

Prosodic restrictions for focus are cues for the realization of spoken French wh-interrogatives in-situ

Ramona Wallner
University of Konstanz

Ramona.Wallner@uni-konstanz.de

Spoken Continental French can employ two different strategies to form information-seeking questions: the wh-word can be fronted (1) or it can appear in-situ (2):

- (1) *Où (-est-ce-que) tu vas ?* (2) *Tu vas où ?*
where (*q-particle*) you go you go where
'Where are you going?'

There is a substantial body of literature explaining speakers' choice between both, but still no satisfying analysis. The use of information-seeking in-situ questions (2) is said to be subjected to hard presuppositions. There is no consensus in the literature if they are semantic equals. However, newer research (Adli 2015, Baunaz & Patin 2009) point towards a broader spectrum of use for wh-in-situ questions in French without restrictions. The second major claim in the literature is that wh-in-situ conveys some notion of 'givenness' (Hamlaoui 2011, Déprez et al. 2013), namely that the non-wh-part of the question has to be given (in a broad sense, i.e. evoked). In this talk, it is argued that French interrogatives without wh-fronting are semantic equals to fronted questions and are possible out-of-the-blue if they adhere to the right constraints. I.e. you could ask (3) without context:

- (3) *Je peux trouver où un tabac ici ?*
I can find where a kiosk here
'Where can I find a kiosk around here?'

In light of the new data contradicting givenness, a new analysis is proposed. The ingredients for non-fronted wh-interrogatives are the following: i) Spoken French marks questions prosodically only, no inversion ii) the wh-word is always stressed in French (Delais-Roussarie et. al. 2015); iii) French possesses no lexical stress but the position of the word in the sentence determines focus marking (Jun & Fougeron 2002); iv) focus-assignment to the right is preferred (Féry 2001, Hamlaoui 2007), if syntax permits; this leads to information structural changes and v) no stressed constituent before the wh-word. The fifth ingredient is novel in the discussion of wh-in-situ questions in French. I will show its validity with two types of experimental data from perception experiments.

References (selected): • Delais-Roussarie, E. et al. 2015. Intonational phonology of French: Developing a ToBI system for French. In S. Frota & P. Prieto (eds.), *Intonation in Romance*, 63–100. Oxford: OUP
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