Exclamative *que/că* constructions in Ibero-Romance and Romanian

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The paper discusses Romanian că exclamative structures in comparison with their Ibero-Romance counterparts. It demonstrates that Romanian uses că as an illocutionary complementiser, homophonous to its subordinating counterpart, to mark an exclamative illocutionary force, much as Ibero-Romance languages do with que. Exclamative că/que utterances are expressive speech acts. They convey non-propositional meaning that extends beyond the at-issue content of the utterance. Specifically, they indicate the speaker's attitudinal or emotional stance towards the propositional content, which is presupposed to be true. Such utterances encode a range of "non-neutral" mental attitudes, including surprise, admiration, or criticism. Moreover, they share with other exclamative structures core properties such as presuppositionality and a scalar interpretation. Unlike in Ibero-Romance, Romanian că exclamatives are restricted in the range of syntactic configurations they employ, always featuring dislocation to the left periphery.

Key-words: *exclamatives, illocutionary complementisers, Romanian, Ibero-Romance*

1. Introduction

Recent research on the hierarchical organization of syntactic domains has shown that, above the C-domain, there is a structural area that hosts elements playing context- or discourse-related roles (Speas and Tenny 2003; Corr 2016; Hill 2010; Wiltschko 2015, a. o.).

Corr (2016) proposed that, within this higher syntactic domain, reside certain elements homophonous to subordinating complementisers, which she termed "illocutionary complementisers", because they signal a specific illocutionary force (Austin 1962). These items differ from regular complementisers in that they do not function as subordinators but instead serve a pragmatic role. Illocutionary complementizers mainly occur in the oral or reported oral discourse, and cannot be found in formal or scientific registers.

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According to Corr (2016), illocutionary complementisers are present predominantly in Ibero-Romance languages, but can also be found in other Romance languages such as Romanian and some Italian dialects (Garzonio and Sorrisi 2013; Colasanti and Silvestri 2016; Stoicescu 2014).

The main example of such a discourse marker is the Ibero-Romance illocutionary complementiser *que*, which, Corr argues, fulfills three roles: (i) exclamative *que* precedes exclamatory utterances (1), (ii) quotative *que* introduces the reporting of prior utterances (2), and (iii) conjunctive *que* introduces a new turn in the conversation (3) (Corr 2016, 2).

(1)   A: *Toma, garda isto*.
          'Here, take this.'
       B: *Que   eu non quero!*
          IC$_{excl}$ I   not want.1sg
          '(But) I don't want it!'

                                                                  (Galician) (ex. 2, Corr 2016, 2)

(2)   A: *Tio,   estava dubtant i això.*
          'Mate, I wasn't sure n' stuff.'
       B: *Eh?*
          'Eh?'
       A: *Que no ho tenia   molt clar tampoc.*
          IC$_{quot}$ not it=have.IMPF.1sg very clear either
          '[I said] I wasn't very sure either.'

                                                                  (Catalan) (ex. 3, Corr 2016, 2)

(3)   *¡Veña Eulogio desperta,   que ia   me ha dáu tempu*
        prt   Eulogio wake.up.IMP IC$_{conj}$ already me has given time
        a ficel café i   churros pa desaiunal!
        to make coffee and churros for breakfast
        'C'mon, Eulogio, wake up, I've already had time to make coffee and churros for breakfast!'

                                                                  (Valencian) (ex. 4, Corr 2016, 4)

Stoicescu (2024) argued that Romanian also uses illocutionary complementisers. The functional item *că* is mainly a subordinator in Romanian, but can additionally appear with exclamative, quotative and conjunctive functions. For instance, the exclamative utterance in (4) is introduced by *că* and features an expressive speech

act (Searle 1969, 1979) in which the speaker conveys a sense of satisfaction that justice has been done.

(4)   *Că   bine ți-a   făcut!*
      IC_excl well CL.2sg.DAT-has done
      'This serves you well!'

In Romanian, by contrast to Ibero-Romance (2), it is rarely possible to find *că* introducing a reported speech act in isolation, in question-answer pairs:

(5)   A: *Ce ziceai? Nu te-am auzit.*
         'What were you saying? I couldn't hear you.'
      B: **Că   vreau   să   vii   până aici.*
         IC_quot want.1sg SUBJ come.2sg up-to here
         'I want you to come here.'

However, in narrative discourse, *că* may appear in complex quotative expressions such as *vezi Doamne că* "lit. see Lord that", *cum că* "lit. how that", or even on its own. In (6a), the speaker, a Uber driver, tells the story of his interaction with a female client who behaved erratically. When the speaker reports what she said, every utterance is preceded by a quotative use of *că*. In example (6b), the speaker reports how another speaker commented on someone else's remarkable abilities and his romantic success. The second speaker's remarks are preceded by the quotative complex expressions *vezi Doamne că* "lit. see Lord that" and *cum că* "lit. how that," and their use signals that the main speaker is quoting the second one.

(6) a. *Femeia   era foarte nervoasă. Că   să   vin   s-o iau,   că*
         woman-the was very angry   IC_quot SUBJ come SUBJ her take IC_quot
         prietenul e pilot, că   e din Columbia…
         friend-the is pilot IC_quot is from Colombia
         The woman was very angry. (She said) that I should come and pick her
         up, that her boyfriend is a pilot, that he is from Colombia…'
      b. *Situația   era descrisă oarecum admirativ, vezi Doamne că   ce   tare*
         situation-the was described somewhat admiringly see Lord   that what tough
         e Crețu și   cum că   o mare româncă i-a   prins slăbiciunea.
         is Crețu and how that a great Romanian CL-has caught weakness-the
         'The situation was described somewhat admiringly. Apparently, Crețu is
         great and a great Romanian lady has become enamored with him.'

The third role of illocutionary *că* is to indicate that a conversational turn begins, to maintain conversational flow and signal that the utterance it introduces motivates the previous speech act. Corr refers to this as the conjunctive use. In (7), the two utterances convey distinct speech acts. The first speech act is an indirect expressive with a secondary directive illocutionary force: the hearer is enjoined to shut up and is insulted at the same time. There follows a prosodic pause marked by #. The second utterance preceded by conjunctive *că* is a threat that serves as a justification for the performance of the prior speech act: the directive was uttered to prevent the speaker from becoming more aggressive.

(7)   *Taci din gură, idiotule! # Că mă faci să fac o nefăcută acuma!*
       'Shut up, you idiot! IC$_{conj}$ you will make me do something stupid!'

Summing up, the examples above show that, in Romanian, as in Ibero-Romance, *că* can serve multiple pragmatic functions, introducing speech acts with various illocutionary forces, and enhancing the sense of cohesion in the conversation.

The aim of this paper is to delve more deeply into the features of illocutionary complementisers and examine the properties of *că* in its exclamatory use, as the Romanian counterpart of the exclamative Ibero-Romance illocutionary complementiser *que*. In section 2 of the paper, we summarise the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics of Ibero-Romance *que*, as discussed by Corr (2016). In section 3, we assess the extent to which Romanian exclamative *că* exhibits similarities and differences with *que.* Section 4 concludes the paper.

2. Properties of exclamative *que* in Ibero-Romance

Exclamative *que* is more often used in Peninsular Spanish and less in European Portuguese or Latin-American Ibero-Romance varieties (Corr 2016: 85). Let us consider some of its syntactic properties.

First, Corr (2016) notes that exclamative *que* mainly (but not exclusively) precedes declarative indicative sentences (8) rather than imperatives (9) or genuine non-rhetorical interrogatives (10). Such sentences are used with an exclamatory illocutionary force (Corr 2016: 84) to perform expressive speech acts of various types.

(8)   *Ai, que   o   gato se me foi   ao   peixe!*
       prt. IC$_{excl}$ the cat   REFL-me-go.PST.3sg to.the fish
       'The cat went off after the fish!'

                                              (European Portuguese) (ex. 11, Corr 2016, 88)

(9) *Ai que   fala   baixo!
     prt. IC_excl speak.IMP low

(Galician) (ex. 27, Corr 2016, 91)

(10) *Ai que   coñécela?
      prt. IC_excl know.2sg-her

(Galician) (ex. 13, Corr 2016, 88)

Exclamative *que* may precede rhetorical *yes/no* questions in Catalan (10) and Galician (11). However, rhetorical questions do not really have interrogative illocutionary force, rather assertive (Han 2002) or expressive force.

(10) *Que et sembla   que tinc   tot el (puto) dia?!*
      IC_excl to.you=seem.3sg that have.1sg all the effing day

(Catalan) (ex. 17, Corr 2016, 89)

(11) *Ai que   che parece   que teño   todo o (puto) día?!*
      prt. IC_excl to.you-seem.3sg that have.1sg all   the effing day
      'Do you think I've got all (effing) day?!'

(Galician) (ex. 18, Corr 2016, 89)

Corr also notes that Galician or Spanish (not European Portuguese) informants find it acceptable if exclamative *que* precedes wh-exclamatives (12).

(12) *Hala, que que ben (*que) fala   a   irlandesa!*
      wow IC_excl what well that   speak.3sg the Irish
      'Wow, the Irish girl speaks so well!'

(Galician) (ex. 24, Corr 2016, 90)

Given the data in (8-12), Corr argues that exclamative *que* has selectional properties. For instance, in European Portuguese, exclamative *que* can only co-occur with declarative sentences. However, clause type is not the only factor that exclamative *que* is sensitive to, a more important one is the illocutionary force of its complement. Exclamative *que* thus introduces direct or indirect expressive speech acts (Searle 1979). Expressive speech acts indicate the attitudinal or emotional stance of the Speaker towards the propositional content which is presupposed to be true (Searle 1979). Exclamative *que* utterances suggest various "non-neutral" mental attitudes, among which excitement, surprise, admiration, dissatisfaction, or concern. Corr also states that "the Speaker must find the content of their utterance noteworthy or remarkable" (Corr 2016, 96), which is considered one of the sincerity

rules for their pragmatic felicity. Compared with exclamative sentences without the illocutionary complementiser, *que* exclamatives convey a more intense emotional state (Corr 2016, 95).

It deserves mention that the attitude of the speaker cannot be cancelled, as can be seen in example (13) below. This shows that the secondary attitude-centric proposition introduced by the exclamative might be analysed as a conventional implicature in the sense of Potts (2005).

(13)   *¡Que hace un día bonito! ??Pero me da igual.*
       'It's [such] a lovely day! ??But I don't care.' (ex. 43, Corr 2016, 96)
       CI: 'I find it remarkable that this is a lovely day!'

Following Biezma (2008) and Potts (2007), Corr (2106) argues that *que* exclamatives display several key characteristics typical of expressive utterances. First, they express non-propositional meaning *independent* from and beyond the at-issue contents of the utterance. As mentioned above, this extra content is related to the speaker's emotional state or attitude. Consider the two utterances in (14)-(15). In (14), the sentence is a declarative in the indicative mood with an assertive illocutionary force. In (15), the sentence in (14) is preceded by exclamative *que* and has an expressive illocutionary force.

(14)   *Aquilo dava   muito dinheiro antigamente.*
       that   give.IMPF.3sg much money   formerly
       'That used to be a good earner in the past'

                                                                       (ex. 46, Corr 2016, 100)

(15)   *Que aquilo dava   muito dinheiro antigamente!*
       IC_{excl} that give.IMPF.3sg much money   formerly
       'That used to be a good earner in the past!'
                                              (European Portuguese) (ex. 47, Corr 2016, 100)

In this sentence pair, the difference in illocutionary force between (15) and the nearly identical utterance in (14) appears to be introduced by the illocutionary complementiser. As mentioned above, in its absence, the sentence has an assertive illocutionary force. For other types of exclamative *que* sentences, things are not as clear. For instance, sentences containing wh-phrases with/without the exclamative *que* have an expressive illocutionary force, regardless of the presence or absence of *que*. Both (16) and (17) are expressives distinguished only by the occurrence of *que* without any other syntactic difference.

(16)   Joer que   qué envidia cochina mah grande
       fuck IC$_{excl}$ what envy   filthy   more big
       'Feck, I'm so flipping jealous!'

                                        (Spanish) (ex. 48, Corr 2016, 101)

(17)   Joer qué   envidia cochina mah   grande
       fuck what envy   filthy   more big
       'Feck, I'm so flipping jealous!'

                                        (ex. 49, Corr 2016, 101)

Such examples make it hard to establish whether the speaker's attitude is expressed by the presence of the complementiser *que* or the wh-pronoun *qué* "what". However, Corr argues that by embedding such sentences under factive verbs one finds that the illocutionary force lies with exclamative *que*. The complements of factive verbs are devoid of any illocutionary force according to Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1970) (*apud* Corr 2016, 103). The example in (18) shows that, when the exclamative *que* sentence is embedded under a factive predicate, we get ungrammatical results. By contrast, in (19), without the exclamative *que*, the wh-phrase sentence is perfectly acceptable when selected by the factive adjective *impressive*. If the factive main clause predicate cannot select an illlocutionarily marked complement, the ungrammaticality of (18) is explained–the complementiser *que* is responsible for the exclamative illocutionary force.

(18)   *Es impresionante que qué   envidia cochina mah grande tengo.
        is impressive   C$_{excl}$ what envy   total   more big have.1sg
                                        (ex. 50, Corr 2016, 101)

(19)   Es impresionante qué envidia cochina mah grande tengo.
       is impressive   what envy total more big have.1sg (ex. 51, Corr 2016, 101)

A second trait of expressive speech acts is temporal non-displaceability. As Potts (2007, 169 *apud* Corr 2016, 104) puts it "expressives cannot (outside of direct quotation) be used to report on past events, attitudes, or emotions, nor can they express mere possibilities, conjectures, or supposition [but] always tells us something about the utterance situation itself." Evidence that exclamative *que* utterances are expressive utterances lies in the fact that they must be anchored to the present moment of the speech situation and cannot be anchored to a past time (20).

(20)   *_En aquell moment, que me feia   mal la panxa!_
       in   that   moment IC_excl me-make.3sg bad the tummy

                                                        (ex. 62, Corr 2016, 104)

Another pragmatic property deriving from their expressive status is that exclamative _que_ utterances are performative (Potts 2007, 167 _apud_ Corr 2016, 119), not descriptive – they make the mental state of the speaker apparent rather than describe the respective feeling/sensation (Esipova 2025). They are not informative about the precise nature of that mental state–anger, shock, surprise, or happiness. This information is contextually inferred (Corr 2016, 105-106). Exclamative _que_ sentences display immediacy of effect because the attitude of the speaker is conveyed instantly, once the speaker makes a full utterance (Corr 2016, 119).

        According to Potts (2007), an expressive element can be iterated without becoming superfluous. In fact, its iteration heightens the emotive character of the expressive speech act. Corr (2016, 108) shows that the repetition of _que_ exclamatives connotes increased anger in the example below:

(21)   _Que ve   l'Afra! (Que) ja   arriba! (Que) ja   ve!_
       IC_excl comes the=Afra IC_excl already arrive.3sg IC_excl already comes
       'Afra's coming! She's about to arrive! She's about to get here!'
                              (Catalan) (ex. 69, Corr 2016, 108, relying on Biezma 2008, 13)

Corr tests _que_ exclamative sentences for some of the traits of exclamatives discussed by Zanuttini and Portner (2003). One of them is occurrence in question/answer pairs. She shows that, in Catalan, exclamative _que_ sentences, like true exclamatives, cannot be followed by an answer in a conversational utterance pair (22b), in contrast to questions introduced by the interrogative particle _que_. This means that exclamative _que_ utterances, like other exclamatives, "do not introduce [information-seeking] questions in the discourse" (Corr 2016, 110; Zanuttini and Portner 2003).

(22)   a. A: _Que arriba l'avia aquest nit?_ B: _Sí, crec que sí._
          'Is granny arriving tonight?' 'Yes, I believe so.'
                                                        (Catalan) (ex. 74, Corr 2016, 110)
       b. A: _Que arriba l'avia aquest nit!_ B: ?#_Sí, crec que sí._
          'Granny's arriving tonight!' 'Yes, I believe so.'
                                                        (Catalan) (ex. 75, Corr 2016, 110)

Summing up, Corr's analysis has revealed that exclamative *que* utterances have selectional syntactic and pragmatic properties. They can be firmly included in the class of expressives (Potts 2005), expressing an intense emotional response or attitude to a certain proposition.

In the next section, we examine the characteristics of Romanian exclamative constructions that are introduced by an illocutionary complementiser, namely *că.*

3. Exclamative *că* in Romanian

As in many other languages, exclamative constructions in Romanian are very diverse and have been the subject of extensive research (Vişan 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005, Tănase-Dogaru 2008, Giurgea 2015, Giurgea and Remberger 2016, Cruschina et al. 2015, a.o.).

However, exclamative *că* structures have received little attention, being briefly mentioned in Giurgea (2015, 24), Cruschina et al. (2015, 270), Irimia (1999, 97), likely because the structure is not very frequent, occurring primarily in the oral register and being deemed archaic or regional by some speakers. As we will show below, attested examples can be found both in various online conversations or commentaries and in introspective monologues or dialogues in literary fiction. This section will offer a preliminary description of the characteristics of exclamative *că* utterances, leaving their formal analysis for future work.

As shown in section 1, exclamative *que* occurs in many Ibero-Romance syntactic structures such as declaratives, rhetorical polar interrogatives, wh-interrogatives, and wh-exclamatives. Romanian uses the exclamative *că* illocutionary complementiser in fewer syntactic structures.

Unlike Ibero-Romance *que*, in Romanian, it is not possible to add *că* to a declarative indicative sentence like (23) and yield an exclamative illocutionary force (24) (Hill 2010, 8). As in Ibero-Romance, exclamative *că* is also not found in real yes/no-questions (25a), wh-questions (25b) or imperatives (26). While being acceptable in Galician and Catalan, rhetorical questions with exclamative *că* are not grammatical in Romanian (27).

(23)   *E frumos   afară.*
       is beautiful outside
       'The weather is nice outside.'

(24)   **Wow, că   e frumos   afară!*
       wow IC_excl is beautiful outside
       'Wow, the weather is nice outside.'

(25) a. *Wow, că   e frumos   afară?
          wow, IC_excl is beautiful outside
          'Wow, is the weather nice outside?'
         *Wow, că cum e afară?
          wow, IC_excl how is outside
          'Wow, how is the weather outside?'

(26) *Că deschide fereastra!
       IC_excl open   window-the
       'Open the window!'

(27) *Că   mă iei   de prost?
       IC_excl me take.pres.2sg of fool
       'Do you take me for a fool?'

There are two types of syntactic constructions in which exclamative *că* typically occurs in Romanian: (i) before wh-exclamatives - see attested examples in (28 a,b) and (ii) before certain focus fronting structures called "exclamative focus fronting structures" by Giurgea (2015), Cruschina et al. (2015) (28c)

(28) a. *Doamne, că   ce   copil perfect ești!*
          Lord   IC_excl what child perfect are!
          'Lord, what a perfect child you are!'
      b. *Doamne, că   ce   faină   poți   fi!*
          Lord   IC_exc what beautiful can.2sg be
          'Lord, how beautiful you are!'
      c. *Dumnezeule mare, că   idiot mai ești!*
          God.VOC   great   IC_excl idiot more are.2sg
          'You are such an idiot!'

The second type was noted more frequently in the previous literature (Giurgea 2015, Cruschina et al. 2015, Irimia 1999), while the first received almost no attention, despite being attested in both colloquial (29a) and literary registers (29b).

(29) a. *Pff, tulai Doamne,   că   ce m-a   luat amețeala,   dar îmi*
          INTERJ. INTERJ.Lord IC_excl what me-has taken dizziness-the but me.DAT
          place.
          likes
          'Oh my Lord, I am feeling soo dizzy, but I like it.'

b. *Doamne, că   ce   farsă frumoasă născoci   pehlivanul   de „grecotei"!*
   Lord,   IC_{excl} what prank beautiful concocted mischievous-the of Greek
   'Oh Lord, what a splendid prank the Greek jester came up with!'

Both types of structures are grammatical in the absence of *că.* All the examples in (28) and (29) would be grammatical if *că* were omitted, as can be seen in (30). Wh-exclamatives (30a) and exclamative focus fronting structures (30b) have an expressive illocutionary force. It follows that, like its Ibero-Romance counterpart, exclamative *că* has selectional properties, selecting exclamative expressive utterances.

(30)   a. *Ce   copil perfect ești!*
          what child perfect are
          'What a perfect child you are!'
       b. *Idiot mai   ești!*
          idiot more are.2sg
          You are such an idiot!'

Giurgea (2015), Giurgea and Remberger (2016), following previous authors (Elliot 1971 and 1974; Grimshaw 1979; Zanuttini and Portner 2003; Vișan 2002, a.o.), argue that exclamatives should be recognised as an independent clause type in Romanian, separate from interrogatives, declaratives, optatives or directives. According to these authors, this clause type displays the following syntactic and interpretative characteristics: (i) the presence of a degree word such as *ce*, (ii) distinctive prosodic marking, (iii) dislocation of a phrase to the left peripherary, (iv) sentence-initial vocative nominals, interjections or discourse particles, (v) the possibility of occurring in subordinate clauses, (vi) presupposed propositional content, (vii) reference to an out of the ordinary situation and (viii) an evaluative dimension, whereby the speaker is critical or appreciative of the situation (Giurgea 2015, 6). Consequently, exclamatives should be understood as exhibiting a more fine-grained set of properties than those recognised in traditional grammars. Features such as distinctive stress patterns (e.g., "a marked lengthening of the last stressed syllable and of the following one" - Giurgea 2015, 4 -, as in *Am cumpărat îngheȚAtă!* "I bought ice cream") or the mere expression of emotion are not, in themselves, the defining hallmarks of exclamative constructions.

Exclamative *că* sentences meet most of the above criteria for exclamative configurations. We saw above that exclamative *că* cannot occur in interrogatives (either wh-, polar or rhetorical questions) or imperatives. Moreover, exclamative *că* sentences have distinctive prosodic features - they involve fronting of a wh-phrase

(28a,b) or another type of constituent (usually an adjective (28c, 31), adverb (41) or DP (28a)) to the left periphery of the sentence, accompanied by accentuation (31). They may contain the degree word *ce* (28a), but not necessarily–focus fronting structures do not require it (28b). Their exclamative status is reinforced by the fact that they are usually preceded by interjections (29a), vocative nominals–mostly, *Doamne* "Lord" (29b)–, or "exclamative particles" such as *vai* (Giurgea 2015), regardless of whether *că* accompanies wh-constructions or focus fronting constructions. According to Giurgea (2015, 17), the clitic adverb *mai* „more" typically appears with a special use in exclamative contexts, distinct from its additive use.

(31)   *Că PROST **mai** ești!*
       IC_{ex} stupid more are.
       'You are so stupid!'

Că exclamatives do not meet criterion (v) in the list above since they cannot occur as subordinate complement clauses, which emphasizes their root clause status (Cruschina and Remberger 2018, see alo Villalba 2003 for Catalan, Corr 2016 for Ibero-Romance in general). Note that, by contrast to Ibero-Romance, Romanian does not admit deletion of *că* in indicative clauses (Cotfas 2017, 262), hence the ungrammatical *că*$_{sub}$ *că*$_{excl}$ sequence in (32).

(32)   **M-am   gândit că că   prost mai ești!*
       REFL.1sg have thought that IC_{ex} stupid more are.
       I thought you were so stupid!'

According to Elliott (1974), Grimshaw (1979) (*apud* Villalba 2003), exclamatives are factive constructions – from a semantic point of view, the truth of the proposition they express is presupposed (hence criterion (vi)), and thus they can only be selected by factive predicates such as *amazing*, as can be seen below for English.

(33)   a. It's amazing how very expensive this wine is.
       b. *I asked how very expensive this wine was.

                                                        (ex. 4, Villalba 2003)

Presuppositionality has generally been used as a diagnostic for belonging to the exclamative construction class, but, since *că* exclamatives cannot be subordinates, the factive predicate selection test illustrated in (33a) cannot be applied in Romanian. The same was found for Spanish (Corr 2016, Gutiérrez-Rexach 2001, 183

apud Al-Bataineh 2023), and Catalan (Villalba 2003). Villalba (2003) proposes another factivity test for Catalan *que* exclamatives, which can be applied to Romanian as well. Since the exclamative *că* structure is factive, it cannot be followed by constructions that deny the truth of the presupposed proposition (34).

(34)   *Doamne, că   ce   copil perfect ești! ??Dacă chiar ai   fi!*
         Lord   IC$_{exc}$ what child perfect are   if   really would be.2sg
         'Lord, how beautiful you are! If only you were!'

Similar to their Ibero-Romance counterparts, exclamative *că* sentences do not occur in question-answer pairs. They cannot serve as responses because their propositional content is not new information (Grimshaw 1979; Giurgea 2015), a consequence of the fact that the propositional content of exclamatives is presupposed to be true.

(35)   *A: Ce apreciezi la Ion?   B: ??Că BINE vorbește!/Că ce MULT muncește!*
         'A: What do you like about Ion? B: How well he speaks!/how hard he works!'

Giurgea (2015) points out that other new information contexts disallow exclamatives in general, and *că* exclamatives are no exception (36).

(36)   *A: Ai auzit?/Să-ți zic ceva!   B:??Că ce mult muncește!*
         'A: Have you heard?/Let me tell you something! B: How well he speaks!/ How
                                                          hard he works!'

As was the case for Ibero-Romance, in *că* exclamatives the speaker suggests that the situation is unusual or striking and this secondary proposition can be analysed as a conventional implicature which cannot be cancelled as can be seen in (37).

(37) a. *Doamne, că   urâți sunt și ăstia! ??Dar nu mi se   pare   nimic special.*
          Lord that IC$_{exc}$ ugly are too these   but not me REFL seems nothing special
          'Oh my, how ugly they are! But I don't find it out of the ordinary.'

As their Ibero-Romance counterparts (Corr 2016; Villalba 2003), Romanian *că* exclamatives are anchored to the speech situation as indicated by the examples in (28) where the eventualities that the speaker evaluates are at/around speech time. Contra Potts (2007), there are instances in which they convey the speaker's present attitude to a past situation (29, 38a). However, in these cases, even if the event is past, the anchoring of the speaker's evaluation is still deictic and cannot be

displaced to a past time (38b). Interestingly, without *că*, the utterance in (38a) becomes a regular wh-exclamative, which allows the adverb *ieri* (38c) and suggests that the speaker evaluated the situation positively in the past. This is proof that *că* contributes to the deictic anchoring of the exclamative.

(38)   a. *Doamne, că   ce   am   mai   poftit la dude   când eram gravidă!*
           Lord   IC$_{exc}$ what have more craved at mulberries when was pregnant
           'Oh my, how I craved mulberries when I was pregnant!'
       b. **Ieri, că ce frumos erai!*
           Yesterday IC$_{exc}$ what beautiful be.PAST.2sg
           'Yesterday, how beautiful you were! '
       c. *Ieri,   ce   frumos   erai!*
           Yesterday what beautiful be.PAST.2sg
           Yesterday, how beautiful you were! '

We found no attested examples in which exclamative *că* utterances, be they focus fronting or wh-structures, are iterated to suggest intensification of feeling, but our intuition is that this is not really possible in Romanian, unlike in Ibero-Romance (21), as illustrated in (39).

(39)   a. *Că   bine mai vorbește... ??că   deștept mai e!*
           IC$_{exc}$ well more speaks...   IC$_{exc}$ smart more is
       b. *Că   ce   bine vorbește...??că   ce   deștept e!*
           IC$_{exc}$ what well speaks...   IC$_{exc}$ what smart   is

Contrary to the widespread view that exclamatives have a degree interpretation (Rett 2011; Zanuttini, Portner 2003, a.o.), Giurgea (2015) shows that exclamatives include both scalar (*Ce frumos e!* "How beautiful it is") and non-scalar constructions (*Ce să-mi facă doctorul!* "How could the doctor help me").

According to the criteria proposed by Giurgea (2015), *că* exclamatives are indeed scalar exclamatives. This claim is supported by several facts. In the case of *că* wh-exclamatives, many examples contain the degree word *ce* "what" (Giurgea 2015) – see *ce faină* "what beautiful" în (28b). Note that in some cases, *ce* is not a degree word rather the wh-determiner *ce*, which heads a DP with an adjective in exclamative focus – *ce copil perfect* "what child perfect" (28a), *ce lupte crâncene* "what battles fierce" (43) – see Giurgea (2015, 16) for an explanation. Focus fronting structures may include degree adverbs like *tare* "very" (40), gradable adjectives (31) or adverbs (41), and they are not grammatical with non-gradable

predicates (Villalba 2003) (42). *Că* exclamatives also contain absolute adjectives such as *perfect* (28a), *crâncen* "fierce" (43), indicating a maximal scalar value.

(40) *Zău, că   tare mai ești   cu toane!*
      really, IC_exc very more be.2sg with moods
      'Really, you are quite moody!'

(41) a. *Că bine le   zice Dinulescu!*
         that well them says Dinulescu
         'She speaks so eloquently!'
      b. *Mă!... că rău mi-a   mai mers astăzi! Ce zi pocită!*
         prt... IC_exc bad CL.1sg.DAT has more gone today   what day ugly
         'Everything went bad for me today! What a bad day!'
      c. *Doamne, tu fată, că   rău înghit.*
         Lord   you girl IC_exc badly swallow.1sg
         'Lord, girl, I just can't swallow!'

(42) **Că   anuală mai   e verificarea asta!*
      IC_exc annual more is check-the   this
      How annual this check is!'

This shows that exclamative *că* utterances lend themselves to the semantic analysis typically applied to other exclamatives, one that emphasizes their degree interpretation.

Exclamative *că* sentences are used to convey the speaker's evaluation of "the degree to which individuals instantiate gradable properties" (Rett 2011, § 3.1). Moreover, the scalar value of the property is high (29) or maximal (28a,b, 43) relative to a contextual standard (Rett 2011, § 3.4). For instance, in (28b), the addressee is ascribed the property *beauty* to an exceptionally high degree. In (43), what stands out is the fact that the battles were particularly fierce–the degree of hostility faced was high. The degree to which the property is displayed may be noteworthy or unexpected (Cruschina et al. 2015, 259; Rett 2011). The overall assessment of the situation or individual can be either positive (41a) or negative (40, 41b,c).

(43) *Doamne,   că ce   lupte crâncene-am mai dus*
      Lord.VOC IC_exc what fights fierce have more fought
      până am ajuns   la armistitiul   asta!
       until have reached at armistice-the this
      'Oh my, the fights I had to fight before reaching this truce!'

Another important question is what discursive role *că* plays, whether it preserves or alters the illocutionary force of the exclamative utterance to which it attaches. The evidence suggests it preserves it – the *că* utterances presented in this section are also expressive and exclamative. Our native speaker intuition is that *că* is a rhetorical-stylistic device, producing an intensification effect and a stronger exclamative illocutionary force. Moreover, it is a marker of the *speaker's* enhanced emotional or attitudinal involvement and of the fact that he/she is evaluating the situation from a deeply relevant *personal* viewpoint in some contextually appropriate way. Support for this claim comes from the fact that more neutral *că* wh- or focus fronting exclamatives, which lack this nuance of personal relevance are not usually preceded by *că* (44).

(44) a. ?Că ce înalt e muntele ăsta!
      IC$_{exc}$ what tall is mountain-the this
   b. ?Că înalt e muntele ăsta!
      IC$_{exc}$ tall is mountain-the this

The increased salience of the "speaker orientation" (Villalba 2017) of exclamative *că* structures, and its role in deictic anchoring suggests that exclamative *că* is a speech act layer element, in the sense of Speas and Tenny (2003), Hill (2007), Corr (2016). A more formal analysis is left for future investigation. Another issue that deserves experimental investigation of the judgments of native speakers is whether there is any semantic difference between *că* wh- and focus-fronting structures, as Cruschina et al. (2015) maintain that the regular wh-exclamatives suggest a higher scalar value than standard focus fronting exclamatives.

4. Conclusions

The paper investigated the properties of exclamative constructions introduced by *que* and *că* in Ibero-Romance and Romanian. It showed that Romanian uses *că* exclamatives both in colloquial and literary registers and argued for their inclusion in the larger class of exclamatives, a distinct clause type, independent from interrogatives and declaratives. *Că* utterances exhibit several key properties of exclamatives: (i) a marked prosodic pattern, (ii) fronting of wh-phrases, adjectival, adverbial or nominal constituents, (iii) the presence of the exclamative element *mai*, (iv) presuppositionality, and (v) a scalar interpretation. They also share the

expressive illocutionary force of Ibero-Romance *que* constructions. Exclamative *că* serves as a deictic anchor and a marker of intense speaker involvement, creating a stronger illocutionary force than that of regular wh- and focus fronting exclamatives.

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