

The influence of pragmatics on the intonation of wh-in-situ questions in French

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The final intonation in French wh-in-situ questions such as in (1) is subject to much debate.

- (1) Tu vas où ?
you go where
‘Where do you go?’

It has been described with a final rise (Cheng & Rooryck 2000) a final fall (Di Cristo 1998) or even a final plateau (Adli 2004). Recent corpus studies by Reinhardt (2019, 2021) observe a wide variety in the intonation of French wh-in-situ questions, despite a tendency towards a final rise.

In this talk, we will give insight into an on-going project, in which we examine the influence of pragmatic factors on the intonation of wh-in-situ questions, a heretofore understudied aspect of the debate. As our data (from a corpus of ten audio books) suggest, there are certain regularities, but intonation does not seem to be fully predictable.

The talk will be held in English.

References

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