The partitive prefix in Kanien'kéha: Support for a degree analysis of exclamativity*

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1. Introduction

This paper investigates the syntax and semantics of exclamatives in Kanien'kéha (or Mohawk), with implications for our understanding of exclamativity across languages.

EXCLAMATIONS are speech acts performed by the speaker to express affect towards the content of the utterance, whether it be their primary purpose or not. Examples of exclamations in English are given in (1) where the exclamation point at the end of each sentence indicates exclamatory prosody, typically associated with the affect of surprise.[1]

(1) a. You have big eyes!
b. What big eyes you have!
c. Boy do you have big eyes!

A subset of exclamations, called EXCLAMATIVES, express affect not only through the manner in which they're performed, but also their syntax. By nature of their syntactic forms, exclamatives, like the utterances in (1b) and (1c), can *only* be used exclamatively to exclaim; they are infelicitous in a non-exclamatory context. Contrast this with the utterance in (1a), whose form can also be used declaratively to assert. Additionally, exclamatives do not just exclaim about anything; their unique syntactic forms give rise to a unique exclamative semantics, exclaiming specifically about an extreme degree.

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[1]Though exclamations and exclamatives were traditionally defined specifically as utterances of surprise, recent work has shown that a number of different emotions can also be expressed (see, e.g., Badan and Cheng 2015, Trotzke and Giannakidou 2024). For simplicity's sake, the examples in this paper all involve surprise but there is future work to be done in documenting other flavors of exclamativity in Kanien'kéha.

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The particular forms and function of exclamatives have inspired a considerable amount of theoretical research focusing on identifying the underlying source of exclamativity. However, wide variation in the surface forms of exclamatives cross-linguistically has made it challenging for analyses to point in one clear direction. Instead, a number of competing accounts have been proposed, based on different empirical touch points, each with its own implications for the mechanics of exclamativity cross-linguistically. The two most prominent accounts are the QUESTION ANALYSIS, which argues that exclamatives are derived from questions, and the DEGREE ANALYSIS, which argues that exclamatives are derived from degree constructions.

Drawing on the prevalence of interrogative morphosyntax in exclamatives, the QUESTION ANALYSIS, commonly represented by Zanuttini and Portner 2003, proposes that exclamatives are a special type of questions that we already know the answer to. Syntactically, exclamatives are said to include both a question operator and a factive morpheme. Like a standard question, the operator takes in a proposition and returns a set of propositions, or possible answers. However, unlike a standard question, the proposition of an exclamative is factive, or presupposed to be true. Because it is essentially uninformative to interrogate a proposition that is already considered true, this configuration of elements instead expands the domain of the set of possible answers to include an exceptional alternative, resulting in the expression of a strong emotion about the new alternative.

The DEGREE approach, commonly represented by Rett 2011, proposes that exclamatives are degree constructions that we exclaim. Under this approach, the morphosyntax of exclamatives is equated with amount free relatives instead of questions. Exclamatives are said to be relative clauses that denote degree properties. When such clauses combine with an exclamatory force operator, the result is an exclamation about a degree.

This paper brings new data from Kanien'kéha (Iroquoian) to bear on the outstanding debate between these two schools of thought. Notably, unlike exclamatives in most previously documented languages, exclamatives in Kanien'kéha lack explicit morphology related to questions or degrees, making it hard to readily take up a question or degree analysis. Instead, Kanien'kéha exclamatives are marked by the addition of the so-called 'partitive pre-pronominal prefix' *n*(*i*)-, as illustrated in (2).[2]

(2) a. Te-hs-kahr-owá:n-en-'s.
DUP-2SGA-eye-be.big-STAT-DISTRIB
'You have big eyes.' (Declarative)

b. **N**-a'te-hs-kahr-owá:n-en-'s!
PART-DUP-2SGA-eye-be.big-STAT-DISTRIB
'What big eyes you have!' (Exclamative)

[2]Abbreviations follow Leipzig glossing conventions with the following additions from Iroquoianist literature: C = complementizer; CONTR = contrastive; DISTRIB = distributive; DUP = duplicative; FACT = factual; HAB = habitual; JR = joiner vowel; NE = ne particle which typically appears with postverbal nouns; NEG = negation; OPT = optative; PART = partitive; PUNC = punctual; Q = question particle; and STAT = stative. Agreement prefixes belong to one of three categories: agentive/subjective (A); patientive/objective (P) or transitive (X>Y) where X is the agent and Y is the patient. They also express gender, including masculine (M), feminine-zooic (F.Z), feminine-indefinite (F.I), and neuter (N).

The presence of this idiosyncratic morpheme in exclamatives raises a number of questions. First, what is the partitive? The prefix only appears in Iroquoian languages where it receives a wide range of varying descriptions.[3] Second, what does the presence of the partitive in exclamatives tell us about exclamativity in general?

Drawing on novel data from fieldwork, I ultimately argue that the presence of the partitive in Kanien'kéha exclamatives is overt empirical evidence in support of the degree analysis of exclamativity. To support this, I show first that Kanien'kéha exclamatives, marked minimally by the partitive, exhibit canonical exclamative semantics, drawing a clear line between the presence of the partitive and exclamativity. I then examine the distribution of the partitive outside of exclamatives, testing predictions made by past exclamative analyses. Crucially, I demonstrate that the partitive appears systematically in degree constructions but not in questions. This distribution is exactly what we predict if exclamativity, and by extension the partitive, are associated with the semantics of degrees, not questions. Finally, based on these findings, I present a formal analysis of the partitive, proposing that it is an overt degree abstraction operator, explaining its appearance in degree constructions. By extension, I argue that partitive-marked exclamative forms are degree relative clauses, exactly as proposed by the degree analysis of exclamativity. In this way, the Kanien'kéha facts provide the strongest, and most morphologically transparent, evidence yet that a degree account is on the right track.

2. Empirical data: exclamatives in Kanien'kéha

This section provides relevant background on the Kanien'kéha language before documenting exclamative clauses in the language. Morphologically, Kanien'kéha exclamatives are composed minimally of a verbal complex prefixed by the partitive. Semantically, this form satisfies commonly accepted cross-linguistic diagnostics for exclamative force. These facts show that the partitive uniquely triggers exclamativity in the language.

2.1 Language background

Kanien'kéha is spoken by around 600 people in Quebec, Ontario and New York state (DeCaire 2023). The vast majority of speakers are Elders who learned Kanien'kéha as their first language but there is also a growing number of fluent second-language speakers (Stacey 2016). All unattributed examples in this paper come from fieldwork conducted by the author in collaboration with three native speakers of Kanien'kéha and one advanced second-language speaker. This research adopts standard theoretically driven fieldwork methodology (see, e.g., Matthewson 2004, Bowern 2008, and Bochnak and Matthewson 2020).

Like other Iroquoian languages, Kanien'kéha is polysynthetic, making use of a host of derivational and inflectional morphology, particularly in verbs. A standard verb form is presented in (3). Minimally, the verb includes a pronominal prefix expressing agreement, a

[3]The term "partitive" originates from the Iroquoianist linguistic tradition but, interestingly, the prefix is not actually related to the concept of partitivity as it is more widely understood, referring to phrases like "two of the sandwiches". In fact, partitivity doesn't seem to be encoded in the Kanien'kéha grammar; the same form is used for both "two sandwiches" and "two of the sandwiches".

verb stem, and an aspectual suffix. This is also the minimal form of a declarative sentence, as shown in (4).

(3) Kanien'kéha verb form
PRONOMINAL PREFIX – [VERB STEM] – ASPECT

(4) a. K-atá:wen-s.
1SGA-swim-HAB
'I swim.'

b. Ro-ienthókw-en.
MSGP-harvest-STAT
'He has harvested.'

Sometimes, verbs also include one or more pre-pronominal prefixes which contribute a wide array of information ranging from modality and negation to directionality and repetition (Mithun 2017). Most verbs also appear with free-standing, uninflected words called "particles" in the Iroquoianist tradition which play many roles, acting as adverbs, determiners, complementizers, discourse particles and more (Michelson 2023). An example of a more complex sentence is given in (5).

(5) Iah th-a-r-atá:wen-' ne Kó:r.
no CONTR-OPT-MSGA-swim-PUNC NE Paul
'Paul will not swim.'

2.2 The form of exclamatives in Kanien'kéha

Minimally, exclamatives in Kanien'kéha are formed by adding the partitive pre-pronominal prefix *ni-* to a standard declarative form. This is exemplified by the minimal pair in (6). Without a partitive prefix, the sentence in (6a) is translated as a declarative clause asserting that a certain blouse is beautiful. When the partitive is added, however, the resulting sentence in (6b) is translated in line with an English exclamative, exclaiming the very high degree to which the blouse is beautiful.

(6) a. Ió-hskats kí:ken oneró:kwa.
N.P-be.beautiful this blouse
'This blouse is beautiful.' (Declarative)

b. **Ni**-ió-hskats kí:ken oneró:kwa!
PART-N.P-be.beautiful this blouse
'How beautiful this blouse is!' (Exclamative)

In addition to this simple form, exclamative constructions also often include other elements, such as emphatic words—akin to English interjections or expletives—and the complementizer *tsi*. However, these elements are always optional (7) and can also appear in declarative

constructions (8). As such, I take just the partitive and verb construction to be the true exclamative form (though see section 4.3 for a proposal of how these optional elements fit into the exclamative picture).

(7) (Á:ke / oh / nió / ótkon) (tsi) **ni**-ió-hskats kí:ken!
geez / oh / wow / damn C **PART**-N.P-be.beautiful this
'(Wow,) how beautiful this is!' (Exclamative)

(8) (Á:ke / oh / nió / ótkon tsi) ió-hskats kí:ken!
geez / oh / wow / damn C N.P-be.beautiful this
'(Wow,) this is beautiful!' (Declarative)

2.3 The force of exclamatives in Kanien'kéha

Kanien'kéha partitive-marked verbs exhibit the same unique set of semantic properties attributed to exclamative clauses in other languages, showing that the presence of the partitive gives rise to true exclamative force. Specifically, they possess (i) obligatory degree readings, and (ii) obligatory evaluativity (see, e.g., Michaelis and Lambrecht 1996, Zanuttini and Portner 2003, Brandner 2010, and Rett 2006, 2008a,b, 2011, among others).[4]

2.3.1 Obligatory degree reading

Unlike declarative clauses, exclamatives must express a degree reading. As noted by Rett (2008a), exclamatives express surprise that a set of *degrees* has a particular degree property, but not that a set of *individuals* has a particular individual property. This restriction is illustrated in English in (9) where a context which supports an individual reading is given. Within this scenario, it is felicitous to exclaim that Mimi speaks two unexpected languages (the individual reading) (9a) but not that the degree of some property of the languages is unexpected (the degree reading) (9b).

(9) Context: You know that Mimi speaks two Romance languages in addition to English. Because her mother is Swiss, you assume the two languages are French and Italian. But you discover she actually speaks Portuguese and Romanian. (adapted from Rett 2008a)

a. (Wow,) Mimi speaks Portuguese and Romanian! (Individual)
b. #(My), What languages Mimi speaks! (Degree)

[4] Another commonly proposed property of exclamatives is factivity (Elliott 1974, Grimshaw 1979, Zanuttini and Portner 2003). While Kanien'kéha exclamatives do indeed satisfy widely used tests for factivity, I have chosen not to show these data because (i) space is limited, and (ii) there is some disagreement over the applicability of factivity tests to exclamatives, particularly those that use embedding strategies. The two properties explored here are more universally accepted and more relevant to the semantic discussion that follows.

The same test can be applied to Kanien'kéha, showing that Kanien'kéha exclamatives also obligatorily express a degree reading. When the context supports an individual reading, as in (10), the partitive-marked exclamative form is infelicitous.

(10) Context: You go to a buffet with your vegetarian friend Paul and others. Paul never eats meat but today he has one piece of steak.

a. Ra-'wà:r-a-ks!
MSGA-meat-JR-eat-HAB
'He's eating meat!' (Individual)

b. #**Ni**-ha-'wà:r-a-k-s!
PART-MSGA-meat-JR-eat-HAB
'Boy is he eating meat!' (Degree)

2.3.2 Obligatory evaluativity

For an exclamative to be expressively correct, some aspect of the utterance must exceed a contextual standard based on the evaluation of the speaker.[5] This can be tested by altering the utterance context in relation to the speaker's expectations, as in (11). Given a context in which the speaker's expectations are surpassed (11a), an exclamative is acceptable; given a context in which expectations are met or fall short (11b), the exclamative is no longer felicitous.

(11) **Ni**-ka-nonhs-owá:n-en!
PART-N.A-house-be.big-STAT
'What a big house!'

a. ✓ After only living in *one-story* houses, you visit a two-story house.
b. ✗ After only living in *three-story* houses, you visit a two-story house.

Zanuttini and Portner (2003) propose another test for evaluativity based on the assumption that the interpretation of exclamatives is the result of a conventional scalar implicature. They argue that the implicature introduced in exclamatives is conventional because it arises from the grammatical structure of the utterance and not its truth-conditional meaning. Furthermore, the implicature is scalar because it implicates that the proposition denoted by the exclamative lies at the extreme end of a contextually given scale. Being conventional, this implicature should be both nondefeasible and detachable. To diagnose this, we can try to modify or cancel the scalar implicature being triggered. Attempting to modify the implicature of a Kanien'kéha exclamative, as in (12), is nonsensical, in line with the scalar implicature intuition.

[5]This is what gives rise to the common surprise reading of exclamatives although surprise is not always required (see, e.g., Badan and Cheng 2015).

(12) **Ni**-ha-hnén:ies ne Max – #nek tsi iah só:tsi te-ha-hnén:ies.
PART-MSGA-be.tall NE Max but C NEG too NEG-MSGA-be.tall
'How tall Max is! – but he's not too tall.'

3. Assessing analyses: the partitive in question vs. degree constructions

Having established that exclamatives in Kanien'kéha are distinguished uniquely by the presence of the partitive prefix, this section investigates the partitive's elsewhere distribution using past analyses of exclamatives as a framework. Both analyses make clear predictions: if exclamatives are questions, the partitive should appear in other constructions with question (or, more generally, alternative) semantics; If exclamatives are degree constructions, the partitive should appear in other constructions with degree semantics. I show that only the predictions of a degree analysis are true, paving the way for a degree account of exclamativity in Kanien'kéha.

3.1 The partitive under a question account

Under a question analysis of exclamatives, we would expect the partitive to appear elsewhere in constructions that give rise to alternatives, such as *wh*-questions (Zanuttini and Portner 2003), polar questions (Taniguchi 2018), and focus constructions (Lipták 2005, Badan and Cheng 2015). While the partitive does appear in a subset of *wh*-questions, it is not found anywhere else across this category, casting doubt on the applicability of a question analysis for Kanien'kéha exclamatives.

In *wh*-questions, the partitive shows up with certain *wh*-words like *how* and *which*, as seen in (13) but not others like *who* or *when*, as seen in (14).

(13) *Wh-questions with partitive*

a. Tó: **ni**-ha-hnen:ies?
how **PART**-MSGA-be.tall?
'How tall is he?'

b. Oh **ni**-wa-hsohk-ò:ten?
which PART-N.A-color-be.a.kind?
'Which color is it?'

(14) *Wh-questions without partitive*

a. Ónhka ra-atáwen-s?
who MSGA-swim-HAB
'Who is swimming?'

b. Kátke sa-nakerá:ton?
when 2SGA-be.born
'When were you born?'

When the partitive does show up in *wh*-questions, an accompanying *wh*-word is always obligatory, as shown in (15). As such, the unifying element of *wh*-question syntax in Kanien'kéha is not the presence of the partitive, but the presence of a *wh*-word.

(15) a. *(**Tó:**) **ni**-ha-hnen:ies?
how **PART**-MSGA-be.tall
'How tall is he?'

b. *(**Oh**) **ni**-wa-hsohk-ò:ten?
which **PART**-N.A-color-be.a.kind
'What color is it?'

The partitive is never required in polar questions, as illustrated in (16). These questions are distinguished by the presence of a second-position question particle *ken*.

(16) *Polar questions*

a. Ra-hnén:ies ken?
MSGA-be.tall Q
'Is he tall?'

b. Kó:r ken ra-tá:wen-s?
Paul Q MSGA-swim-HAB
'Does Paul swim?'

Certain question accounts further extend the analysis beyond question semantics to alternative semantics in general. Such work argues that exclamatives can also be derived by focus constructions which give rise to domain widening of focus alternatives. However, like with the traditional questions shown above, the partitive is not a critical element of focus constructions in Kanien'kéha either, militating further against a question approach.

In Kanien'kéha, focus is marked by word order with a pre-verbal focus position (Flaim 2025). This can be seen in question/answer pairs like (17) where the DP answer to a *wh*-question must obligatorily appear in the pre-verbal focus position. In the following example, the answer to "who" must appear before the verb, as shown in (17a), and is infelicitous in any other position, as shown in (17b). Focus-marking is indicated via capitalization.

(17) Óhnka ra-hnén:ies?
who MSGA-be.tall
'WHO is tall?'

a. **Kó:r** ra-hnén:ies.
Paul MSGA-be.tall
'PAUL is tall.'

b. #Ra-hnén:ies ne **Kó:r**.
MSGA-be.tall NE Paul
'Paul is tall.'

If the partitive were related to focus in some way, we might expect it to appear in either of the focus constructions above but it does not. Additionally, it is not even the case that the partitive-marked verb in exclamatives must occupy a focus position. As demonstrated in (18), the partitive-marked word *can* appear in the pre-verbal focus position (18a), but any other word also can (18b), making it hard to accept the partitive as a fundamental component of focus constructions.

(18) a. **Ni**-ha-hnén:ies ne Kó:r!
PART-MSGA-be.tall NE Paul
'How tall Paul is!'

b. Kó:r **ni**-ha-hnén:ies!
Paul **PART**-MSGA-be.tall
'How tall PAUL is!'

3.2 The partitive under a degree account

Under a degree analysis of exclamatives, we would expect the partitive to appear elsewhere in degree constructions, such as measure phrases, degree questions, comparative standards, and amount free relatives (Beck et al. 2009, Bochnak et al. 2020). This is exactly what we find in Kanien'kéha; the partitive is a required element of every one of these constructions, lending support for a degree-based analysis of the prefix and, by extension, exclamatives.

The partitive is obligatory in measure phrases and degree questions, as illustrated in (19) and (20), respectively.

(19) *Measure phrases*

a. Ià:ia'k **ni**-ka-nónhs-a-ke.
six **PART**-N.A-house-JR-number
'There are six houses (the houses number six).'

b. Ken' **ni**-ha-hnén:ies ne Kó:r.
this **PART**-MSGA-be.tall NE Paul
'Paul is this tall.'

(20) *Degree questions*

a. Tó: **ni**-ha-hnén:ies ne Kó:r?
how **PART**-MSGA-be.tall NE Paul
'How tall is Paul?'

b. Tó: **ni**-ka-nó:ron?
how **PART**-N.A-be.expensive
'How much does it cost?'

The partitive is also required in the standard clause of comparative constructions, as shown in (21). This is the case for both traditional comparatives comparing individuals (21a) as well as (sub)comparatives comparing clauses (21b).

(21) *Comparative standards*

Kó:r sénha ra-hnén:ies…
Paul more MSGA-be.tall

'Paul is taller…'

a. tsi **ní**:-io-ht ne Shawátis.
C **PART**-N.P-be.a.way NE John
'than John.' (Individual)

b. tsi **ní**:-io-ht tsi ka-nákt-es.
C **PART**-N.P-be.a.way C N.A-bed-be.long
'than the bed is long.' (Clausal)

Finally, the partitive is always present in clauses with amount free relative interpretations, as shown in (22) where these clauses are marked in square brackets. This is true for clauses headed by a complementizer (22a) as well as those headed by a *wh*-word (22b).

(22) *Amount free relatives*

a. Wak-aterièn:tare-' [tsi **ni**-ha-hnén:ies ne Kó:r].
1SGP-know-STAT C **PART**-MSGA-be.tall NE Paul
'I know [how tall Paul is].'

b. Wak-aterièn:tare-' [tó: **ni**-ka-nákt-es].
1SGP-know-STAT how **PART**-N.A-bed-be.long
'I know [how long the bed is].'

4. Proposal: exclamativity via degree abstraction

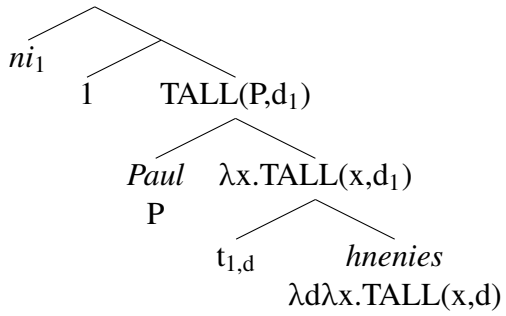
Based on the distribution of the partitive prefix outside of exclamatives, I propose that the morpheme is an overt degree abstraction operator and, by consequence, partitive clauses are necessarily degree constructions. This proposal accounts for both the partitive's presence in common degree constructions as well as its presence in exclamatives, assuming a degree analysis of exclamativity.

4.1 The partitive is an overt degree operator

In the spirit of past analyses of *covert* degree relative operators (see Chomsky 1977 and Heim 2001 on comparative standards and Cable 2018 on Tlingit adjectival predicates), I propose that the partitive morpheme (PART) is an *overt* degree abstraction operator which

binds the degree argument of a gradable predicate and undergoes operator movement to derive a clause which denotes a set of degrees. Semantically, I take PART to denote an identity function on gradable predicates. Syntactically, I take PART to originate within the maximal project of the gradable predicate, saturating its degree argument and then moving to the left-edge of CP, resulting in a degree-denoting clause akin to an amount relative clause. This proposal is laid out in (23).

(23) a. Semantics of PART: $[\![\text{PART}]\!] = \lambda P_{\langle d,t\rangle}\text{: P}$
b. Syntax of PART: $[_{\text{CP}}\ \text{PART}_1\ [_{\text{CP}}\ 1\ [_{\text{CP}}\ \text{Kó:r is d}_1\text{-tall}]]]$
c.



Given the semantic entry above and an assumed semantics of gradable predicates as relations between individuals and degrees (Cresswell 1976, Kennedy and McNally 2005, and many others), the structure in (23c) will have the truth conditions in (24). The partitive clause denotes a degree property corresponding to the relevant gradable predicate. Thus, with the predicate TALL, the partitive form denotes the set of degrees to which Paul is tall.

(24) $\lambda d_1.\text{TALL}(P,d_1)$

4.2 Deriving degree constructions with the partitive

Taking the partitive to be a degree operator naturally explains its presence in the degree constructions presented in section 3.2. In each construction, the partitive operator abstracts over a degree variable to create a clause denoting a degree property. This clause is then used to derive a range of degree constructions. In the case of measure phrases and degree questions, the clause combines with an overt degree argument or a degree *wh*-word, respectively, as illustrated in (25) and (26).

(25) *Deriving measure phrases*
$[_{\text{DEGP}}\ \text{this}\ [_{\text{CP}}\ \text{PART}_1\ [_{\text{CP}}\ 1\ [_{\text{CP}}\ \text{Paul is d}_1\text{-tall}]]]]$
$\rightsquigarrow \text{TALL}(P,d_{\text{this}})$

(26) *Deriving degree questions*
$[_{\text{DEGP}}\ \text{how}\ [_{\text{CP}}\ \text{PART}_1\ [_{\text{CP}}\ 1\ [_{\text{CP}}\ \text{Paul is d}_1\text{-tall}]]]]$
$\rightsquigarrow \lambda p.\ \exists d_1\ [\ p = \text{TALL}(P,d_1)\ ]$

Though not shown here due to space constraints, the clause can also be selected by a comparative operator to act as a comparative standard or embedded by a complementizer to form an amount free relative. Thus, the partitive functions as an overt marker of degree abstraction which shows up across contexts in which we'd expect such an operation to take place.

4.3 Deriving exclamatives with the partitive

The same derivation explains the form of exclamatives in Kanien'kéha while shedding light on the nature of exclamativity more broadly. Exclamatives consist solely of a partitive clause, without other obligatory morphology. As a result, I take them to be degree-denoting clauses resulting from abstraction of the partitive operator, like the clause shown in (23b).

Though this derivation gets at the degree reading of exclamatives, it doesn't explain the affective stance associated with evaluativity. To derive this, I return to the data presented in section 2.2. As noted, exclamations—both declarative and exclamative—can optionally appear with an emphatic word and a complementizer to highlight the strong emotion of the utterance. In the spirit of Kratzer (1999) and Rett (2011), I take these elements to function as an overt illocutionary force operator denoting exclamation (E-Force). E-Force can also be marked through intonation, as is often assumed for exclamatory speech acts. The resulting proposal is presented in (27).

(27) *Deriving exclamatives*
$[_{\text{FORCEP}}$ E-Force $[_{\text{CP}}$ PART$_1$ $[_{\text{CP}}$ 1 $[_{\text{CP}}$ Paul is d_1-tall]]]
$\rightsquigarrow$ strong emotion about the degree to which Paul is tall (λd_1.TALL(P,d_1))

5. Conclusion and future work

In examining exclamatives and the partitive prefix in Kanien'kéha, this paper made three principal claims: (i) Kanien'kéha exclamatives, possessing standard exclamative semantics, are distinguished morphologically by the presence of the partitive prefix; (ii) the distribution of the partitive suggests that the morpheme is related to degrees and not questions, and (iii) exclamatives are degree-denoting clauses, derived via degree abstraction by the partitive operator.

Interestingly, this syntax and resulting semantics is exactly what is proposed for exclamatives in other languages by the degree analysis of exclamativity proposed by Rett (2011). Within this framework, exclamatives are degree-denoting relative clauses that are exclaimed, just as they appear to be in Kanien'kéha, where degree relativization is spelled out by the partitive operator and exclamatory illocutionary force is spelled out by the emphatic/complementizer construction. In this way, Kanien'kéha provides overt empirical evidence that a degree account is on the right track.

In terms of future research, this project highlights the need for more documentation and analysis of exclamatives cross-linguistically, especially in understudied languages. The empirical data from morphologically transparent languages like Kanien'kéha can shine a clearer light on theoretical puzzles that have not been resolved with data from more com-

monly documented languages. Within this context, it would be interesting to see if other languages possess an overt degree abstraction operator like the partitive, reinforcing the claims made here. Finally, the current proposal raises questions about the re-examination of past analyses of exclamatives in other languages. Are all such exclamatives degree questions? If so, perhaps there are different strategies for degree abstraction taking place in different languages. While I argue that the Kanien'kéha examples are derived via relativization, other languages may make use of *wh*-movement, focus-movement, or other strategies which trigger abstraction over degrees. If not, it would appear that different languages use different strategies to arrive at a shared exclamative semantics. Relatedly, more work is needed to determine how the proposed source of exclamativity for exclamatives with degree readings relates to non-degree exclamatives like inversion exclamatives. Is it possible that both approaches—question and degree—exist?

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