
The position of où: where's the difference?

Freitag
10.03.2017
13:30 – 14:00
B4 1, 0.25

Janina Reinhardt
Universität Konstanz

janina.reinhardt@uni-konstanz.de

Morphosyntactic variation in French interrogatives has long been the focus of investigation (see e.g. Pohl 1965, Coveney 1995, Boucher 2010). However, significantly less research has been done on the mapping between morphosyntactic variants and intonational forms.

In this paper, I will investigate the prosody of ‘where’-questions in four French audio books. In contrast to Delattre 1966 and in line with Delais-Roussarie 2015, about half of the questions were not realised with a simple fall (L*L%). Indeed, one third were even realised with a simple rise (H*H%). This evidence casts doubt on the assumption of a falling default pattern for constituent questions. Sentences (1) and (2) were produced with falling as well as with rising intonation, leaving no space to explain variation by the fronting or non-fronting of the question word either (cf. Déprez et al. 2012).

- (1) Tu étais où ?
(2) Où va-t-on ?

A closer look at the context suggests that the falling patterns may be due to a secondary meaning of reproach, or the mere expression of a thought or resignation. If intonational patterns can be mapped, it is thus to pragmatic meaning rather than to word order.

References: • Coveney, A. (1995): The use of the QU- final interrogative structure in spoken French. *JFLS* 5(2), 143–171. • Delais-Roussarie, E. et al. (2015): Intonational Phonology of French: Developing & Prieto, P., *Intonation in Romance*, 63–100. • Delattre, P. (1966): Les Dix Intonations de base du français. *The French Review* 40(1), 1–14. • Déprez, V. et al. (2012): The interaction of syntax, prosody, and discourse in licensing French wh-in-situ questions. *Lingua* 124, 4–19. • Pohl, J. (1965): Observations sur les formes d’interrogation dans la langue parlée et dans la langue écrite non littéraire. In: *Actes du Xe Congrès 1965*, 501–516. • **Audio sources:** Alex (Camille Verhoeven 2) (written by P. Lemaitre, read by P. Résimont) • Le temps est assassin (M. Bussi, J. Basecqz) • Si c’était à refaire (M. Lévy, M. Marchese) • Total Khéops (J.-C. Izzo, A. M. Mancels).