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EXPLETIVE NEGATION IN ROMANIAN *WH* AND *IF* EXCLAMATIVES

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Abstract. Expletive negation (hereinafter, also EN) has not been, so far, thoroughly studied in Romanian linguistics – despite the fact that most modern grammars recognize it and (quite) effectively categorize its various contexts of manifestation. Beyond some very well grounded insights regarding the phenomenon, a rigorous interpretation of it, applying the most recent theories available in international literature, is lacking.

The purpose of this article is to provide a systematic analysis for Romanian EN occurrences, while also making correlations to other languages. Out of ten specific contexts for expletive negation inventoried by Yoon (2011: 120), only one is put under scrutiny here, namely exclamatives. The focus falls specifically on two types of clauses: *Wh* exclamatives, which are a widely recognized environment for EN, and clauses introduced by complementizer *If*. The latter is a context not taken into account in cross-linguistic studies, which might even be singular to Romanian.

In interpreting various EN occurrences in these two situations, Yoon's (2011) unified analysis model, based on very extensive research, is applied, while referencing two other interconnected perspectives: that of Portner, Zanuttini (1996, 2000) and that of Delfitto (2020), following Delfitto, Melloni, Vender (2019). Use is also made of valuable considerations included by Giurgea (2015) in a paper on Romanian exclamatives.

The common thread of the theories employed in this analysis is that they are all set up in the realm of implicatures, thus using a pragmatic lens in providing a proper interpretation of EN – while of course establishing connections to other language layers (such as syntax and semantics).

Keywords: negation, expletive negation, scalar negation, evaluative negation, exclamative clauses

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1. What is expletive negation?

It is obvious that, traditionally, the so-called expletive negation has a paradoxical air to it. This stems from the fact that, although a negative marker appears next to a verb and is seemingly (syntactically) connected to it – in the same way as a standard propositional negation would be –, the former does not actually negate the latter. As Ionescu (2004: 14) puts it, EN “is merely a grammatical way of marking a constituent, with no negative correspondence in the content of the marked constituent”. This puzzling discrepancy results in “a formally negative sentence with a positive meaning” (Barbu Mititelu, Maftai Ciolăneanu 2004: 42), which makes the negative marker seem “empty” or devoid of negative force (its apparent uselessness justifying the term *expletive*).

A more nuanced definition can be extracted from *The Oxford Handbook of Negation*, according to which EN appears “in main and embedded clauses without providing, according to the received wisdom, any truth-conditional contribution to interpretation”; it should be added that this special type of negation is usually, but not always, “linguistically indistinguishable from standard sentential negation” (Delfitto 2020: 255). Espinal (2000: 49), on the other hand, highlights that “[w]hat is characteristic of expletive negation is the fact that a negative item, which lexically contributes to negation, does not modify the truth value of the proposition in which it occurs”.

Perhaps the most widely referenced (and easily understandable) context of EN is that in which the expletive negative marker appears in a clause embedded under one of various *verba timendi* (or equivalent structures). This type of construction was attested even in Latin and is nowadays present not only in Romanian, but in other (Romance or non-Romance) languages as well.

- (1) Timeo *ne* veniat. [Latin]
 fear.1SG that-not come.SBJV.3SG
 “I am afraid he/she will come.”

- (2) Je crains qu’il *ne* vienne. [French]
 I fear.1SG that-he.NOM not come.SBJV.3SG
 “I am afraid he will come.”

- (3) Fobamai *mipos* kano lathos. [modern Greek]
 fear.1SG that-not make.1SG error
 "I am afraid of making a mistake."
- (4) Tenia por que *no* escollissin un nou director. [Catalan]
 have.1SG.IMPF fear that not choose.SBJV.3PL a new director
 "I was afraid that a new director would be elected."
(apud Yoon 2011: 22-23)
- (5) Mă tem să *nu* vină.
 CL.ACC.1SG fear.1SG SBJV not come.SBJV.3
 "I am afraid he/she/they will come."

The expletive nature of the negative marker in the above examples is made clear, even at a first glance, by the mere comparison of the sentences to their English translations, from which the negation is evidently absent². This indicates that what the speaker fears is the occurrence, not the non-occurrence of a specific event (*i.e.*, the coming of a certain person, the making of a mistake, the choosing of a new director).

The contexts in which EN can appear are, of course, more varied than the one illustrated above. To my knowledge so far, the most extensive and simultaneously in-depth study on this intriguing linguistic phenomenon is that of Yoon (2011), which has the additional merit of proposing a unified analysis model for a considerable variety of structures. Compiling data from approximately 15 (genealogically and typologically) different languages, the researcher identifies a number of ten specific environments for expletive negation (Yoon 2011: 120), one of which is represented by exclamative clauses. According to Yoon (2011), this EN context is common to Spanish, Catalan, Italian, Greek, Korean, Japanese, German, English, while Romanian is not included in her study. The present article aims to (at least partially) fill this gap – and I believe my endeavour to be all the more useful considering that Romanian data is markedly absent from other important studies on the topic as well.

² For the examples pertaining to *Wh* exclamatives, I shall endeavour to keep the negative marker in the translations, even if just in parentheses, so as to show that such constructions are at the very least conceivable, if not always acceptable, in English as well.

(*apud* Portner, Zanuttini 1996: 262)

(8) *No ga-lo* *magnà tuto!*
not have.3SG-CL.NOM.3SG eaten everything
‘He’s eaten (didn’t eat) everything!’
(apud Portner, Zanuttini 1996: 263)

(9) Vien-lo?
come.3SG-CL.NOM.3SG
“Is he coming?”

(10) Cossa ga-la magnà?
 what have.3SG-CL.NOM.3SG eaten
 ‘‘What did she eat?’’

(11) *No* (e)l vien? (**No* vien-lo?)
not CL.NOM.3SG come.3SG (*not come.3SG-CL.NOM.3SG)
“Is he not coming?”

(12) Cossa ze che *no* la ga magnà?
 what is that not CL.NOM.3SG have.3SG eaten
 (*Cossa *no* ga-la magnà?)
 (*what not have.3SG-CL.NOM.3SG eaten)
 “What didn’t she eat?”
 (*apud* Portner, Zanuttini 1996: 258-259)

The two researchers apply a scalar implicature interpretation to the clitic *no* in (6), (7), (8) – an approach derived from the pragmatic analysis of *even*. In an example such as (13), *even* indicates the existence of a set of alternatives to the element under focus (Rome). The alternatives are ordered in a scale according to how likely their occurrence is. It should be mentioned that the expectedness of the alternative actualised in (13) must be “necessarily quite low” in order to allow its focalisation by means of *even* (Portner, Zanuttini 1996: 265).

(13) Mary *even* applied for the job in Rome.

(*apud* Portner, Zanuttini 1996: 265)

In the case of exclamatives introduced by a *Wh* element, a similar scale may be detected. In (7), the set is made up by unexpected things he could have said, with the possibilities being arranged according to how unlikely their actualisation would be. The resulting scale could look something like this: {‘he committed a murder’ < ‘he is having trouble in his marriage’ < ‘he dislikes his neighbour’ < ‘it is a nice day outside’} (*apud* Portner, Zanuttini 1996: 266).

Due to the presence of negation, Portner, Zanuttini (2000: 224) point out, in a later article, that all the alternatives in the above scale are in fact negative, which means the complete form of any proposition serving as an alternative in such EN exclamatives would be structured in the same way as “[he didn’t tell him] he committed a murder”. Based on this, the implicature of (7) would be that “everything he didn’t tell him was very low on the expectation scale”, although “he did tell him some pretty unexpected things” (Portner, Zanuttini 2000: 224).

Regarding EN exclamatives without a *Wh* element, the authors note that the set of alternatives is actually reduced to two options, namely the positive and negative versions of the proposition. It so follows that the scale of possibilities for (8) will be: {‘he ate everything’ < ‘he didn’t eat everything’} (*apud* Portner, Zanuttini 1996: 268).

For an example such as (8), the implicature triggered by the EN is that the realisation of the positive alternative (someone’s having eaten everything) was unexpected for the speaker (Portner, Zanuttini 1996: 268).

2.2. *Evaluative negation*

In developing a unifying analysis model for EN, Yoon (2011: 29) herself makes use of Portner, Zanuttini's (1996, 2000) approach, according to which the meaning of exclamatives (and questions) naturally interacts with a scale of alternatives. In an example like (8), which she borrows from Portner, Zanuttini (1996: 263), the function of the expletive negative marker is to show that the alternative of someone's having eaten everything was outside the range of expectations for the speaker, so that its realisation "expresses [...] a strong surprise" (Yoon 2011: 29).

Noting that "[t]his unexpectedness sense is represented in terms of likelihood scale", Yoon (2011: 30) proceeds to show that, depending on the context of utterance, the meaning of some exclamatives may also be derived from their interaction with a scale of alternatives arranged according to their desirability. Thus, in the context of a large amount of food available, someone's eating all of it would be considered very surprising, so that the "EN conveys a likelihood scale"; "on the other hand, if the speaker utters the sentence in an annoyed tone of voice" – showing that he/she himself/herself would have liked to maybe eat something, but couldn't –, the presence of EN would signal the activation of a(n) (un)desirability scale (Yoon 2011: 36). The positive alternative in the binary (*yes* or *no*) set alluded to in (8) would be thus considered either very improbable or very undesirable.

Though Portner, Zanuttini (2000: 227) state that "perhaps a general notion of ordering is common to all cases of expletive negation", it is Yoon (2011) who actually extends (an upgraded version of) their analysis model to (virtually) all EN contexts. She manages to do so by simplifying a series of "semantic effects" specific to various usages of EN and reducing them to the two previously mentioned scales: (un)likelihood and (un)desirability (Yoon 2011: 93, 263).

Based on its capacity to convey meaning by interacting with a(n) (un)likelihood or (un)desirability scale, Yoon (2011: 16) draws the conclusion that EN actually serves an evaluative purpose; as such, she even proposes (and applies) a "terminological transition from the traditional expletive negation to *evaluative negation*" (emphasis mine) – the latter also coincidentally shortened to EN. Her insight is that whenever an expletive negation

occurs, it signals an evaluation (being) made either by an epistemic subject (one who has certain information and beliefs about the world), or by a bouletic one (an individual who has certain desires/preferences regarding the world). This evaluating subject – or “attitude holder” – may be the speaker itself or “the matrix subject when EN occurs in embedded clauses” (Yoon 2011: 29).

In her interpretation of EN, Yoon (2011: 129) also references an important pragmatic theory: she believes that the specific evaluative meaning of EN “must be understood as conventionalized implicature, *i.e.* an utterance modifier”, as described by Potts (2005, 2007, *apud* Yoon 2011).

To explain what conventional implicatures (CIs) are – a notion proposed, but not thoroughly theorized by Grice (1975, *apud* Potts 2003: 6) –, one should at least mention some “textbook examples” such as *but, therefore, even* (Potts 2003: 1), to which expressives like *damn* or *stupid* can be added (Potts 2003: 212-213), but also supplemental phrases like *unfortunately* or *luckily* (Potts 2003: 13). The CIs carried by such terms are contained in the basic (lexical) meaning of the words, do not affect the core message of a sentence (“what is said”, according to Grice), but “provide a clue as to how the information should be received” (Potts 2003: 4, 9).

Yoon (2011) also derives from this theory the idea of “semantic multidimensionality” (Potts 2003: ix), which allows her to reach the conclusion that EN produces its effects “on a separate dimension from the semantic core of utterance” (Yoon 2011: 264). Although it may seem a more or less useful theoretical observation, this idea is actually very important from a practical point of view. On the one hand, it explains the incongruity one immediately perceives when trying to grasp the function of EN. On the other hand, the fact that the standard negative marker and the expletive one actually operate at different semantic levels explains why the two cannot be involved in the so-called double (logical) negation, as has been observed (Yoon 2011: 9).

Following this interpretation, Yoon (2011: 262-264) reaches the goal(s) of her thesis by demonstrating that EN has a “uniform nature” and is not just “semantically meaningful”, but also “syntactically operative”; she notes that the “various subspecies of EN in language are indeed part of the grammar”, as “reflexes of grammaticalization of perspective and subjective mode”.

Furthermore, she posits that expletive negation “exhibits a striking parallel in interpretation as an ordering relation” (Yoon 2011: 264) – in other words, it helps with the division of modal space into possible worlds, depending on a set of beliefs or desires of the speaker (or attitude holder). More than that, she considers EN to be a “subjunctive mood marker”, with the caveat that she means the “broad conception” of “notional mood”, a category that is larger than and encompasses that of “traditional grammatical mood” (Yoon 2011: 257, 263).

It should be mentioned that Yoon (2011) is not the only one to attribute a modal value to expletive negation. Taine-Cheikh (2000) also includes some instances of it among a series of modal value usages of the Arab negative particle *lā*. Not only this, but the current “official” Romanian grammar intuitively makes this connection as well, by noting that EN in exclamatives may be interpreted as “a negation of modal attitude” (GALR II: 698), a fact which becomes obvious by performing a deconstruction of such (*Wh*) clauses:

- (14) *Câte nu mi-a spus!* [Nu pot
how-many not CL.DAT.1SG-have.3SG told [not can.1SG
să cred] *câte mi-a spus!*
SBJV believe.1SG] how-many CL.DAT.1SG-have.3SG told
“The things he/she told (didn’t tell) me! [I cannot believe] the things
he/she told me!”

- (15) *Ce n-a făcut!* [*Nu pot să cred*]
what not-have.3SG done [not can.1SG SBJV believe.1SG]
ce a făcut!
what have.3SG done
“The things he/she did (didn’t do)! [I cannot believe] what he/she did!”
(*apud* GALR II: 698)

2.3. Implicature negation

Another pragmatically inclined theory on EN is that included in the dedicated chapter of *The Oxford Handbook of Negation* (2020), after having

been presented in a previous article (Delfitto, Melloni, Vender 2019). According to this perspective, EN has the force of a real negation – the difference being that it “interacts with the layer of implicated meaning (as distinguished from the asserted meaning)” (Delfitto 2020: 268). To be more exact, “the basic insight to be developed is that EN occurs in a syntactic structure *S* in order to deny the conversational implicature normally associated to *S*” (Delfitto, Melloni, Vender 2019: 60). In his analysis of (*Wh*) exclamatives (one of the four contexts of EN to which he applies his theory), Delfitto (2020) also takes into account the scalar implicature model, but he has a different approach and arrives at a different conclusion than Portner, Zanuttini (1996, 2000).

He places under scrutiny a pair of quasi-equivalent sentences, quoted here as (16) and (17), which are very similar to the previously discussed example (7).

- (16) Che cosa *non* ha fatto Gianni!
 what thing.ACC not have.3SG done Gianni.NOM
 “The things Gianni did (didn’t do)!”

- (17) Che cosa ha fatto Gianni!
 what thing.ACC have.3SG done Gianni.NOM
 “The things Gianni did!”

(*apud* Delfitto 2020: 260-264)

As can be seen, both (16) and (17) are grammatically correct, the presence or absence of EN marking the difference between the two. According to Delfitto (2020: 264-265), in the positive version of the exclamative, the implicature is that Gianni did some surprising things, but he did not do all of them (the most unlikely alternatives would be eliminated by default). In this context, the role of EN is to deny this elimination implicature – or, in other words, to cancel the exclusion of the most unlikely possibilities. The resulting implicature of the exclamative with EN is that “Gianni virtually did *all* the amazing things one might conceive of” (Delfitto 2020: 265).

Delfitto (2020: 262) admits that his interpretation and the evaluative/expressive perspective (illustrated by Yoon) have a very important point in common: they both account for the possibility of expressing the undesirability

(besides the unlikelihood) of a matter. He argues, however, that the two perspectives are also substantially different, and that only his allows room for a real negative force of EN.

3. Types of Romanian exclamative clauses

A few key theoretical facts about exclamatives are also needed in order to properly understand expletive negation in these contexts. Although I have touched on this in presenting Portner, Zanuttini's (1996, 2000) theory on scalar negation, for a better overall perspective I shall now turn to a study on Romanian exclamatives, which makes important distinctions on the matter – and even provides us with useful considerations regarding correlated occurrences of EN.

Giurgea (2015: 3) argues for a narrow definition of exclamatives, which “as a special clause type must be distinguished from sentences characterized by a linguistic manifestation of the speaker's feelings (often consisting in a particular intonation, notated with the exclamation mark)”. He goes on to show that “this distinction is not made in traditional grammar” (including the GALR), which explains why an (apparently) exclamative sentence may simultaneously fit into the other well established clause types: declaratives, imperatives, interrogatives, and even optatives (Giurgea 2015: 3-5). Although he allows some room for this overlapping of functions by coining the phrases “exclamatives in a broad sense” or “impure exclamatives”, he stresses the fact that “exclamatives as a special clause type” cannot belong to either of the classes above (Giurgea 2015: 5).

In the literature on the topic, the latter category is usually distinguished from the former by two criteria: the first is presuppositionality, which means that “exclamations, unlike declaratives, presuppose that the proposition expressed is mutually known by speaker and hearer” (Michaelis 2001, *apud* Giurgea 2015: 6); the second is non-canonicity, which means that a certain state of things “is presented as exceptional, non-canonical”, and “the speaker usually expresses a positive or negative evaluation” of it (Giurgea 2015: 6).

Furthermore, Giurgea (2015: 5) shows that actual exclamatives “always bear a non-prosodic marking at the clause-level: introductory words,

word order (fronting of a constituent into the left periphery of the clause), verbal mood” – see *ce* in (18) and (19), the fronting of an adjective denoting a scalar property in (20), and the subjunctive mood in (21):

- (18) *Ce înalt e!*
 what high be.3SG
 “How high/tall he/she/it is!”

- (19) *Ce să-mi spună el!*
 what SBJV-CL.DAT.1SG tell.SBJV.3 he
 “The thing(s) he told me!”

- (20) *FRUMOASĂ rochie și-a cumpărat Ioana!*
 beautiful dress.ACC CL.DAT.3-have.3SG bought Ioana
 “What a beautiful dress Ioana bought!”

- (21) *Să uit eu cheile!*
 SBJV forget.1SG I.NOM keys.DEF.ACC
 “How could I forget the keys?!”

(*apud* Giurgea 2015: 11-18)

The author also distinguishes between scalar and non-scalar exclamative type clauses, although “a considerable number of studies claim that exclamatives always contain a scalar component” (Giurgea 2015: 11). In the former case, “the exclamative focus is on the degree of a scalar property” (Giurgea 2015: 10) – a quality, as in (18) and (20), or quantity, as will be shown in (29) below.

In the latter case, the meaning of the sentence is also derived based on a set of alternatives, but these are not degrees of a scalar property anymore, but either different values that may be attributed to the focalized constituent (in partial exclamatives), or the pair formed by the (presupposed) proposition and its negated counterpart (in total exclamatives) (Giurgea 2015: 25). In (19), the alternatives are the various things he might have said, while in (21), forgetting and not forgetting the keys are the only two options.

It should be noted, however, that the category of *Wh* exclamatives featuring an expletive negative marker is a bit broader than Avram (1986: 248), for example, specifically indicates. The *Wh* phrases introducing such clauses may be pronouns, pronominal adjectives (determiners), and adverbs such as *ce, cine, care, cât, câtă, câți, câte, unde, când, cum*. I provide some additional examples below, which illustrate that *care* “which” is not “a possible exception” regarding the exclamative use of *Wh* words (Giurgea 2015: 15), at least not in the presence of EN. As can be seen, the *Wh* phrase may also be preceded by a preposition in Romanian:

- (24) *La ce nu a recurs ca să-și*
 to what not have.3SG resorted that SBJV-CL.DAT.3
atingă scopurile!
 reach.SBJV.3 ends.DEF.ACC
 “What he/she did (didn’t do) to reach his/her ends!”
- (25) a. *Ce cadouri n-a primit Diana de la*
 what gifts.ACC not-have.3SG received Diana.NOM of to
prietenul ei!
 boyfriend.DEF.ACC she.GEN
 “What gifts Diana received (didn’t receive) from her boyfriend!”
- (26) *Cu cine nu s-a certat!*
 with whom not CL.ACC.3-have.3SG argued
 “Whom did he/she not have a fight with!”
- (27) *Care elev nu știe!*
 which student.NOM not know.3SG
 “Which student doesn’t know!”
- (28) *Pe care nu l-a chemat la petrecere!*
 DOM which not CL.ACC.3SG-have.3SG called to party.ACC
 “Which one didn’t he/she call to the party!”
- (29) *Cât nu mi-aș dori*
 how much not CL.DAT.1SG-would.1SG want
să fiu cu tine!
 SBJV be.SBJV.1SG with you.ACC.SG
 “How much I would (wouldn’t I) want to be with you!”
- (30) *Pe unde nu m-am dus în vacanță!*
 On where not CL.ACC.1SG-have.1 gone in vacation.ACC
 “The places I went (didn’t go) to on vacation!”
- (31) *Când nu a profitat de tine!*
 when not have.3SG profited of you.ACC.SG
 “When didn’t he/she take advantage of you!”

- (32) *Cum nu a încercat să rezolve problema!*
 how not have.3SG tried SBJV solve.SBJV.3 problem.DEF.ACC
 “How didn’t he/she try to solve the problem!”

Before looking into the semantic value of the EN in these contexts, we should note that the majority of the clauses above are, according to Giurgea’s view (2015), non-scalar. As partial exclamatives, they have an exclamative focus placed on a specific constituent rather than the whole sentence, this constituent being closely tied, explicitly or implicitly (see (27) versus (28) for comparison), to the *Wh* word. The (non-scalar) alternatives are, in these cases, the things a person did in order to reach their goals, the gifts Diana received, the people a person fought with, etc.

Giurgea (2015: 15) notes that the inclusion of the expletive negation into such *Wh* exclamatives “yields a big quantity interpretation”. This added meaning is not sufficient, however, to turn clauses like (24), (25)a, (26), (27), (28), (30), (31), or (32) scalar, since their basic underlying structure does not change – the focalised constituent does not itself assign a high degree of a property:

“This interpretation can be obtained on the basis of the literal meaning as follows: from the fact that the values of x for which the sentence is not true are surprising, it follows that for most values of x , the sentence is true, which implies that the number of x for which the sentence is true is exceptionally big. Thus, although the meaning seems scalar (big quantity), the structure is based on a non-scalar exclamative type (in which what differs between alternatives is the value of an individual-type variable).” (Giurgea 2015: 15)

The above list of examples does include an exception: (29) is the only scalar exclamative, introduced by *cât* – a quantitative pro-form according to Giurgea (2015: 14-15). The *Wh* word marks the assignment of a high degree of a scalar property, namely quantity. A question naturally arises in this situation: if the role of EN is to also signal “a big quantity interpretation” as Giurgea (2015: 15) says, should its occurrence be considered useless or redundant? I would argue that no, the expletive negative marker has its own (in context, emphatic) semantic value: what

it does is raise the degree of the property from a general, unspecified high level to an exceptionally high one.

It should be pointed out that quantity degree *Wh* clauses such as (29) are the only scalar exclamatives that can accept an EN in Romanian: environments like (33) and (34), for example, in which *ce* or *cât* indicate the high degree of a specific quality, cannot:

- (33) **Ce înalt nu e!*
 what high not be.3SG
 “How high/tall he/it is not!”

- (34) **Cât de înalt nu e!*
 How much of high not be.3SG
 “How high/tall he/it is not!”

Moving on to the analysis of EN in these types of clauses, I shall focus here on example (25)a. According to Portner, Zanuttini (1996, 2000), in order to derive the meaning of EN in this instance we must first look at the scale of alternatives, arranged according to their likelihood. Informed by the speaker’s expectations, such a scale would include the least likely alternatives and could look something like this: {‘a house in Monaco’ < ‘a Rolls Royce’ < ‘a pink diamond jewellery set’ < ‘an expensive painting’ < ‘a one month luxury trip to the Caribbean’}.

Based on such a scale, the implicature derived according to Portner, Zanuttini (1996, 2000) would be that Diana received many amazing gifts, with the exception of the most unlikely: that is, all the options included in the scale above – since, as we have previously seen, in the presence of EN, the focus shifts to a set of negative alternatives, as opposed to a set of positive ones (Portner, Zanuttini 2000: 224).

It is easy to see the connection between the set of alternatives that may be formulated according to Portner, Zanuttini (1996, 2000) and “the values the focalized constituent takes” that Giurgea (2015: 25) talks about: in fact, they are basically the same thing. The difference is that, while the idea of exclamatives’ interaction with different sets of possibilities remains the same, the latter author has a stricter conception of scalarity, which must

be connected not merely to sets of alternatives, but to scales of degrees of a certain property.

In Delfitto's (2020) interpretation, the role of EN is to deny the "default" implicature attached to a positive exclamative. For (25)b, which is the non-EN variant of (25)a, that implicature would be that Diana received some, but not all possible gifts. The role of EN is to cancel the exclusion of the least likely alternatives (eliminating the "not all" part), so the resulting implicature of (25)a would be that Diana actually received (virtually) all the gifts one could think of, even the most unexpected ones.

- (25) a. Ce cadouri *n-a* primit Diana de la
 what gifts.ACC not-have.3SG received Diana.NOM of to
 prietenul ei!
 boyfriend.DEF.ACC she.GEN
 "What gifts Diana received (didn't receive) from her boyfriend!"
- b. Ce cadouri a primit Diana de la
 what gifts.ACC have.3SG received Diana.NOM of to
 prietenul ei!
 boyfriend.DEF.ACC she.GEN
 "What gifts Diana received from her boyfriend!"

It may be observed that the overall meaning of a *Wh* exclamative including EN is slightly different here: in Delfitto's view (2020), none of the alternatives in the set are to be excluded, while Giurgea (2015) and Portner, Zanuttini (1996, 2000) admit there are options in the set, albeit very few, that are not assumed to be actualised in real life. What the EN does is to actually shift the focus on these very few exceptions, thus highlighting, by contrast, the exceptionally high number of positive alternatives.

In Yoon's (2011) view, the EN marks an evaluation regarding the kinds of gifts Diana has received. The speaker is the holder of an attitude, which may stem from an epistemic (referencing a likelihood scale) or a bouletic (referencing a desirability scale) point of view. I posit that the subject could actually be making a two-tier evaluation in such contexts: they could be surprised and, depending on their relationship with Diana, upset or jealous, but also happy on account of the presents she has received.

We can observe, therefore, the evaluation in terms of desirability may be either positive or negative, the tone of voice and other contextual cues providing the necessary input for a proper interpretation.

I would like to draw attention to an interesting fact (in my opinion), that is the difference between (23) and (30), though both exclamatives are introduced by the adverb *unde*. The fact that the *Wh* element is preceded by a discursive marker in one case, and by a preposition in the other makes no difference here, as both of these can be removed without affecting the overall meaning.

- (23) *Și unde nu-i trage una!*
 and where not-CL.DAT.3SG slap.3SG one
 “And, all of a sudden, (didn’t) he/she slapped (slap) him/her!”
 (*apud* Avram 1986: 248)

- (30) *Pe unde nu m-am dus în vacanță!*
 on where not CL.ACC.1SG-have.1 gone in vacation.ACC
 “The places I went (didn’t go) to on vacation!”

The difference between the two lies in the distinct semantic value of *unde*. In (30), the adverb has its standard locative meaning, whereas in the example provided by Avram (1986), it assumes a (not so frequent) temporal value, its specific meaning being *suddenly* (s.v. MDA2).

Given its punctual nature, the fact that it refers to a specific moment in time, the adverb warrants a different interpretation in the second type of construction. The main difference is that, while locative *unde* triggers a scale of multiple possibilities (different places a person went to on vacation), temporal *unde* interacts with a binary set of alternatives, composed of a negative and a positive: “he/she slapped him/her” versus “he/she didn’t slap him/her”.

Both (23) and (30) would be, in Giurgea’s view (2015), non-scalar, although of a different type: total as opposed to partial, respectively. Applying Portner, Zanuttini’s (1996, 2000) model, the implicature of (23) would be that the slapping is very unexpected – a fact which, according to Yoon (2011), marks an evaluation on the likelihood scale.

5. Romanian *If* exclamatives

(35)a illustrates another interesting environment for EN – this one has a debatable exclamative status, but is important due to its unusual nature, corroborated with its chances of being specific to Romanian. Giurgea (2015: 24) considers *If* clauses with EN to be “affective declaratives” or a “mixed type, intermediate between declaratives and exclamatives”, because while they have “a particular clause-level marking or clause shape correlated with an affective meaning”, they “do not seem to satisfy the presuppositionality criterion”. In other words, the content of the proposition is not (necessarily) previously known to the hearer, but it may represent new information.

- (35) a. *Dacă nu* m-a înnebunit!
 if not CL.ACC.1SG-have.3SG made crazy
 “(If) he/she drove (hasn’t driven) me crazy!”

Giurgea (2015: 24) notes that Romanian *dacă* “if”, “combined with expletive negation, heads clauses that make reference to a very big quantity and expresses discontent”, as in (36) and (37). He also mentions that the expression of a big quantity is obligatory, as shown by the contrast between (37) and (38), but this can be achieved in different ways, not solely by using a quantitative expression. While in (37) the author illustrates a case of repetition, in (35)a, my own example, I believe the “big quantity” semantics is carried by the verb *a înnebuni* “to drive crazy”, which has an accumulative meaning – thus achieving similar effects to a repetition.

- (36) *Dacă n-am* vorbit cu o mie de persoane!
 if not-have.1 spoken with a thousand.ACC of persons.ACC
 “I (must have) talked to a THOUSAND persons!”

- (37) *Dacă n-am* pierdut-o, și am recuperat-o,
 if not-have.1 lost-CL.ACC.3SG and have.1 recovered-CL.ACC.3SG
 și iar am pierdut-o și tot așa!
 and again have.1 lost-CL.ACC.3SG and on-and-on like-that
 “I lost it and got it back and lost it again and so on!”

- (38) **Dacă* *n-am pierdut-o* și *am recuperat-o!*
 if not-have.1 lost-CL.ACC.3SG and have.1 recovered-CL.ACC.3SG
 (apud Giurgea 2015: 24–25)

When it comes to understanding the role of the expletive negative marker in *If* clauses, we are presented with an interesting conundrum. On the one hand, as in the case of temporal *unde*, *dacă* introduces two possible options (a binary set of alternatives, in other words) and has a similar function to the homonymous complementizer used to convert *yes/no* questions into indirect speech. The two alternatives triggered by the very semantics of *dacă* in (35)a – a total exclamative – will be “he/she drove me crazy” versus “he/she didn’t drive me crazy”.

On the other hand, Giurgea (2015: 25) considers these types of clauses to be scalar exclamatives, “as the big quantity is what motivates the evaluation”. This would mean that in the case of *If* EN clauses, there is another, in his opinion (actually) scalar, set of alternatives at work, represented by the various degrees of the property obligatorily expressed, that is (big) quantity. But the question is: with which set of alternatives does the EN interact with?

Following the spirit, if not the letter of Portner, Zanuttini’s (1996, 2000) approach, I would opt for the binary set of alternatives triggered by *dacă*, thus considering *If* clauses to be non-scalar exclamatives (a fact supported by their similarity to indirect questions). The role of EN here would be to signal strong surprise due to the occurrence of something unexpected (someone driving one crazy about something). Following Giurgea’s (2015) way of thinking, the expletive negative marker would again have a strengthening “big quantity” reading, showing that the scalar property degree assigned by the quantitative expression (necessarily contained by such clauses) is exceptionally high (at least from the speaker’s perspective).

Making use of Yoon’s (2011) model, I would argue that, unlike the conclusion derived from Portner, Zanuttini (1996, 2000), the evaluation made by the speaker on the (un)desirability scale comes to the forefront, leaving the unlikelihood evaluation as secondary. Such an interpretation takes into account, of course, the generally negatively perceived meaning of the verb *a înnebuni* (and perhaps various contextual cues). This

foregrounding of the desirability scale is actually highlighted by Giurgea (2015: 24) as well, when he mentions that clauses like (36) and (37) “express discontent”.

However, I would like to point out that this is not always the case. In a different environment, such as (39)a and (40), we notice that the evaluation on the desirability scale may be flipped, suggesting a positive perception on the part of the speaker. By contrasting (40) to (41), we can see how easy the switch is between positive and negative (bouletic) evaluations in *If* EN clauses.

- (39) a. *Dacă nu* m-a dus prin toate
 if not CL.ACC.1SG-have.3SG taken through all
 colțurile lumii!
 corners.DEF.ACC world.DEF.GEN
 “(If) he/she took (didn’t take) me all over the world!”

- (40) *Dacă nu* m-a plimbat pe la toate
 if not CL.ACC.1SG-have.3SG taken on to all
 restaurantele din nordul Bucureștiului!
 restaurants.DEF.ACC from north.DEF.ACC Bucharest.DEF.GEN
 “(If) he/she took (didn’t take) me to all the restaurants in the north
 of Bucharest!”

- (41) *Dacă nu* m-a târât pe la toate
 If not CL.ACC.1SG-have.3SG dragged on to all
 bodegile de cartier!
 joints.DEF.ACC of neighbourhood.ACC
 “(If) he/she dragged (didn’t drag) me to all the neighbourhood joints!”

6. Further considerations

It should be noted that Romanian grammatical literature provides us with another useful criterion for the classification of various EN contexts. That is the omissibility or removability of the expletive negative marker (see Barbu Mititelu, Maftai Ciolăneanu 2004: 42-43; GR: 566-567). Although Barbu

Mititelu and Maftai Ciolăneanu (2004) do not specify whether they mean “removable” from a semantic or syntactic point of view, in the context of this paper, which proves that EN clearly adds *something* to the overall meaning of a sentence, I shall assume the latter.

Barbu Mititelu and Maftai Ciolăneanu (2004: 43) consider the EN to be non-omissible in *Wh* exclamatives introduced by *ce, cât, unde*. This is, in my opinion, actually not true, as can be proven by the formulation of two quasi-equivalent sentences like (16) and (17), one with and the other without EN. This possibility holds for Romanian as well, where both (25)a and (25)b, its non-EN counterpart, are in fact grammatically correct.

- (16) Che cosa *non* ha fatto Gianni!
 what thing.ACC not have.3SG done Gianni.NOM
 “The things Gianni did (didn’t do)!”

- (17) Che cosa ha fatto Gianni!
 what thing.ACC have.3SG done Gianni.NOM
 “The things Gianni did!”

(*apud* Delfitto 2020: 260-264)

- (25) a. Ce cadouri *n-a* primit Diana de la
 what gifts.ACC not-have.3SG received Diana.NOM of to
 prietenul ei!
 boyfriend.DEF.ACC she.GEN
 “What gifts Diana received (didn’t receive) from her boyfriend!”
- b. Ce cadouri a primit Diana de la
 what gifts.ACC have.3SG received Diana.NOM of to
 prietenul ei!
 boyfriend.DEF.ACC she.GEN
 “What gifts Diana received from her boyfriend!”

When performing the omission of the expletive negation from examples like (35)a and (39)a, it may be noticed that the sentence cannot stand unless *dacă* is removed as well, as the ungrammaticality of (35)b and (39)b proves. Since in *dacă* lies the distinctive characteristic of this type of clause, I shall

consider the NE to be non-removable in this environment, even though taking out the complementizer as well would leave behind grammatical sentences, namely “impure exclamatives” (Giurgea 2015: 5) – which are, essentially, declaratives, such as (35)c and (39)c.

(35) b. *Dacă m-a înnebunit!
if CL.ACC.1SG-have.3SG made crazy

(39) b. *Dacă m-a dus prin toate
if CL.ACC.1SG-have.3SG taken through all
colțurile lumii!
corners.DEF.ACC world.DEF.GEN

(35) c. M-a înnebunit!
CL.ACC.1SG-have.3SG made crazy
“He/she drove me crazy!”

(39) c. M-a dus prin toate
CL.ACC.1SG-have.3SG taken through all
colțurile lumii!
corners.DEF.ACC world.DEF.GEN
“He/she took me all over the world!”

7. Conclusions

The present paper provides a very necessary review of noteworthy recent theories regarding expletive negation, based on which it demonstrates how this linguistic phenomenon may be systematically analysed. My focus here is on (two types of) exclamative clauses, which constitute one out of ten (major) environments for EN to occur, cross-linguistically, according to Yoon (2011).

The (connected) pragmatically inclined approaches I employ are illustrated with facts from Romanian, a Romance language that has barely been mentioned in EN studies. I believe this choice of linguistic material is very useful to the international literature on the topic, since it broadens its overall

perspective. The analysis of *Wh* exclamatives aligns with studies conducted on languages other than Romanian, while the discussion of *If* clauses provides significant new insights into the phenomenon of expletive negation.

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