

Towards an interactional analysis of French *wh*-question strategies

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Modern Colloquial French (MCF) exhibits two different *wh*-question strategies, *wh*-in-situ questions ('default'), (1a), and *wh*-ex-situ questions ('non-default'), (1b).

- (1) a. T'as vu qui hier? WHINsITQ
2SG.COLL=have.2SG see.PTCP who yesterday
'Who did you see yesterday?'
- b. Qui_i t'as vu t_i hier? WHExsITQ

Based on results from a recent corpus study (Matuschat-Petersen in prep.), I argue that the alternation in (1) cannot be reduced to 'completely free variation' (*pace* Adli 2006), but is also due to contextually based contrast which favors WHExsITQs.

This talk will present an analysis for this contextual restriction implemented in Wiltschko's (2021) Interactional Spine Hypothesis (ISH).

References

- Adli, Aria. 2006. French *wh*-in-situ questions and syntactic optionality: Evidence from three data types. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 25(2). 163–203.
- Matuschat-Petersen, Wiebke. in prep. *Wh-questions in Colloquial French*. Bielefeld/Tours: Universität Bielefeld/Université de Tours dissertation.
- Wiltschko, Martina. 2021. *The grammar of interactional language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.