Semantic restrictions in verb-second vs. non-verb-second wh-exclamatives

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In some Germanic languages wh-exclamatives occur as verb-second (V2) or as non-verb-second structures (non-V2). Recently it was shown that V2/nonV2 in German and Dutch are not interchangeable. In Dutch, V2 underlies stricter semantic restrictions than non-V2, i.e. verb-final (Vf): the noteworthiness evaluation exclamatives are often thought to express can concern individuals and propositions in Vf but only individuals in V2 (Nouwen & Chernilovskaya 2013). For German, Vf has been shown to be more restricted than V2 w.r.t. the realization of the exclamative accent on the finite verb, which has been argued to be due to the availability of (verum) focus alternatives (Driemel 2015). The present paper presents evidence that there are different semantic restrictions on German V2 vs. Vf wh-exclamatives and argues that the two structures come with different force operators. Like Dutch, German allows the full range of wh-words that occur in questions also in exclamatives (Repp 2013). The evidence for different restrictions on V2/Vf comes from exclamatives with the wh-words wer/wen (‘who/m’) and was (‘what’). Both wh-words may occur with the quantifier alles (‘all’), which in questions indicates exhaustiveness (Zimmermann 2007), and in exclamatives a large amount, i.e. a high degree: (1) illustrates the semantic contribution of alles in Vf exclamatives with wen (‘whom’). (2) shows that the corresponding V2 exclamative is only felicitous with alles, i.e. is restricted to a high degree reading. Was is a multipurpose question word that can ask about entities, propositions, reasons (see 3a) and degrees. Was-exclamatives can express surprise at all these semantic objects, apart from reasons: (3b), which is string-identical to (3a), receives a high degree reading (in V2 and Vf). Note that the verb in (3) is intransitive so was cannot be the object of the verb. To explore the readings of was and the co-occurrence of alles with was in V2 vs. Vf exclamatives, a corpus study was conducted (268 mil token sub-corpus of deWaC (Baroni et al. 2009); was für (‘what a’) was excluded; who(m) exclamatives did not occur sufficiently often). The corpus analysis revealed that was in any of the above readings was combined with alles equally often in V2 and Vf (total n=105; χ²(1) = 2.143, p>.05). For was-exclamatives without alles, two types of readings were explored: was as a direct object of a transitive verb, and was combined with an intransitive verb (= degree was). The former readings only occurred in Vf exclamatives. The latter occurred in V2 and in Vf. So, again V2 but not Vf exclamatives can be shown to be subject to a degree restriction. To account for the difference I propose that V2 and Vf exclamatives host different exclamative force operators (rather than e.g. question operators as in D’Avis 2001, Abels 2005), see (4)/(5). V2 only allows degree readings and Vf allows degree, individual (and manner) readings. Wh-phrases are set restrictors requiring their complement
either to be a set of entities, degrees or manners so that wh-structures either are individual, degree or manner properties yielding the appropriate semantic object for the force operator in V2 vs. Vf.

(1)  
  a. Wen der alles eingeladen hat!  
      whom he all invited has  
      (surprise at high nb of (noteworthy) people)  
  b. Wen der eingeladen hat!  
      (surprise at noteworthy person/people)  

(2)  
  a. Wen hat der alles eingeladen!  
      (surprise at high nb of (noteworthy) people)  
  b. ?Wen hat der eingeladen!  

(3)  
  a. Was hast du (so) geweint?  
      what have you so wept  
      (question about reason of weeping)  
  b. Was hast du geweint!  
      (surprise at degree of severity of weeping)  

(4)  
$$[[\text{Excl-Deg}]] = \lambda D_{(d,t)} \exists d [\text{the speaker finds } \lambda w.D(d)(w) \text{ surprising}] = V2$$  

(5)  
$$[[\text{Excl}]] = \lambda P_{(d,t)} \exists x [\text{the speaker finds } \lambda w.P(x)(w) \text{ surprising}], \text{ for } \langle \tau \rangle = \langle e \rangle \text{ and } \langle \tau \rangle = \langle d \rangle \text{ and } \langle \tau \rangle = \langle m \rangle \text{ (manner) } = Vf$$