Hoe cool is dat wel niet! How pseudo-questions and expletive negation in Dutch

Rachel Nye, Lieven Danckaert

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1 Introduction

This paper focuses on the Dutch equivalents to structures such as (1), referred to by Nye (2009, 2011) as *how*-pseudo questions (HPQs). On the surface, HPQs resemble how degree questions (HDQs) (2), but combine the surface word order of a matrix question with an interpretation more usually associated with exclamative structures.[1]

(1) How cool is that! HPQ

(2) How old is he? HDQ

As shown in (3) and (4), very similar structures are also available in Dutch:

(3) Hoe cool is dat! HPQ
how cool is that

*There is much that we could – and would like to – say in tribute to Liliane, both in terms of her contribution to the field of linguistics, and regarding the support that she has provided us both with. Taking the saying "actions speak louder than words" to heart, a revival for this particular occasion of the former 'PhD student + Postdoc buddy' team established by Liliane during the early GIST days seemed the most suitable way to convey these sentiments. The connections this paper shows to Liliane's work, in terms of the languages studied, the linguistic topics touched upon and the approach taken to the data should be apparent throughout.

[1] Throughout this paper, in constructed examples or examples from a spoken language source, we punctuate HDQs with a question mark and HPQs with an exclamation mark. In attested written examples, there is considerable variability in how HPQs are punctuated (as discussed by Nye (2009) for English), and the original punctuation is maintained when such examples are reproduced. Punctuation proves an equally poor indication for determining the HPQ vs. HDQ status of a given string in Dutch as it does in English.

'How cool is that!'

(4) Hoe oud is hij? HDQ
how old is he
'How old is he?'

HPQs are common in contemporary English and Dutch, and they differ from what one could call 'standard exclamatives', such as English (5) and Dutch (6), in two important respects. First, HPQs are more colloquial, whereas the exclamatives in (5) and (6) are primarily associated with a more formal register. Second, only HPQs have a string-identical interrogative counterpart.

(5) a. How tall that building is!
b. What a tall building that is!

(6) a. Wat is dat gebouw hoog!
what is that building high
b. Wat is dat een hoog gebouw!
what is that a high building
'How tall that building is!'

Our first aim is to offer a description of the Dutch HPQ pattern exemplified in (3). Concretely, we show that Dutch and English HPQs have very similar properties: in line with Nye (2009, 2011) we argue that despite the apparent surface resemblances, HPQs do in fact differ structurally from HDQs, in Dutch as well as in English. On the basis of this we conclude that the interpretive properties of HPQs cannot be explained as a pragmatic effect arising from the use of a HDQ in a particular context. Rather, the difference in interpretation of HPQs and HDQs results from a difference in the underlying syntax of these two structures. As a result, despite the presence of subject-auxiliary inversion in both (1) and (2), HPQs are best categorised as a type of exclamative, rather than as interrogatives.

Secondly, on the basis of the Dutch data we develop a new argument for the claim that HPQs should be distinguished structurally from HDQs, which goes beyond those already put forward by Nye (2009). In particular, we demonstrate that in Dutch HPQs it is possible for the sentential negator *niet* 'not' to occur, without any of the negative force with which it is typically associated. The fact that this type of 'expletive negation' is not available in Dutch HDQs again suggests that HPQs and HDQs do not have the same syntactic structure, despite typically having the same word order.

Section 2 of this paper briefly recapitulates the main arguments put forward

by Nye (2009, 2011) on the basis of English HPQs for the claim that HPQs are structurally distinct from HPQs, and applies these to Dutch HPQs. In section 3, the phenomenon of expletive negation in Dutch HPQs is discussed and in section 4, HPQs and other inverted exclamatives are compared to rhetorical questions. Section 5 suggests directions for future research and section 6 concludes.

2 Distinguishing HPQs from HDQs

Nye (2009) provides evidence to show that although HPQs can be string-identical to HDQs, HPQs differ from HDQs both in interpretation and, in some cases, in form. Three key properties identified by Nye (2009) as distinguishing HPQs from HDQs are applied to the Dutch data, with the same results shown to hold for Dutch as for English.

2.1 Questions

First, HDQs introduce a question into the discourse, whereas HPQs do not. For example, a HDQ can felicitously be used in the exchange in (7), where A's utterance is a genuine information-seeking question, to which the B's reply constitutes a pragmatically appropriate answer.

(7) A: Signalen worden door de satelliet verstuurd met de snelheid van
signals become by the satellite sent with the speed of
het licht.
the light
Hoe snel is dit (uitgedrukt in km/sec)?[2]
how fast is this expressed in kilometres per second
B: 300.000 km per seconde.
300,000 kilometres per second
'300,000 kilometres per second.'

In contrast, as shown in (8), HPQs are incompatible with an answer that provides a piece of new information. This is of course not to say that they cannot

[2] https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=30&ved=0ahUKEwisrKbn3vvbAhVEZVAKHdYLDlw4FBAWCF0wCQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.uhasselt.be%2FDocuments%2Fuhasselt%40school%2Flesmateriaal%2Fverkeerskunde%2FGPS_stellingenspel.ppt&usg=AOvVaw3a4QEUghfeLUlfnDcyrZyQ. Last accessed 30.06.2018.

be replied to at all. A response indicating agreement with the speaker's assessment, such as the one in (8B'), is typically felicitous.

(8) A: Wow hoe snel is dit![3]
wow how fast is this
'Wow, how fast is this!'
B: #Wel, het heeft precies 2 uur en 5 minuten geduurd.
well it has precisely 2 hours and 5 minutes lasted
'Well, it took exactly 2 hours and 5 minutes.'
B': Ja, inderdaad, dat was echt snel.
yes indeed that was really fast
'Yes indeed, that was really fast.'

We can conclude that while HDQs have interrogative illocutionary force, HPQs do not. However, on a par with *bona fide* exclamatives (cf. Portner & Zanuttini 2000), nor do HPQs have the same distribution as declaratives, as attested to by the fact that they cannot felicitously be used to answer a question, a point exemplified by the dialogue in (9):

(9) A: Werd het pakket snel afgeleverd? Question
became the parcel quickly delivered
'Was the parcel delivered quickly?'
B: #Hoe snel was dat! HPQ
how fast was that
'How fast was that!'
B: #Wat was dat snel! *Wh*-exclamative
what was that fast
'How fast that was!'
C: (Ja,) de levering was echt snel. Declarative answer
yes the delivery was really fast
'(Yes,) the delivery was really fast.'

This suggests that the HPQ pattern is in fact a type of exclamative.

[3] https://www.agrolingua.com/nl/klanten-over-ons?pagenr=11. Last accessed 30.06.2018.

2.2 Evaluativity

Another property shared by genuine *wh*-exclamatives and HPQs is the fact that both show polarity-insensitive evaluativity, which HDQs do not. The concept of evaluativity (in the realm of adjectival constructions) is defined in Rett (2015: 1) as follows: "[an] adjectival construction is evaluative iff it makes reference to a degree which exceeds a contextually valued standard". Adjectival predicates in HPQs do seem to qualify as evaluative expressions: whereas HDQs ask about the extent to which the property expressed by the adjective holds, HPQs exclaim about the fact that this property holds to a great extent. For example, in the example in (10) it is presupposed that the Herengracht is beautiful; what is asserted is that it is indeed very beautiful, prettier than other parts of Amsterdam at the same time of year, for instance.

(10) Maar kijk eens aan: hoe mooi is de Herengracht in de
but look once PRT how beautiful is the Herengracht in the
zomermaanden.[4]
summermonths
'But just look at that: how beautiful is the Herengracht during the summer months!'

In contrast, no such effects are present in a regular HDQ such as (11) (which is the title of a government brochure about spatial planning). Not only does this question lack the presupposition that The Netherlands will be beautiful in the near future, given the interrogative semantics there is also no assertion that the country will score high on a scale of beauty.

(11) Hoe mooi is Nederland morgen?[5]
how beautiful is the.Netherlands tomorrow
'How beautiful will The Netherlands be tomorrow?'

Following Rett (2011), we can conclude that Dutch HPQs behave like structures whose status as exclamatives is not debated in relation to the property of evaluativity.

[4] https://docplayer.nl/43797578-Olf-jacobs-en-liesbeth-smits-wonen-in-een-fraai-verbouwde-villa.html. Last accessed 30.06.2018.

[5] http://www.henkbouwmeester.com/?portfolio=hoe-mooi-is-nederland-morgen. Last accessed 30.06.2018.

2.3 Intensifiers

Third, as observed in Nye (2009), HPQs – like exclamatives and in contrast to HDQs – can contain intensifiers such as *totally* and *incredibly* which modify the adjective in the *how*-phrase. The same holds for Dutch. Intensifiers such as *bangelijk* 'scarily', *kei-* 'very' (lit. 'boulder'), *verdomd* 'damn', *vet* 'fat', *vreselijk* 'terribly' and *fucking* (borrowed from English) can modify the adjective within the hoe-phrase in Dutch HPQs. Crucially, this is also the case for exclamatives, in contrast to HDQs, where such intensifiers are typically excluded.

(12) a. WTF hoe **vet** cool is da!!![6]
WTF how fat cool is that
'WTF, how very cool is that!'

b. Die blauwe op 1'50; hoe **bangelijk** goed ziet die der uit zeg!!![7]
that blue at 1'50 how scarily good sees that PRT PRT say
'The blue one at 1:50; how scarily handsome does he look!'

c. Hoe **vreselijk** erg is het om het WEL te doen??[8]
how terribly bad is it to it PRT to do
'How terribly bad is it to actually do it!'

d. En hoe **kei**cool is je poncho geworden [...].[9]
and how very.cool is your poncho become
'And how cool has your poncho turned out to be!'

e. Hoe v**erdomd** geil kan je worden van sushi?[10]
how damn horny kan you become of sushi
'How damn horny can you get from sushi!'

f. HOE **FUCKING** COOL IS *GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2*?!?[11]
how fucking cool is Guardians of the Galaxy vol. 2
'How fucking cool is Guardians of the Galaxy vol. 2?!?'

[6] https://twitter.com/ruytersg/status/743023125420507136. Last accessed 15.01.2018.

[7] https://forum.alfaclub.nl/viewtopic.php?t=44903&start=270. Last accessed 15.01.2018.

[8] https://www.ikenmama.nl/forum/forums/topic/je-kind-in-de-winkel-laten-eten/page/2/. Last accessed 15.01.2018.

[9] http://moos-moosies.blogspot.be/2014/01/een-nieuw-jaar-een-eerste-creatie.html. Last accessed 15.01.2018.

[10] http://www.clint.be/entertainment/sexpiratie-nodig-hoe-verdomd-geil-worden-sushi/. Last accessed 15.01.2018.

[11] http://vertigoweb.be/recensie-guardians-the-galaxy-2/. Last accessed

As shown in (13), none of the strings given in (12) can plausibly be coerced into a question (i.e. HDQ) interpretation:

(13) a. *Hoe vet cool is da?
b. *Hoe bangelijk goed ziet die der uit?
c. *Hoe vreselijk erg is het om het WEL te doen?
d. *En hoe keicool is je poncho geworden?
e. *Hoe verdomd geil kan je worden van sushi?
f. *HOE FUCKING COOL IS *GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2*?

In other words, there are contexts in which HDQs and HPQs are in fact formally non-identical, which strongly suggests that the difference between the two patterns is not a matter of pragmatics alone. In the following section, we discuss an additional phenomenon which also differentiates Dutch HPQs from HDQs on formal grounds.

3 Expletive negation in exclamatives

Both Dutch and English are known to permit expletive negation – alternatively referred to as 'pleonastic negation', and defined as 'a lexically present but semantically vacuous negation' (Dinković & Ilc 2017: 159) – in certain structures (cf. Haegeman 1995: 160–161 for varieties of East and West Flemish, Espinal 2000: 65–66 for Standard Dutch, and Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 845–846, Horn 2010: 123–124, Collins & Postal 2014: 228, Dinković & Ilc 2017: 162 for English), including exclamatives. The presence of expletive negation in exclamative structures specifically has been observed in the literature for a range of languages (Portner & Zanuttini 2000, Espinal 2000, Andueza & Gutiérrez-Rexach 2010, Delfitto & Fiorin 2014, Biberauer & Potgieter 2017), though at present it is not yet fully understood what determines whether or not a particular exclamative structure licenses expletive negation.

For English, the observation that exclamatives can permit expletive negation dates back to Jespersen (1924: 323) who states that "in exclamations [...] very often it does not matter whether *not* is added or not", providing the example given here as (14) by way of support:

(14) How often have I (not) watched him!

15.01.2018.

However, it is by no means the case that expletive negative is productively available in all present day English exclamatives (Jespersen's example is characterised by Horn (2010: 123) as "now somewhat quaint-sounding").[12] In the non-inverted equivalent (15), for instance, *not* seems to be excluded (at least when it is interpreted as expletive negation).

(15) How often I have (*not) watched him!

The availability of expletive negation in Dutch exclamatives has been noted by Espinal (2000: 66), among others, who gives the following examples (her (32a,b)):

(16) a. Wat heeft hij **niet** een vragen gesteld!
what has he not a questions raised
'He raised so many questions!'
b. Wat heeft hij **niet** een ellende veroorzaakt!
what has he not a mess caused
'He created such a mess!'

The examples in (16) do not involve HPQs but rather 'standard' *wh*-exclamatives (see also (6)). Note that the (invariant, but possibly discontinuous) string *wat een (sg. or pl.) NP* (lit. 'what a NP') cannot be used in interrogative contexts, which disambiguates the structures in (16) from interrogatives.[13]

Let us now turn to negation in HPQs. For English, Nye (2009: 18) provides the attested example presented here as (17). To the extent that such marginal cases are accepted, *not* has the expected force of sentential negation, negating the propositional content: (17) is an exclamation about the lack of vigilance. The interpretation and acceptability of negation in canonical non-inverted exclamatives seems to be similar (18). Sentential negation *not* seems even more marginal in HDQs (19).

(17) ?How vigilant are they not!

[12] Inverted exclamatives such as (14) are differentiated from HPQs in terms of both prosody and register: inverted exclamatives such as (14) seem out-dated, formal and literary, much as the noninverted equivalent in (15) does, while HPQs, in contrast, are characteristic of contemporary, informal, colloquial speech. The possibility of expletive negation in inverted exclamatives but not HPQs in English, as discussed in this section, provides another piece of evidence in favour of the view that these structures should be distinguished.

[13] As such, although the English translations Espinal (2000) provides for (16a) and (16b) are declaratives, these could perhaps more accurately be rendered as 'What a lot of questions he raised!' and 'What a mess he caused!' respectively.

(18) ?How vigilant they are not!

(19) ??How vigilant are they not?

Although in many cases Dutch HPQs are string-identical to their English equivalents, one striking difference is the ease with which *niet* 'not' can occur: some speakers in fact have a preference for it to be present in HPQs. What is important to note is that what we are dealing with here is expletive negation, that it is to say 'the negation is not interpreted according to its canonical logical meaning' (Delfitto & Fiorin 2014: 284). In fact, only on this interpretation are such cases grammatical. Two attested examples are given in (20):

(20) a. Ik heb geen kind en ik wil ook Disney. Hoe erg is dat **niet**?![14]
I have no child and I want also Disney how bad is that not
'I don't have a child and I also want Disney. How bad is that!'

b. Een boek dat zich om laat bouwen tot een flipperkast,
a book which REFL PRT let's build to a pinball.machine
hoe leuk is dat **niet**?[15]
how cool is that not
'A book which can be transformed into a pinball machine, how cool is that?

In these examples *niet* does not negate the truth of the propositional content of the sentence, but rather appears to have an intensifying function (if any). The crucial observation is that *niet* in Dutch HDQs – to the extent that it is acceptable at all – can only be interpreted as conveying canonical sentential negation, on a par with what can be observed for English.

(21) a. ??Hoe erg is dat niet?
how bad is that not
'How bad is that not?'

b. ??Hoe leuk is dat niet?
how nice is that not
'How nice is that not?'

Observe that Dutch HPQs are fully disambiguated from HDQs on formal grounds

[14] https://www.bigcitylife.be/2016/11/23/die-pressdays-wat-is-dat-eigenlijk/. Last accessed 29.06.2018.

[15] https://www.kimcrabeels.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/GVA-20161104-00026001.pdf. Last accessed 29.06.2018.

when expletive negation is accompanied by the positive polarity particle *wel*, with which it can (and readily does) occur in combination. Some attested examples are given in (22):

(22) a. Elektriciteit, hoe belangrijk is dat **wel niet**[16]
electricity how important is that PRT not
'Electricity, how important is that!'

b. Sinds mijn kindertijd – hoe lang is dat **wel niet** geleden? –
since my childhood how long is that PRT not past
hanteer ik even vlot het Nederlands als het West-Vlaams
handle I equally fluently the Dutch as the West.Flemish
en het castellano [...].[17]
and the Castellano
'Since my childhood – how long ago is that! – I've been equally fluent in Dutch, West Flemish and Castellano.'

The elements *wel* and *niet* can also occur in combination with a seemingly similar function and interpretation in other exclamative clauses (cf. (23a)), but crucially not in interrogatives with question force (cf. (23b)).

(23) a. Wat er allemaal **wel niet** gedaan is.[18]
what EXPL all.ADV PRT not done is
'How many things have been done!'

b. *Wat is er allemaal **wel niet** gedaan?
what is EXPL all.ADV PRT not done

To conclude, we now have another argument in favour of the claim that – at least in Dutch – HPQs differ structurally from HDQs. Under purely pragmatic accounts of their differences in interpretation, the differing distribution and interpretation of the negator *niet* (and the positive polarity particle *wel*) in the two contexts remains unexplained.

[16] http://nlcm.nl/elektriciteit-hoe-belangrijk-dat-wel-niet/. Last accessed 29.06.2018.

[17] http://uilenvlucht.jotemo.be/?m=201212. Last accessed 29.06.2018.

[18] www.dutchdesignonabudget.nl/2015/06/wat-er-allemaal-al-wel-niet-gedaan-is.html. Last accessed 01.07.2018.

4 HPQs, inverted exclamatives and rhetorical questions

Cases such as the short attested exchange in (24) might at first sight appear to contradict the claim made in section 2.1 above to the effect that while HPQs can be responded to, they are incompatible with an answer that provides a piece of new information. As A's utterance in (24) contains the string *wel niet*, shown above to be incompatible with HDQs (cf. (23b)), this must be a HPQ rather than a HDQ and indeed, under the most natural interpretation of this statement, A wishes to convey the message that it has indeed been a very long time since they played this particular board game. Nevertheless, B's response appears to constitute an answer which provides a rough indication as to when they last played this game.

(24) A: "Pim-pam-petten? Hoe lang is dat **wel niet** geleden?"[19]
pim-pam-pet.INF how long is that PRT not passed
'Pim-pam-pet [a board game, rn & ld], how long ago is that'
B: "Een jaar of dertien." zei ik droogjes.
a year or thirteen said I dryly
'About thirteen years, I said dryly.'

We see two possible ways to account for such cases. The first is to follow Delfitto & Fiorin (2014) who claim that while exclamatives and rhetorical questions have essentially the same (Boolean) semantics (regardless of whether an expletive negator is present), the two structures are differentiated by – among other things – the fact that only the latter can be answered in a pragmatically felicitous manner (see in particular Delfitto & Fiorin 2014: 293, fn. 2). If this is indeed the case, then considering HPQs to be rhetorical questions potentially accounts for the fact that HPQs pattern with exclamatives rather than with HDQs in the ways described above, and yet nevertheless permit a contentful answer like HDQs and other questions, and unlike canonical non-inverted exclamatives.

Note however that – as shown by the constructed dialogue in (25), where A is Jespersen's example of an English exclamative structure involving expletive negation (discussed above, where it is provided as example (14)) – it is also possible for an interlocutor, B, to provide a pragmatically felicitous answer that provides new information, something which is impossible in response to the corre-

[19] https://mijn.editio.nl/schrijfwedstrijd/schrijverij/. Last accessed 01.07.2018.

sponding non-inverted exclamative in the parallel dialogue in (26).

(25) A: How often have I (not) watched him!
B: I don't know. 3 times maybe?

(26) A: How often I have watched him!
B: #I don't know. 3 times maybe?

Should the label 'rhetorical question' thus be extended to all inverted exclamatives? This seems undesirable, in the first instance as not all rhetorical questions can have exclamative interpretation, and so the affinity which HPQs and other inverted exclamatives show to non-inverted exclamatives is obfuscated under such an approach. On the contrary, canonical rhetorical questions are rather understood as 'an assertion of opposite polarity' (Sadock 1971: 224), such that (27) and (28) are interpreted as meaning roughly 'No-one still uses Facebook' and 'Everyone likes chocolate' respectively.[20]

(27) Who still uses Facebook?

(28) Who doesn't like chocolate?

Similar examples of canonical rhetorical questions which systematically resist exclamative interpretation can be found in Standard Dutch (where such rhetorical questions can be differentiated from questions with interrogative illocutionary force by the addition of the unstressed discourse particle *nou* (in Northern Dutch varieties), or *nu* (which is more idiomatic in Southern Dutch)). A relevant example is given in (29) (from Dik 1997: 244, his (30b) (our translation rn & ld, emphasis in original[21])), which again has opposite polarity interpretation ('No-one would want to be chairperson'):

(29) Wie wil er **nou** VOORzitter worden???
who wants there PRT chairperson become
'Who on earth would want to be CHAIRperson?'

As Nye (2009: 26 fn. 11) observes for English, the same applies to certain structures involving how, such as (30), which are interpreted as meaning 'It can't be so very difficult!' and can thus also be classified as rhetorical questions. Similarly,

[20] As Delfitto & Fiorin (2014: 296) observe, "Typically, negative rhetorical *wh*-questions express some sort of universal quantification."

[21] As suggested by the capitalisation, (29) is most naturally pronounced with heavier-than-neutral stress on the predicate *voorzitter* 'chairperson'.

the Dutch rhetorical question (featuring the particle *nu*) in (31) has very much the same meaning as its English counterpart in (30).

(30) How difficult can it be?

(31) Hoe moeilijk kan dat **nu** zijn, cijfers met elkaar verbinden
how difficult can that PRT be.INF numbers with each.other connect.INF
tot een tekening.[22]
to a drawing
'How difficult can that be, connecting numbers to make a drawing?'

As neither HPQs nor inverted exclamatives of the type illustrated in (25) are interpreted as assertions of the opposite polarity, there seems little motivation on interpretive grounds for categorising these together with core rhetorical question cases such as (27)–(31). Similarly, in the absence of any clear definition which identifies and characterises properties common to all of the many structurally and interpretively heterogeneous structures to which the term 'rhetorical question' has been applied (for various approaches, see e.g. Han 2002, Caponigro & Sprouse 2007, Sprouse 2007, Delfitto & Fiorin 2014, and references cited therein), extending the reach of this label to cover HPQs (and potentially other inverted exclamatives too) currently offers little by way of explanatory advantage.[23]

A starting point for a second – and in our view more convincing – approach to accounting for cases such as (24) and (25) is the fact that what these examples hold in common is that in both cases B wilfully misconstrues what A intends to be an inverted exclamative as a degree question. B's characterisation of their own manner of responding in (24) as *droogjes* 'dryly' is telling in this regard, and B's response in (25) comes across as equally flippant. We suggest that in (24) and (25), the interlocutor B is in effect providing an answer to the HDQs 'How long ago is that?' and 'How often have I watched him?' respectively, rather than an appropriate response to the HPQ 'How long ago is that!', in (24), and the inverted exclamative 'How often have I watched him!' in (25). Thus we can maintain the claim made in section 2.1 that HPQs, like exclamatives, do not introduce a question into the discourse and are thus incompatible with an answer that provides a new piece of information. Speakers can, however, knowingly play upon the surface similarities HPQs show to HDQs and choose to treat HPQs as HDQs, to

[22] https://twitter.com/jookjev/status/546651519287042048. Last accessed 12.07.2018.

[23] Delfitto & Fiorin (2014: 293, fn. 2) themselves "leave the distinction between exclamatives and rhetorical questions to the reader's intuition".

(intended) comic effect.[24]

Thus, whilst recognising the properties which (certain types) of rhetorical questions seem to share with (certain types of) exclamative structures (as identified by Delfitto & Fiorin 2014), pending a clear definition of the term 'rhetorical question' and a thorough exploration of the intersection of this category with that of (inverted) exclamatives, we continue to treat HPQs as a particular subtype of inverted exclamative, on the basis of their syntactic and interpretive similarities to canonical members of the category 'exclamative', illustrated and discussed in sections 2 and 3 above.

5 For future research

Many questions remain concerning the specifics of the structure of HPQs, in particular how to encode structurally not only the syntactic and semantic differences they show to the sometimes string-identical HDQs, but also the more subtle interpretive differences they show to canonical exclamatives, to other inverted exclamatives, and to certain types of rhetorical questions. As discussed in section 4, a starting point for this would be a detailed taxonomy of the various structures labelled as 'rhetorical questions' and 'inverted exclamatives' in the literature, with particular attention paid to any potential intersection between these two categories.[25]

It also remains to be determined what the precise function and interpretation of (*wel*) *niet* is in Dutch HPQs, in comparison to those Dutch HPQs in which expletive negation is not present. A broader question in relation to expletive negation concerns the range of structural environments in which this is licensed. It is currently unclear why expletive negation in Dutch is permitted in HPQs as well as other canonical exclamatives, while in English it is excluded from HPQs and the majority of other exclamative structures, but permitted in some other con-

[24] In the case of (24), this relies on the respondent overlooking the presence of *wel niet*, which, as discussed in section 3, disambiguates HPQs from HDQs. Even though the surface string of (25) is identical to that of the corresponding interrogative *How often have I watched him?*, the two structures are differentiated in speech by prosody, which the respondent must again disregard. In this respect, (25) is reminiscent of exchanges in which requests such as *Can you pass the salt?* are met with the response *Yes, I can.* rather than with the action required to fulfil the request. In such instances, the respondent similarly has to – wilfully or otherwise – ignore the difference in prosody between the request and the information-seeking question.

[25] The proliferation of labels is greater still, with Andueza & Gutiérrez-Rexach (2010) making use of the term 'rhetorical exclamatives' for the Spanish structures they discuss.

texts, including at least marginally in exclamatives such as (14) (repeated above as (25A)).[26]

At least in Dutch, it does seem to be the case that expletive negation in exclamatives is parasitic on the presence of one crucial ingredient, namely *wh*-movement to the clausal left periphery. In *wh*-exclamatives lacking *wh*-movement, expletive negation is totally unacceptable. One such type of exclamative is found in the native variety of Dutch of one of the authors of this squib, which is a variety of East Flemish from the region of Ghent. The relevant structure features an invariable (and typically phonologically reduced) *wh*-word *wa(t)* 'what, which is not located in the left periphery of the clause, but rather sits in the TP. Consider the examples in (32):

(32) a. Gent is **wa** de max![27]
Ghent is WHAT the max
'Ghent is SO cool!'

b. Oostende is **wa** de max![28]
Ostend is WHAT the max
'Ostend is SO cool!'

c. dat is **wa** schoon![29]
that is WHAT beautiful
'That's SO beautiful!'

d. Wajoooooo da is **wa** lang geleden![30]
EXCLAM that is WHAT long passed
'Woah, that's SUCH a long time ago!'

[26] The structure illustrated in (i) (see Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 845–846 is another context where expletive negation is possible in English. Both interpretations (a) and (b) are available for the string in (i): reading (a) results from interpreting *(did)n't* as having negative force, while reading (b) results when *(did)n't* is interpreted as expletive negation.

(i) I wouldn't be surprised if they didn't get the job.
a. I would not find it surprising if they did not get the job.
b. I would not find it surprising if they did get the job.

Crucially, although the negator *nie(t)* can be added to these structures, it always has to be interpreted as inducing canonical sentential negation:

(33) a. Gent is **wa** nie de max!
Ghent is WHAT not the max
'Ghent is SO not cool!'

b. Oostende is **wa** nie de max!
Ostend is WHAT not the max
'Ostend is SO not cool!'

c. dat is **wa** nie schoon!
that is WHAT not beautiful
'That's SO not beautiful!'

d. Wajoooooo da is **wa** nie lang geleden!
EXCLAM that is WHAT lnot ong passed
'Woah, that's SO not a long time ago!'

To conclude this section, while *wh*-movement may be a necessary condition for the licensing of expletive negation, the presence of *wh*-movement alone cannot be a sufficient condition for this, given that canonical interrogatives – both in Standard Dutch and in the colloquial variety from Ghent in which structures like (32) are productive – also involve *wh*-movement and yet fail to allow expletive negation, as example (23) above shows.

Providing an answer to the questions raised in this section goes well beyond the scope of our contribution here, which hopes to serve as the impetus for further research in these areas.

6 Conclusion

In the course of this paper, we have not only demonstrated that Dutch HPQs pattern alike with exclamatives rather than HDQs on the tests proposed by Nye

[27] https://twitter.com/genteswademax. Last accessed 09.07.2018.

[28] https://www.visitoostende.be/nl/oostende-wa-de-max. Last accessed 01.07.2018.

[29] https://www.facebook.com/JPBauwens/posts/1052229218190696?comment_id=1052428764837408&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D. Last accessed 01.07.2018.

[30] mc.sk5.dev.sk-gaming.com/member/579687-kersjeee/guestbook. Last accessed 01.07.2018.

(2009) for English but, more significantly, have shown that the Dutch data reveals an additional similarity between HPQs and exclamatives to the exclusion of HDQs, namely the ability for expletive negation to occur in the former two structures, but not the latter. This provides additional support for an analysis whereby HPQs differ structurally from HDQs, as opposed to the alternative in which the interpretation of a single interrogative structure is determined by pragmatic context. *Hoe cool is dat wel niet!*

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