structure is transferred to the phonological component of the grammar. Thus, on the assumption that there must be some structural element or configuration which contributes the sense of speaker evaluation and exclamativity which is found in HPQs but not HDQs. my aim in the remainder of this chapter is to explore possibilities as to how this structural differentiation may be realised.

4.2 HPQs and copular BE

In exploring possible representations of HPQs I am going to limit my focus to those involving '*how* + adjective' sequences with copular BE, as these are by far the most commonly attested type of HPQ, and space constraints prevent me from exploring the representation of all forms. Determining the structure of predicative clauses is not the focus of this dissertation, and hence I will adopt the current standard analysis in analysing the complement of copular BE as a Small Clause (SC) containing the subject and the adjectival predicate, following Rothstein (1995) amongst others[16]. A possible analysis for a HDQ such as (1) incorporating this assumption is sketched in (2). It assumes V-to-T and T-to-C raising of the auxiliary, and subject raising from within the small clause to spec-TP, as well as *wh*-movement to spec-CP. Strikethrough font marks a copy of a constituent which will receive null spellout at the interface. The implementation and implications of such an analysis for HPQs will be discussed later in this chapter.

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[16] For a summary of previous approaches and an alternative proposal, see Moro (1997).

1) *How warm is it?*

2)

```
                        CP
              _____/    _____
            AP                       C'
           /__\                  ___/    \___
          how                   C            TP
          warm                  is       ___/  \___
                                       PRN          T'
                                        it       __/  \__
                                                T        VP
                                                i̶s̶   ___/   \___
                                                    V            SC
                                                   B̶E̶        __/    \__
                                                          PRN         AP
                                                           i̶t̶        /__\
                                                                     h̶o̶w̶
                                                                     w̶a̶r̶m̶
```
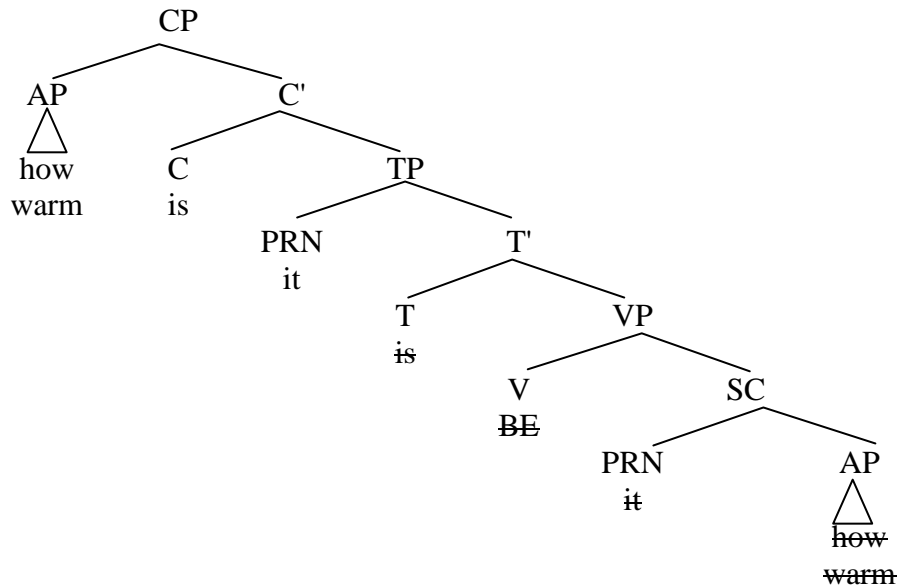
4.3 Investigating the structure of HPQs

The main issue which will be pursued here is that, despite having surface strings which resemble interrogatives, HPQs are used by speakers with a force closer to that typically associated with exclamatives. This immediately rules out certain syntactic approaches to the encoding of force, such as Pesetsky and Torrego's (2001) proposal, whereby SAI and exclamative interpretation are mutually exclusive. Below I provide a list of 6 questions which address what I consider to be important components of this issue. Whilst I do not claim to be able to offer a definitive answer to all, or even any, of these, I will use them to explore and assess possible analyses. The questions are given below as (a)-(f). Questions (a)-(c) focus on syntactic properties, whilst questions (e) and (f) are concerned with semantic interpretation, and (d) involves both.

a) Where does the *how*-phrase originate and where is its landing site?
b) How does SAI arise?
c) In which position is the (focussed) subject found?
d) How is it that intensifiers are able to occur in HPQs?
e) How are HPQs interpreted as contributing the speaker's evaluation rather than requesting that of the addressee?
f) How does the exclamative(-like) force arise?

The proposals which I make here for the structure of HPQs are based on previous accounts which explore differences in structure and interpretation between *wh*-interrogatives and *wh*-exclamatives. Numerous such accounts have been offered, but due to space constraints I will limit my focus to a small number of proposals which show potential in accounting for HPQs. These are intended to illustrate certain possible approaches rather than to provide an exhaustive summary of the previous literature.

The resulting analyses will be assessed in terms of how well they may account for the properties of HPQs, bearing in mind the questions (a)-(f) outlined above. Both involve the positing of null syntactic structure, although they differ in the specific realisation of this. The first analysis combines elements of Radford's (2000) feature-driven account of *wh*-movement with a factive operator proposed by Ono and Fujii (2006) and Zanuttini and Portner (2003), whilst the second involves the application of the cartographic approach taken by Munaro and Obenauer (1999) in their account of pseudo questions in Italian. It is to Radford's account which I turn first.

4.4 *Wh*-interrogatives and *wh*-exclamatives: accounting for clausal force

4.4.1 Radford (2000)

Radford's (2000) account is of particular interest because it permits inverted exclamatives such as (3), Radford's (37d), which were able to occur in Elizabethan English (EE), alongside the canonical exclamative and interrogative patterns of Present Day English (PDE).

3) *How sound is she asleep!* (Nurse, *Romeo and Juliet*, IV.v)

Radford differentiates matrix exclamative and interrogative clauses in terms of the feature composition of C. He hypothesises that in both EE and PDE, C in matrix interrogatives bears an uninterpretable mood EPP feature [uM] but no uninterpretable tense feature [uT]. On the assumption that T carries a mood feature, but subjects do not, this ensures that it will be the auxiliary which raises to value and delete the [uM] on C driven by its EPP feature, rather than the subject, guaranteeing subject-auxiliary inversion. In matrix exclamatives, Radford (2000: 11) hypothesises

that in PDE C has neither [uM] nor [uT]. Thus, there is neither T-to-C raising, nor raising of a tensed subject to spec-CP. If in EE, in contrast, root exclamative C does carry a [uT] feature, then either T-to-C movement or movement of the subject to spec-CP will value and cancel this, admitting both the inverted and non-inverted word order patterns.

Whilst these proposals alone cannot account for HPQs, one could assume that C in matrix exclamatives in PDE has the same feature composition as Radford proposes for EE, thus permitting the inverted word order of HPQs alongside the non-inverted order of standard interrogatives. However, such an account would over-generate, in that it would permit T-to-C movement in *what*-exclamatives such as (4), and in 'real' *how*-exclamatives such as (5), where in fact it cannot occur. Furthermore, there is a more general, theoretical difficulty with such an approach, in that a HDQ and a HPQ are then differentiated only by the nature of the uninterpretable feature found on C which drives T-to-C movement – [uM] in the former, [uT] in the latter. It is not clear that this can explain any of the differences in syntactic behaviour or interpretation between them which were noted in Chapters 2 and 3.

4) *What a good deal is that!*
5) *How have they tried!*

A possibility to consider which avoids the first of these difficulties is that C in HPQs has its own particular feature composition, thus correctly ruling out inversion in exclamatives such as (4) and (5). The derivation for the HPQ in (6) is sketched in (7) to explore this hypothesis. If C bears both a [uM] and a [uT] feature, although the uninterpretable features of C could, in theory, be deleted by movement of the subject from spec-TP to spec-CP to cancel [uT], followed by T-to-C movement to cancel [uM], the Principle of Economy would ensure that in fact only T-to-C movement took place, as this one dislocation would have the effect of deleting both sets of interpretable features, resulting in the correct word order, with auxiliary preceding subject.

6) *How cool is he!*

7)

```
                              CP
                    ┌─────────┴─────────┐
                   AP                   C'
                   /\          ┌────────┴────────┐
                  how          C                 TP
                 cool      ┌───┴───┐     ┌────────┴────────┐
                 [Wh]      C       T    PRN               T'
                        [u̶Wh̶]     is    he         ┌───────┴───────┐
                        [u̶T̶]     [T]   [u̶T̶]        T               VP
                        [u̶M̶]     [M]   [φ]         i̶s̶        ┌──────┴──────┐
                                [u̶φ̶]              [T]        V            SC
                                                  [M]       B̶E̶      ┌─────┴─────┐
                                                 [uφ]       [T]    PRN         AP
                                                            [M]     h̶e̶         /\
                                                           [uφ]    [uT]       h̶o̶w̶
                                                                   [φ]       c̶o̶o̶l̶
                                                                            [Wh]
```
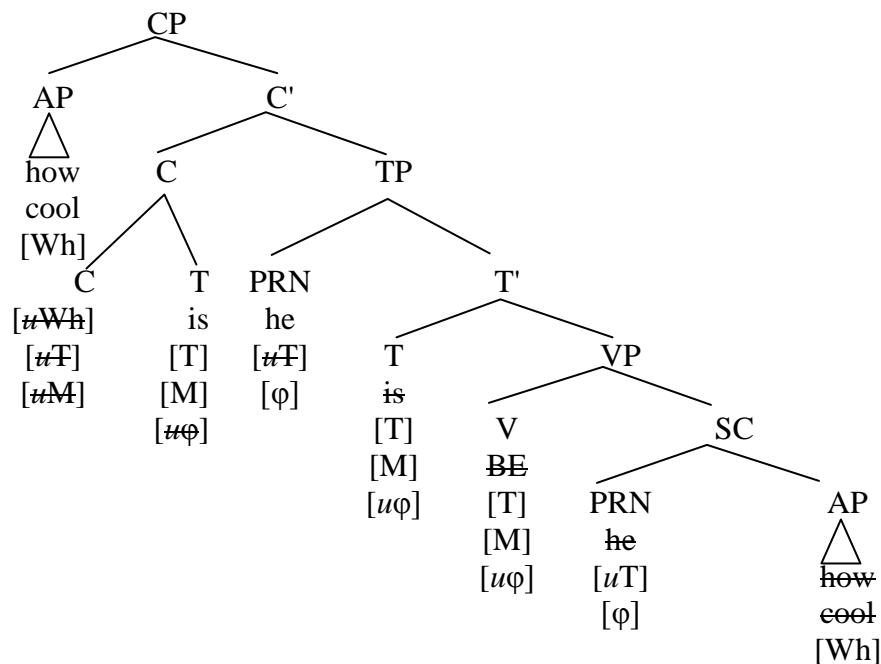
In fact, the same effect could be achieved by positing a [*u*M] feature alone, just as Radford hypothesises for interrogatives in PDE. The only effect of the [*u*T] feature then is to provide some element which distinguishes HPQs and HDQs in terms of underlying representation, and hence in interpretation. However, again, it is not clear how this feature would actually account for any of the behavioural differences noted. The decision to posit the [*u*T] feature on C for HPQs would thus seem to be driven by a desire to create the correct outcome, rather than by any independent reason, which does not seem to be a particularly satisfactory outcome.

This touches upon a more general problem with Radford's account, which is that it is not clear even for the canonical cases of interrogatives and exclamatives how the particular syntactic configurations which characterise these clause types come to receive the interpretations that they do.

Whilst alone Radford's proposals cannot account for HPQs, I will return to them below when their use in conjunction with elements of Ono and Fujii's (2006) account, to be discussed next, will be considered.

Ono and Fujii (2006) [henceforth OF] adapt Pesetsky and Torrego's (2001) account of *wh*-interrogatives and *wh*-exclamatives, maintaining the idea that the feature composition of C is identical in both cases, with C bearing [*u*Wh] and [*u*T]. Nevertheless, OF make substantial modifications, the most significant of which being the introduction of a null factive operator, Op$_{FACT}$, bearing a [*u*T] feature into the numeration for exclamatives. OF further assume that nominative DPs do not in fact bear such a feature, and that 'Merge preempts Move' (OF: 173) as well as positing the 'Interpretive rule' OF given below as (8) (their (33c)).

8) Interpretive rule: Interpret a *wh*-clause as exclamative if the factive Operator, Op$_{FACT}$, is in Spec-CP, otherwise interpret it as interrogative.

The outcome of these assumptions is that whilst in *wh*-interrogatives it is only through T-to-C movement that the [*u*T] feature on C can be deleted, giving the correctly inverted word order and interrogative interpretation, in *wh*-exclamatives, where the factive operator is present in the numeration, the [*u*T] feature on C is deleted instead by insertion of Op$_{FACT}$ in a specifier position of CP, with no T-to-C movement, as Merge is less costly than Move. They assume that the [*u*T] feature of Op$_{FACT}$ is itself deleted as it probes the [*u*T] feature on C. Given (8), this allows them to account not only for the differences in surface structure between canonical exclamatives and interrogatives, but also for how the underlying representations come to be associated with their particular interpretations.

The difficulty in trying to account for HPQs is thus that in OF's account, the factive operator is required for exclamative interpretation, yet its presence in the numeration automatically precludes the possibility of T-to-C movement, and hence of generating the inverted word order required. It is, however, possible to combine the more desirable aspects of OF's account with the derivation sketched for HPQs in line with Radford's approach to capitalise on the benefits of both, in a manner illustrated in (8) below. From Radford's account we take the distinction of *wh*-clauses in terms of the feature make-up of C, whilst from OF's we borrow the factive operator with [*u*T].

Assuming that, as in the derivation in (7), C in HPQs carries [*u*Wh], [*u*T] and [*u*M] features, then with the derivation in (10) proceeding as in (7) until TP is merged with C, there are now two options for the cancelling of the [*u*T] and [*u*M] features. The first is that, as in (7), T-to-C movement occurs with the [T] and [M] features of T simultaneously cancelling [*u*T] and [*u*M]. The second is that OpFACT is merged in spec-CP to cancel the [*u*T] feature of C, with T-to-C movement still required to delete the [*u*M] feature of C. Whilst it may seem that the first option is to be preferred on grounds of economy, were this to be selected the factive operator would remain in the numeration, and the derivation would not converge. Thus, it must be the second possibility which is realised. For our purposes, this is the desirable outcome as (10) then combines the SAI found in interrogatives with the factive operator of exclamatives.

9) *How cool is he!*

10)

```
                              CP
                  ┌───────────┴───────────┐
                 AP                        CP
                 △              ┌──────────┴──────────┐
               how           OpFACT                   C'
               cool           [u̶T̶]         ┌──────────┴──────────┐
               [Wh]                         C                     TP
                                     ┌──────┴──────┐       ┌──────┴──────┐
                                     C             T      PRN            T'
                                  [u̶W̶h̶]          is       he      ┌──────┴──────┐
                                   [u̶T̶]          [u̶φ̶]      [φ]     T            VP
                                   [u̶M̶]          [T]            i̶s̶      ┌──────┴──────┐
                                                 [M]           [uφ]      V            SC
                                                               [T]       B̶E̶     ┌──────┴──────┐
                                                               [M]      [uφ]    PRN           AP
                                                                        [T]      h̶e̶          △
                                                                        [M]      [φ]          h̶o̶w̶
                                                                                              c̶o̶o̶l̶
                                                                                              [Wh]
```
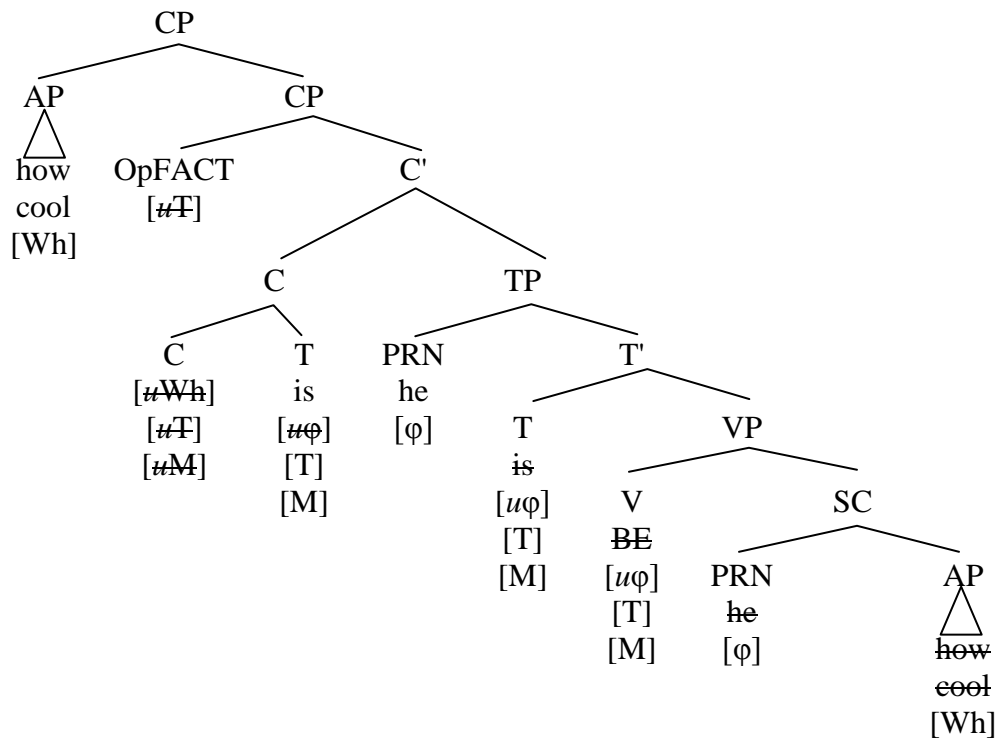
With the exception of the presence of OpFACT, the derivation in (10) is identical to that in (7). Yet this is a crucial distinction, for the presence of a factive operator gives a convincing explanation for at least some of the properties of HPQs. Syntactically, for example, OF (2006: 175 f.n. 10) argue that 'wh-in-situ is disallowed in the scope

of the factive operator', which would explain both its absence from HPQs and exclamatives, and its ability to occur in HDQs. Fitzpatrick (2005:141) claims that it is the presence of a factive operator which explains why negative polarity items cannot occur in *how come* questions, and similar reasoning could be applied to HPQs.

With regard to semantics, OF use the principle in (8) to link the presence of a factive operator to exclamative interpretation. However, this is merely stipulative, giving no explanation as to how the factive operator contributes to an exclamative interpretation. Yet Zanuttini and Portner's (2003) account [henceforth ZP] shares with OF's the assumption that a factive operator is a key element in determining interpretation as an exclamation, whilst dispensing with an interpretive principle altogether. ZP argue that the presence of a *wh*-operator-variable-structure and a factive morpheme encode the key semantic properties of exclamatives: respectively, that they define a set of alternative propositions, and that their propositional content is presupposed.

ZP (40) suggest that the ''sense of surprise', 'unexpectedness', 'extreme degree' and the like' which characterises exclamatives results from pragmatic 'widening' of a scale to include degrees not normally under consideration. They argue that every type of root clause must have some kind of function, and that widening is the only use available to root *wh*-clauses which contain a factive operator – if the content is presupposed (as it must be if the sentence if factive), then it cannot be interpreted as an assertion (of this content), nor as a question. If HPQs encode the same semantic properties as exclamatives, through the same syntactic devices, then widening must also apply to result in interpretation as an exclamation.

4.4.3 Munaro and Obenauer (1999)

Where ZP view clausal force as the result of a particular configuration of syntactically encoded elements, Munaro and Obenauer (1999) [henceforth MO] distinguish between a projection for interrogative force, InterrForceP, and a projection higher in the syntactic structure which encodes exclamative force, ExclCP. In interrogatives the *wh*-phrase is hosted in the specifier position of the former, whereas in exclamatives it targets the latter.

For MO, the extra structure stems from decomposition of the CP into various functional projections [FPs], which differ in terms of the semantic content of their heads. As such, their work embraces the cartographic approach which decomposes the traditional CP, TP and DP layers into further, semantically contentful, projections[17]. As MO (217) put it, they 'follow a by now well-established tendency to associate each interpretively relevant feature to a specific head (projection) in the functional structure of the sentence'.

Contrary to the accounts discussed previously, MO also make specific proposals for non-standard questions. They propose an intermediate functional projection within the CP layer, the Ev(aluative)CP, situated between the ExclCP and InterrForceP. The functional projections which MO suggest make up the CP, and the order in which they occur, are represented below in (11).

11) Ordering of Functional Projections in MO's decomposed CP
    ExclP – EvCP – InterrForceP – FocusP – OpP - TopP

MO posit spec-EvCP as the landing site for the *wh*-phrase in a range of *wh*-pseudo questions in Pagotto, the particular sub-dialect of Bellunese (itself a variety of Venetian Italian) from which they provide their data. (12) (MO's (8)) illustrates one particular type of pseudo-question which seems to share certain properties with HPQs.

12) *Cossa sé-tu drio   magnar (che)?*
      what   are-cl behind   eat   (what)
      'What on earth are you eating?'

MO's (188) description of these structures as 'sentences that correspond syntactically to interrogative structures (that is, displaying inversion between inflected verb and subject clitic pronoun) but through which the speaker does not intend to acquire new information about a specific subject' could very nearly apply to English HPQs. In both cases, 'the speaker, in the lively expression of a feeling of surprise/annoyance/

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[17] Key contributions to this approach to syntax have been made by Rizzi (1997) and Cinque (1999) amongst others.

disapproval, conveys his personal evaluation of the event referred to' (MO: 218). It is because of these shared semantic properties of pseudo questions that MO (217), argue that 'the position occupied by [the *wh*-words] *cossa* and *que* in this kind of sentences [sic] cannot be the same as the one of *wh*-phrases in ordinary *wh*-questions'. Thus they attribute these properties to the head of the functional projection EvCP.

In considering such an approach for English HPQs, it is of course the case that, in line with Ockham's Razor, additional structure should not be assumed unless it is well-motivated. Yet although the particular 'surprise-disapproval' reading identified by Obenauer (2006) and MO for utterances such as (12) does not arise for HPQs, speaker evaluation still seems to be the relevant property in differentiating them from exclamatives and interrogatives. There is no reason to assume that this property must result in precisely the same range of meanings for non-standard questions in different languages and dialects. The semantic similarities between HPQs and the pseudo-questions MO discuss are still great enough to suggest the presence of a Speaker Evaluation projection in English, under the assumptions of the cartographic approach[18].

Given the semantic similarities HPQs show to exclamatives, one may wonder if spec-ExclP would not be an equally appropriate landing site for the *wh*-phrase. However, MO offer syntactic evidence from Italian that in pseudo-questions the *wh*-phrase must occur below ExclP. Although there is no parallel evidence for English, MO (216 f.n. 19) hypothesise further that the *wh*-phrase must occupy a structurally lower position in pseudo-questions than in exclamatives, because they show 'inversion between the inflected verb and the subject clitic pronoun, which is traditionally taken to be a morpho-syntactic mark of 'interrogativity''. Thus for HPQs there is nevertheless indirect evidence provided by SAI that the *wh*-phrase targets a lower projection than ExclP.

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[18] Whilst they are only concerned with pseudo-questions involving WHAT, MO (250) explicitly describe EvCP as 'a functional projection…whose specifier can be filled across languages by the *wh*-element WHAT *and other wh-phrases*' [my emphasis]. Whilst they do not elaborate on which *wh*-phrases may or may not occupy this position, the extension from WHAT to HOW does not seems unnatural, given that these are exactly the two *wh*-words which, when realised in English, can occur in both exclamatives and interrogatives.

Whilst the focus thus far has been on the landing site of the *wh*-phrase, MO's account also differs from those previously discussed in terms of the origin of this phrase. For certain of their pseudo-questions, they assume that the *wh*-phrase is base-generated within CP, rather than raising to this position. This is an interesting hypothesis to explore for HPQs, in that it would seem to offer a possible explanation for certain of the differences in behaviour noted between HPQs and HDQs, such as the absence of a pair-list reading in (13), and the impossibility of (14) being interpreted as a HPQ.

If the *how*-phrase in HPQs is base-generated, then the fact that in (13) the *how*-phrase always has scope over the lower quantifier *all* follows from the absence of a lower *wh*-trace, which renders impossible reconstruction with the *how*-phrase interpreted in base position, and hence rules out the possibility of the second quantifier being interpreted as having broader scope. Similarly, as the *wh*-phrase in (14) cannot be associated with the higher clause, it becomes impossible to interpret if there is no lower *wh*-trace, as would be the case if the *how*-phrase is base-generated in the structure. This would then explain why (14) can be understood only as a HDQ[19].

13) *How cool are all the students!*   wh $> \forall$, $*\forall >$ wh

14) *How cool did John say that was?*

However, just as MO are forced to rule out a base-generation analysis for those structures in which *cossa* is not doubled with *che* in argument position, as without such an argument the verb would not be able to discharge its internal theta role, a similar difficulty would seem to arise for HPQs. Without the presence of (a copy of) the adjectival phrase in the Small Clause complement to BE, there is no way for the Small Clause subject to receive a theta role. This would result in a violation of the Chomsky's (1981) Theta-Criterion, which states that every argument must bear a theta role, and hence the derivation would not converge at the interface. Thus, for the

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[19] Such readings are also absent from *how come* questions, and this forms part of the basis upon which Fitzpatrick (2005) argues for the base-generation of the *wh*-phrase in such cases. However, the case for differentiating *how come* questions from standard interrogatives in this way is clearer, as subject-auxiliary inversion is also absent.

moment, I shall continue to assume that the *how*-phrase raises to the CP layer from lower in the structure, whilst remaining open to the possibility that future refinements in the analysis of the structure of small clauses may make a base-generation a tenable proposal for HPQs.
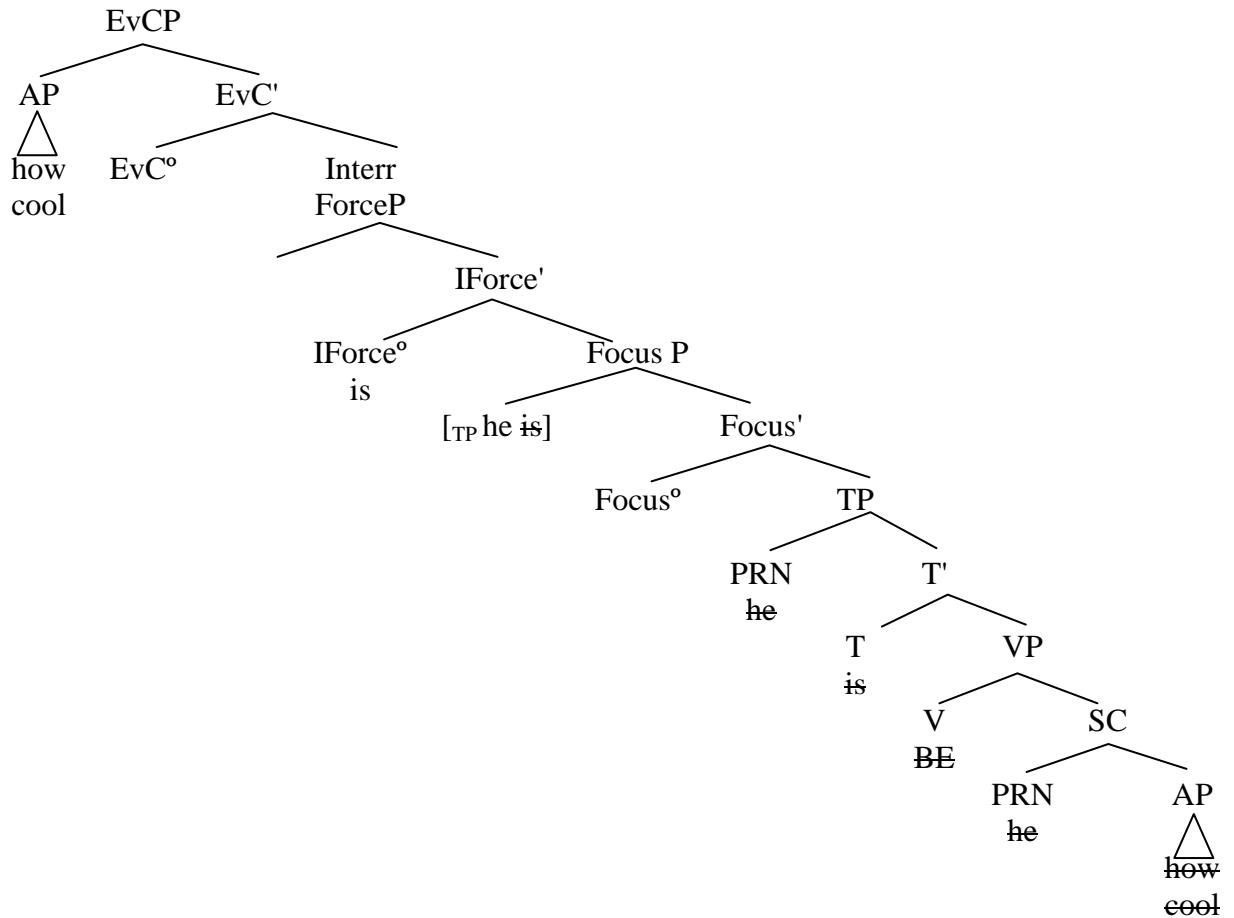
I will now attempt to apply such an analysis to HPQs such as (15), the derivation for which is sketched in (16). The analysis MO provide for pseudo-questions differs from that given for canonical interrogatives only in the landing site of the *wh*-phrase. Both cases are, however, differentiated from exclamatives by the assumption that '*wh*-movement is followed by raising of remnant IP'[20] also to within CP (MO: 214). Remnant movement involves the dislocation of a constituent from which another constituent has already been extracted. According to MO (214), it takes place 'in order to check the focus feature of interrogative clauses', which includes non-standard questions, as EvCP is seen to form part of the interrogative layer.

I will assume that in English, as for Italian, *wh*-movement to spec-EvP and the usual movements within TP are followed by movement of the remnant TP to spec-FocusP to check the Focus feature. In order for the inverted word order to be generated, however, the auxiliary in English must raise higher still. I will follow MO in assuming that even in pseudo-questions, the landing site for this movement is the head of InterrForceP, and not of EvCP. In Italian, the movement of the verb to such a position is motivated by the presence of a subject clitic in InterrForce which requires a host. In English we could thus assume that there is a null affix which similarly requires a host, and which is strong enough to attract a light verb such as copular BE, just as T can attract such a verb to raise from V. Whilst positing more covert structure may seem undesirable, here it is necessary to generate the correct word order. The result is that the inverted word order of HPQs is generated as in standard interrogatives, whilst at the same time the targeting of the specifier position of EvCP leads to the interpretation that the speaker is contributing their own evaluation.

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[20] For the sake of continuity, I will continue to refer to this as TP, although nothing hinges on this decision.

15) *How cool is he!*

16)

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                    EvCP
              _____|_____
            AP            EvC'
            /\        _____|_____
          how       EvC°        Interr
          cool               ForceP
                            ____|____
                                   IForce'
                              _____|_____
                          IForce°          Focus P
                            is          ____|____
                                 [TP he is̶]      Focus'
                                            _____|_____
                                        Focus°            TP
                                                     _____|_____
                                                   PRN          T'
                                                   he̶       _____|_____
                                                           T            VP
                                                           i̶s̶      _____|_____
                                                                   V          SC
                                                                   B̶E̶    _____|_____
                                                                        PRN         AP
                                                                        he̶         /\
                                                                                  how̶
                                                                                  cool̶
```

<u>4.5 Accounting for HPQs: summary</u>

Whilst the accounts presented here are by no means an exhaustive summary of proposals regarding the syntactic encoding of force, they have illustrated a range of possible approaches, and shown some of the strengths and weaknesses of each. Whilst both of the analyses offered rely on null abstract structure to account for interpretive differences – a null operator with semantic content which occupies a specifier position in (10), a null head with semantic content in (16) – they nevertheless differ in certain respects. Whilst (10) assumes there to be a single CP with multiple specifiers, in (16) the CP is decomposed into various functional projections, each with a separate specifier position[21]. In (10), exclamative interpretation is dependent on the inclusion of a factive operator in the numeration in combination with a *wh*-operator-variable configuration, whilst in (16) clausal force is

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[21] Therefore only (16) is compatible with Kayne's (1994: 22) claim that 'a given phrase can have only one specifier'.

encoded directly by means of additional functional projections. The fact that (10) is, in effect, an inverted exclamative, distinguishes it further from (16), where HPQs are a type of interrogative, albeit with a non-standard interpretation. Yet both derivations share the fact that they are able to account for the inverted word order of HPQs, whilst also going some way towards explaining the fact that the interpretation of HPQs differs from that of standard interrogatives.

In the early part of this chapter, I posed six questions for use in assessing possible analyses of HPQs. I will now consider the responses, in the light of the discussion above, by way of evaluation of the derivations proposed in (10) and (16).

a) Where does the *how*-phrase originate and where is its landing site?

Despite the potential appeal of considering the *how*-phrase as an element base-generated within the CP layer, the conclusion reached was that this is incompatible with the assumption that it is the adjectival predicate of copular BE which theta-marks the subject of BE. Thus in both accounts the *how*-phrase was hypothesised to originate within the small clause complement of the copular verb and raise to the CP layer.

In terms of the landing site of the *how*-phrase, in (10), the *wh*-phrase occupies the higher of two specifiers of CP, with the factive operator in the lower specifier position, whilst in (16), the specific landing site for the *how*-phrase of HPQs is assumed to be the specifier of EvCP, which MO suggests hosts the *wh*-phrase in non-standard questions in Italian. As the latter approach involves positing the most structure – separate, semantically contentful projections as the landing sites for the *wh*-phrases of exclamatives, interrogatives and pseudo-questions – it is also the most costly. All else being equal, the structure in (10) would be favoured on grounds of economy.

b) How does SAI arise?

In both (10) and (16), the positions occupied by the subject and auxiliary in inversion are exactly the same for HPQs as for the corresponding HDQs. The accounts also

share the assumption that the subject originates internally to the small clause, which is the complement of the verb V hosting the auxiliary, with the verb raising to T and the subject to spec-TP. In (10), the verb then raises over the subject to C. However, in (16), the whole TP raises to spec-FocusP, within the split CP, by remnant movement. In order to generate the inverted order, the auxiliary must then be assumed to raise higher still, to the head of IForceP. The motivation for this movement is less clear in English than in Italian.

c) <u>In which position is the (focussed) subject found?</u>

In (10), the subject in HPQs ends up in spec-TP, having raised from within the small clause. This is the position which it is also seen to occupy in most other analyses, and yet this does not tally with the intonation facts. As the subject often seems to receive main stress within HPQs, it would be expected to occupy a focus position, when in fact spec-TP is not such a position[22]. In (16), on the other hand, once the auxiliary has raised to the head of InterrForceP, then only the subject remains in the specifier of FocusP. Whilst this is a desirable outcome, it should be noted that the subject is also the sole constituent to occupy this position in HDQs, yet these do not have the particular intonational pattern noted for HPQs. A further point to note is that, this work being concerned primarily with the syntax of HPQs, the phonological facts have merely been sketched. As was noted in section 2.3, not all HPQs share an intonation pattern, as in some cases the subject is unable to bear main stress, Before discounting or modifying the current proposal on these grounds, it is necessary in further research for these to be established more clearly.

d) <u>How is it that intensifiers are able to occur in HPQs?</u>

Assuming the structure in (10), the ability for intensifiers to occur in HPQs is no more surprising than their presence in canonical exclamatives, as they encode exactly the same syntactic properties which ZP deem necessary for exclamative interpretation. For (16), where HPQs are non-standard interrogatives, rather than exclamatives, the explanation for the ease of occurrence of intensifiers is less clear.

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[22] For more on focus positions, see Horvarth (1985) and Zubizaretta (1998).

Recall from Chapter 2, however, that under certain discourse contexts intensifiers can be licensed in questions such as (17), where the sense of surprise is assumed to arise pragmatically and not from any semantic encoding of exclamativity. An interesting hypothesis is that evaluativity, in the sense defined by Rett (2007), is the key factor in licensing intensifiers. In exclamatives, HPQs and evaluative questions such as (17), the property denoted by the adjective is presupposed, and hence can be intensified, even if in (17) the exact value for this is still requested. The activation of EvCP could then perhaps be considered sufficient to trigger an evaluative interpretation of the adjectival structure, hence permitting the licensing of intensifiers.

17) *How ridiculously tall is she?*

e) <u>How are HPQs interpreted as contributing the speaker's evaluation rather than requesting that of the addressee?</u>

In (16), speaker evaluation is a property encoded directly in the syntax, by means of the EvCP, which is one of the functional projections forming part of the split CP layer. Movement of the *how*-phrase to the specifier position of this projection activates the semantic content of the head, so that the utterance is understood as the speaker's lively assessment of a situation. According to Obenauer (2006: 252), it is this 'specific semantic value which in fact weakens their status as requests for information'. Nevertheless, HPQs are still structurally closer to interrogatives than exclamatives, in that EvCP, like IForceP and unlike ExclP, forms part of the interrogative layer. According to MO, this allows, although does not require, pseudo-questions to be answered which. Given the data presented in Chapter 3, this is not necessarily a desirable outcome. Furthermore, it is not clear in this case how HPQs are distinguished structurally from questions such as (17).

Whilst in (10) the property of speaker evaluation is not directly encoded in the syntax, as a type of exclamation HPQs are compatible with the expression, but not requesting, of an evaluation. What such an account fails to explain is that HPQs convey not only the idea that a property holds to a significant extent, but the

particular sense that the speaker deems this noteworthy, which was discussed in section 3.8 and which must be accounted for at the very least as a pragmatic effect.

f) How does the exclamative(-like) force arise?

In (10), HPQs share with standard exclamatives the same syntactic encoding of factivity, through OpFACT, combined with a *wh*-operator-variable configuration, which are deemed by ZP to be the necessary syntactic factors for semantic interpretation as an exclamative. Thus HPQs are not merely exclamation-like: the reason HPQs seem to have the force of exclamatives is because they are exclamatives, albeit with inverted word order.

In (16), HPQs are not exclamatives, but are rather a special type of interrogative, with the syntactically encoded property of speaker evaluation contributing to an exclamation-like interpretation. This makes the sense of exclamativity a pragmatic effect, which would appear insufficient to account for the semantic behaviour of HPQs in relation to ZP's criteria outlined in Chapter 3, and leaves unexplained properties which are accounted for when a factive operator is present.

5. Conclusion

The intention of this work was firstly to present the properties of *how*-pseudo-questions, a form commonly used in informal registers of spoken and written contemporary English as a means for the speaker to offer an lively evaluation of an object, person, situation or event. In Chapter 2 it was demonstrated that despite sharing with HDQs the presence of SAI, HPQs also pattern like exclamatives in certain respects, whilst in other ways they diverge in their behaviour from both types of *how*-structure. In Chapter 3, their semantic properties were discussed. Here the pattern was clearer, in that HPQs resembled canonical exclamations on all counts, including when assessed using Zanuttini and Portner's (2003) criteria.

The second aim was to explore potential analyses for this sentence type. In doing so, the broader objective was to investigate the topic of clausal force in English. HPQs provide an interesting case because in surface form they most often resemble interrogatives, yet semantically seem closer to exclamations. Whilst mismatches between form and force are often attributed to pragmatic factors, it was argued that as the exclamative force in HPQs seems to be semantic, just as in canonical exclamatives, then taking a compositional approach to meaning, this must somehow be represented in the syntax. Whilst pursuing a syntactic approach to distinguish pseudo-questions from standard questions may not have been widely explored for English, recent accounts have been given for other languages, for example by Munaro and Obenauer (1999) and Garzonio (2004) for Italian.

In Chapter 4, the syntactic encoding of clausal force in English was considered. Two analyses were offered which combined the correctly inverted word order with a plausible explanation for at least some of the semantic properties of HPQs.

In the first account, the numeration of HPQs is hypothesised to contain a factive operator which in combination with the *wh*-operator-variable structure means that all the syntactic elements necessary for the force of exclamativity to arise are present in the derivation, just as for canonical exclamatives. Yet because of the assumptions made about the feature content of C, subject-auxiliary inversion can still take place just as in interrogatives. In this account then, HPQs are in fact exclamatives with

inverted word order. The occurrence of intensifiers is therefore unsurprising, and the presence of a factive operator means that, furthermore, this approach has the potential to account for the absence of NPIs and pair-list readings with a second quantifier. What remains to be explained, in addition to several aspects of syntactic behaviour, is how it is that HPQs seem to differ from exclamatives in the sense that they convey a greater sense of speaker involvement in the evaluation, and consequently can seem to invite agreement.

In the second account, the property of speaker evaluation is encoded directly in the syntax, in the head of the EvCP, the specifier position of which is the landing site for the *wh*-phrase in HPQs. As EvCP forms part of the interrogative layer of the split CP, this accounts for obligatory SAI in HPQs, and could be seen as the source of the sense that HPQs seek agreement. What then needs to be explained is how HPQs seem not merely to be exclamation-like, but actually to share the same semantic characteristics of exclamatives and why, unlike both rhetorical and information questions, they do not define a set of possible answers. Furthermore, there are an even greater number of syntactic properties of HPQs which go unexplained than in the first account.

Whilst the first account seems to account successfully for a greater range of the properties of HPQs, it by no means explains every aspect of their behaviour. The second account still seems to have potential, particularly if a way can be found to incorporate the base-generation of the *how*-phrase. Therefore, I will not find conclusively in favour of one or the other analyses presented here but rather, having pointed out the advantages and shortcomings of each, leave them open as possibilities to be developed and refined further in the future. Inevitably, the degree to which one finds them plausible depends to some extent upon one's own theoretical viewpoint. However, adding to the syntactic observations made, establishing in depth the prosodic properties of HPQs, investigating further their semantics and analysing their patterns of use and response in discourse may also serve to differentiate the accounts more clearly, or may alternatively show that both are inadequate and that an alternative is required.

There are further ways in which the research here could be extended. Firstly, due to space constraints, the analyses offered here are only for adjectival HPQs. As observed in Chapter 2, HPQs with adverbs in the *how*-phrase and full lexical verbs are also attested. These differ from adjectival HPQs in that the *how*-phrase appears to be a type of adjunct, and so it is to be expected that there would be a structural distinction. Whether they can be accommodated by the current proposals or not remains to be seen.

An additional, and particularly interesting, direction for further research would be cross-linguistic comparison. The analysis here drew substantially on proposals which have been made for the analysis of non-standard questions in Italian. Similar structures seem to exist in Norwegian and Swedish, and German appears to have pseudo questions which can be word-for-word equivalent to English HPQs. If further investigation revealed significant similarities to HPQs in the syntactic and semantic behaviour of such structures, then a unified analysis would be desirable. Data from such languages may then favour one of the structures presented here, or indicate that an alternative is required. I hope to pursue some of these themes in further work.

However, even with the limitations acknowledged for this current research, I hope not only to have documented some of the properties of a frequently-used but little-discussed structure of contemporary English, but also in the course of the discussion of HPQs to have shown that investigating non-core syntax can be both revealing and rewarding. As many an English-speaker would say, *how cool is that!*

Appendix 1: Attested examples of *how* pseudo-questions

Below are listed HPQs which I came across or had reported to me in the course of researching and writing this dissertation. Some but not all of these are referenced in the body of the work. I present them here for reference and as a record of some of the diversity found for the structure. For written examples, context is given where possible. For those which occurred in published media, reference is given to the original source.

Table 3 summarises certain additional information for the HPQs listed. The first column gives a reference to the corresponding numbered HPQ on the list. The second states whether the example was spoken or written. In the latter case, the punctuation used is indicated within brackets. The third and fourth columns provide information about the speaker, where known: their age and the variety of English they speak. The fifth and sixth columns give properties of the adjective – its length, and whether it conveys a positive (P) or negative (N) description (some denote properties which are neither of these). In some cases the latter decision depends upon the context in which the adjective is used – *funny* in HPQ31 is classed as positive because it was intended as a synonym to 'amusing', whereas in HPQ17 it is used with a meaning closer to 'strange', and hence is not clearly positive or negative. Column 7 shows whether or not the HPQ is an instance of the frequently-attested pattern with copular BE as verb and pronominal *that* as subject. The final column classifies the overall force of the utterance as positive (P), negative (N) or neither.

HPQ1:   *How healthy am I!*

HPQ2:   *'How yum was that,'* (*The Guardian*, p11 col.4, 13/03/2009) [It was three and a half hours before Fiona and Ian Penfold stumbled back out, grinning. "How yum was that," Fiona Penfield said. "It was stunning, the best meal I've ever had."]

HPQ3:   *How badly-organised is that!*

HPQ4:   *'Being Rachael Ray: How Cool Is That?'* [As she likes to say, "*How
           cool is that?*"] (New York Times, article by Kim Severson, 19/10/2005)
           http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/19/dining/19rach.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=b
           eing%20rachael%20ray&st=cse

HPQ5:   *How vigilant are they not!*

HPQ6:   *How exciting is my lunch!*

HPQ7:   *How nice was that!*

HPQ8:   *How cool am I?!*

HPQ9:   *How dirty is that!*

HPQ10:   *How bad was that play!*

HPQ11:   *How speedy and efficient was that!*

HPQ12:   *How bad are they cut out!*

HPQ13:   *How great is that!*

HPQ14:   *How exciting is gold!*

HPQ15:   *How great is my man!*

HPQ16:   *How nice would it be if it worked out for me to work for Human
           Rights Watch after I graduated!*

HPQ17:   *How funny is that!*

HPQ18:   *How wierd* [sic] *is this-my fiance works with your dad!*

HPQ19:   *How great will that be!*

HPQ20:   *How cool is that!* (#2)

HPQ21:   *How brazen, even defiant, is this?* (*The Guardian*, article *How many troops is enough*? by Scott Lucas, 09/04/2009) http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2009/apr/09/us-troops-afghanistan-obama-petraeus

HPQ22:   *How sexed up is this play!*

HPQ23:   *How frustrating is that!*

HPQ24:   *How great is this!* (part of the script of *The Factory*, performed at The Lakeside Theatre, University of Essex, 01/05/2009)

HPQ25:   *How out of the loop am I!*

HPQ26:   *How cool is that, not to mention, efficient.* (KishCabo, message posted on Shopping Lycos website, 22/01/2008) http://shopping.lycos.com/product/view/m/40960525/user-reviews?diktfc=A62950BC8F40AFFC01ACD21B7C0C2781F1CC4561FE41

HPQ27:   **1247:** *Still waiting on teams from Wembley - how rubbish is that? I'm hoping they are a matter of seconds away...* (Jonathan Stevenson, BBC online real-time football commentary blog, 24/05/2009) http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/8066085.stm

HPQ28:   *How disappointing is that!*

HPQ29:   *How healthy am I?* (#2) [Instant messaging conversation]

[CCRO: I've started drinking hot water with half a lemon squeezed into it. I'm obsessed

[13:57:51] EP1: yeah, that's lush...and good for you. Detoxifies the body ... drink as your first drink of the day, or last at night, for best results. Are you turning into a yuppy?

[13:58:32] CO: Is it yuppy? Damn. Better stop. It's just that it's freezing a[nd] lemons are cheap and coffee without sugar isn't

[13:58:47] CO: It usually is my first drink of the day and probably my last at night too

[13:58:52] CO: How healthy am I?]

         EP1: Very healthy...very proud of you!]

HPQ30:   *How cool would it be to live in Canada!*

HPQ31:   *How funny would it be if we had someone like that on our course!*

HPQ32:   *How grotesque is that?* [The latest scheme to bully parents into giving
         their children the MMR vaccination is to bar kids from school unless they
         have had the vaccination. How grotesque is that? Parents who decline the
         MMR jab are not thoughtless, stupid or uncaring. They are unconvinced]
         ('Jabbing at freedom', *Daily Mirror* article by Tony Parsons, p13 col. 2
         06/06/2009)

HPQ33:   *How against the run of play is that?* [Steven Gerrard and Frank
         Lampard combine with a short corner down the England left and from
         Gerrard's cross, Man City's £12m man Gareth Barry is unmarked at the far
         post to head into the corner. How against the run of play is that?] (Jonathan
         Stevenson, BBC online real-time football commentary blog, 06/06/2009)
         http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/internationals/8087045.stm

HPQ34:   *How great was that milk, eh?*

HPQ35:   *How fancy are they!* [How fancy are they! Well, you can't really tell, but they are really fancy]

HPQ36:   *How flattering is that?* ['Kimberley Walsh was over the moon to be mistaken for actress Jaime Winstone. 'How flattering is that?' asks the Girls Aloud favourite'] (*Metro* newspaper gossip column, 20/07/2009)

HPQ37:   *How useful is that!*

HPQ38:   *How scary is that!* [text message]

HPQ39:   *How wrong is that?* ['I can't explain my reaction, man. But for some reason I wasn't happy for her…It's almost like I resented Melissa for getting better. How wrong is **that**?'] ('Doonesbury' by Garry Trudeau, 'Review' supplement of *The Guardian*, 01/08/2009)

HPQ40:   *How cheeky is that!*

HPQ41:   *How great does this look!*

HPQ42:   *How excellent is that?* […They send a plastic doll 100,000 feet up in the air, to the edge of space, in a helium balloon, and parachute him back to earth. And they set fireworks off underwater. How excellent is that?] (Sam Wollaston's TV review, *The Guardian*, G2 supplement, 18/08/2009)

HPQ43:   *How not cool is that?* [An early job was hosting a children's show called Playabout with Floella Benjamin. He's very embarrassed about it saying, "I had to do all that kiddie stuff, like being a big wobbly jelly. I had my hair greased back in what I thought was a very slick kind of way. Actually I looked like one of The Pasadenas. A Pasadena doing a jelly - that was me! How not cool is that?"] (Interview with Don Gilet, BBC Drama 'Faces' website)
http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/faces/don_gilet.shtml

HPQ44:   *How mad is that!* [£5 to park on the beach! How mad is that! It's scandalous.]

HPQ45:   *How totally weird is that!!?!?* [What is amazing is that this is **EXACTLY** the way Star Trek described how warp speed travel was possible… a "warp bubble." How totally weird is that!!?!?] (From August 16[th] post on 'Dr. Bill: The Computer Curmudgeon' blog, http://www.drbill.cc/1155/how-cool-is-this-warp-drive-may-be-possible/)

HPQ46:   *How cool is that?!* (#3) [Wow! How cool is that?! Not only did they seek the information but when the[y] couldn't find it online they chose to do some primary research!] (Comment in response to 20/05/2009 post on 'Rolling Around In My Head: A Blog By Dave Hingsburger'**,** http://davehingsburger.blogspot.com/2009/05/frog-hollow.html.)

HPQ47:   *How easy was it!* [A: We used to just wear jeans and trainers and hoodies all the time. B: How easy was it, though!]

HPQ48:   *How strange is that!*

HPQ49:   *How big is it!*

HPQ50:   *How sweaty is it today!*

Table 3: Properties of attested HPQs

HPQ	Spoken or written (?/!)	Age of speaker	Variety of English	Adjective/ adverb length (syllables)	Positive(P)/ negative(N) adjective/ adverb	…is /was that	Positive(P)/ negative(N) force of utterance
1	spoken	26	American English	2	P	no	P
2	written report of speech (,)	unknown	unknown	1	P	yes	P
3	spoken	51	Northern English	5	N	yes	N
4	written report of speech (?)	37	American English	1	P	yes	P
5	spoken	54	Northern-influenced southern English	3	P	no	N
6	spoken	Same informant as (1)		3	P	no	P
7	spoken	Same informant as (1)		1	P	yes	P
8	spoken (reported to me written as '?!')	Same informant as (1)		1	P	no	P
9	spoken	early/ mid-twenties	Standard British English	2	neither	yes	neither

10	spoken	27	Southern Standard British English	1	N	no	N
11	spoken	Same informant as (1)		a) 2 b) 3	a) P b) P	yes	P
12	spoken	Same informant as (1)		1	N	no	N
13	spoken	Same informant as (1)		1	P	yes	P
14	spoken	Same informant as (1)		3	P	no	P
15	spoken	Same informant as (1)		1	P	no	P
16	spoken	Same informant as (1)		1	P	no	P
17	spoken	24	Standard British English	2	neither	yes	neither
18	written (none)	mid-twenties	Northern English	1	neither	no	neither
19	spoken	Same informant as (1)		1	P	yes	P
20	spoken	Same informant as (1)		1	P	yes	P
21	written (?)	unknown	unknown	a) 2 b) 3	a) N b) N	no	N
22	spoken	Same informant as (1)		3 in total	neither	no	neither
23	spoken	Same informant as (5)		3	N	yes	N
24	spoken	unknown	unknown	1	P	no	P

25	spoken	25	Northern English	4 in total	N	no	N
26	written (.)	unknown	unknown	a) 1 b) 3	a) P b) P	yes	P
27	written (?)	unknown	unknown	2	N	yes	N
28	spoken	Same informant as (5)		4	N	yes	N
29	written (?)	25	Scottish Standard English	2	P	no	P
30	spoken	early twenties	British English	1	P	no	P
31	spoken	Same informant as (30)		2	P	no	P
32	written (?)	middle-aged	British English	2	N	yes	N
33	written (?)	Same informant as (27)		6 in total	neither	yes	neither
34	spoken	mid-twenties	Australian English	1	P	yes	P
35	spoken	25	Northern English	2	P	no	P
36	written (?)	twenties	British English	3	P	yes	P
37	spoken	22	Northern English	2	P	yes	P
38	written (!)	Same informant as (17)		2	neither	no	neither
39	written (?)	unknown	unknown	1	N	yes	N
40	spoken	Same informant as (37)		2	N	yes	N

41	spoken	24	Scottish Standard English	1	P	no	P
42	written (?)	unknown	unknown	3	P	yes	P
43	written (?)	unknown	British English	1	P	yes	N
44	spoken	middle-aged	Northern English	1	N	yes	N
45	written (!!?!?)	unknown	American English	1	neither	yes	neither
46	written (?!)	unknown	Canadian English	1	P	yes	P
47	spoken	late teens	Southern English	2	P	no	P
48	spoken	25	Standard British English	1	neither	yes	neither
49	spoken	Same informant as (48)		1	P	no	P
50	spoken	Same informant as (48)		2	N	no	N

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