NON-CANONICAL QUESTIONS IN FRENCH, GERMAN, AND BEYOND
University of Konstanz
November 21-22, 2019
Organizers: Andreas Trotzke & Anna Czypionka

November 21, 2019 (Room L602)

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French wh in situ: Distribution and intervention effects

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A comparative corpus study on a case of non-canonical question

15:00 - 15:45  Laurie Dekhissi (U Poitiers) & Aidan Coveney (U Exeter)
Variation between qu’est-ce que & pourquoi in conflictual rhetorical questions: A corpus-based study

15:45 - 16:15  Coffee break

16:15 - 17:00  Yoshio Endo (U Kanda)
Non-standard questions in French, German and Japanese

17:00 - 17:45  Claire Beyssade (U Paris 8) & Elisabeth Delais-Roussarie (UMR6310 & U Nantes)
French rhetorical questions: Semantic analysis and prosodic realizations

17:45 - 18:45  Jenny Doetjes (U Leiden)
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Ur Shlonsky (U Geneva)

French wh in situ: Distribution and intervention effects
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French wh in situ is grammatical in main and subordinate clauses but ungrammatical in indirect questions. This is arguably due to the fact that indirect questions are selected and in order for selection to be satisfied, the wh must be in a position accessible to the interrogative-selecting matrix predicate. If it remains in situ, wh is “too far” to satisfy this selection requirement. Our work develops this intuition into a more explicit analysis of French/Romance wh in situ.

French wh in situ cannot be c-commanded by a subset of quantificational elements. We study these “intervention effects” both empirically and theoretically and provide a feature-based explanation of why wh in situ nevertheless survives some quantificational intervenors.
Lucia Tovena (U Paris 7)

A comparative corpus study on a case of non-canonical question
A comparative corpus study on a case of non-canonical question

A further reading for comment questions  In French, questions with the wh-item comment (how) can be about a manner of doing or a means (Van de Velde, 2009), e.g. they are answerable as in (1a)–(1b). They also have at least one further reading, as question (1) is answerable by sentence (2).

(1) Comment Max peut regarder dehors? (How can Max look outside?)
   a. Attentivement (Carefully)
   b. Avec des jumelles. (With binoculars)

(2) Tu sais, la conversation est ennuyeuse (You know, the conversation is boring)
Assume that question (1) has a canonical form when the wh-item is related to a complement position, be it an argument of the verb or an adjunct of the V or the v (Van de Velde, 2009), as in the interpretations congruent with (1a) and (1b). The question in (1) definitely is interpreted non-canonically when answered as in (2). In such a case—not found exclusively in French, as shown by the English translation—the relevant reading has been termed ‘cause’ e.g. by de Cornulier (1974), Korzen (1990) and (Fleck 2008) i.a., and has more recently been analysed as the expression of an ‘attributional search’ by Fleury and Tovena (2018), who take it more as a ‘reason’ than (an empirical) cause. The syntax and pragma-semantics of question (1) in its reason reading is a pressing issue. Are there syntactic constraints associated with this reading? Does the wh-item bind a variable and, if so, what is the semantic type of such a variable? The issue is made more difficult by the possible interference of uses as rhetorical questions. In suitable contexts, (1) is understood as equivalent to (3) in the conversation, or at least is congruent with an answer like (3).

(3) Personne ne peut regarder dehors quand le président parle. (Nobody can look outside while the president is speaking)

Indeed, Desmets and Gautier (2009) treat non-manner and non-means comment questions as rhetorical questions. But they do not tell us what is the reading that is taken rhetorically, nor do they qualify their claim that these uses necessarily result from an extraction operation on a canonical structure. This paper aims to contribute to the discussion on comment questions with a comparative study of data from several corpora. In particular, we work to clarify the characterisation of reason-comment by testing potential constraints on its occurrences.

Empirical evidence for a high rooted comment  Fleury and Tovena (2019) provide strong empirical ground for an analysis of reason-comment as high base-generated adjunct that does not bind a low syntactic variable. They draw an analogy with reason why, which Rizzi (1990, 2001) and Shlonsky and Soare (2011) take to be externally merged in the left periphery of the clause in questions like Why did Max leave?. Indeed, reason-comment i) does not occur in-situ, ii) is not sensitive to negation in the clause where it would be construed (4), iii) does not scopally interact with quantifiers in the clause in (5), i.e. (comment>*tout le monde, *tout le monde>comment), and iv) the question does not license NPIs.

(4) Comment Max n’a-t-il pas lu le courrier de Paul? (How could Max not have read Paul’s mail?)
(5) Comment tout le monde déteste Daniel? (How come everyone hates Daniel?)

A comparative corpus study  If reason-comment is rooted high, it is predicted never to trigger subject-aux inversion, like discourse structuring adverbials (Haegeman 2012). In order to test this prediction with corpus data, we selected all the prose texts of the database Frantext posterior to 2009, the year Desmets and Gautier’s paper was published, which used the same database. 314 occurrences of sentence initial comment were automatically extracted from a collection of 3,000,969 words (accessed on December 2017), and annotated by hand.
by two raters. The observed proportionate agreement in attributing the reason reading is 64.01273\%, and is interpreted as fair according to the guidelines set by Landis and Koch (1977). The Cohen’s kappa coefficient is 0.237. The results show that the ratio of subject-verb inversion cases—be it simple or complex—is 3 to 2. Thus, the prediction of a complete independence of the clause expressing the prejacent from the reason-comment that operates on it, is incorrect in such a coarse form.

Before looking into the no-inversion prediction, we tackled and dismissed the potential claim that the high number of inversion cases is an epiphenomenon of written French. We searched the ESLO (Barbu and Dugua, 2016) corpus, that includes transcriptions of several hundreds of hours of recording, for a total exceeding 10 millions words. A query for questions with sentence initial comment yielded 901 hits. Given that we were looking for subject inversions, we cut down the number of results by restricting the query to cases where comment is followed by a verb. This yielded about 400 cases. A random sample of 100 cases turned out to contain no instance of reason-comment. For this reason, we concluded that subject-aux inversion takes place in written and spoken French.

What the Frantext data clearly show is that reason-comment questions are not a single phenomenon. An interesting property that has emerged is that only some the comment questions neatly split themselves into a wh-item and a clause conveying the prejacent (6). These questions exhibit no subject-aux inversion, only have reason reading that conveys surprise, and do not allow rhetorical uses. A silent ça after comment could be assumed without affecting the meaning and the prosodic contour. When overt, ça is interpreted anaphorically. The antecedent is a proposition that need not be overtly realised in the discourse, but can be inferrable. These cases form a coherent set of reactive questions that support the prediction.

(6) Comment tu as eu peur? (How come you were scared?)

Interestingly, sentences with no overt subjects make up another large coherent set supporting the prediction. These are cases Riegel et al. (1994) termed ‘deliberative infinitival’, see (7). Typically, they have no clear rhetorical use, convey no or mild surprise, and often allow the speaker to build an argument by subsequently providing a possible reason for the situation described by the prejacent. The 55 instances found in Frantext suggest a genre bias. They are frequently used in argumentative writing reporting the train of thought of a single speaker.

(7) Comment retirer le poignard? (How can one pull out the dagger?)

We tested the bias by searching the TALANA corpus of extracts from the daily newspaper Le Monde (texts from 1989 to 1993, about 700 thousand words). The search yielded 89 questions with comment in sentence initial position, of which 29 were judged to admit a reason reading. 19 of them are infinitival questions, which supports the hypothesis of a genre bias. Questions exhibiting subject inversion come in a variety of forms, and require further study. For the moment, we note that sometime native speakers are unable to pin down a meaning difference brought about by inversion.

Selected references

Laurie Dekhissi (U Poitiers)
& Aidan Coveney (U Exeter)

*Variation between qu’est-ce que & pourquoi in conflictual rhetorical questions: A corpus-based study*
La variation entre *qu'est-ce que* et *pourquoi* dans les questions rhétoriques conflictuelles : analyse de corpus.

A l’occasion de plusieurs études, nous avons observé que l’emploi de *qu’est-ce que* non argumental était une stratégie efficace pour exprimer son désaccord (Ducrot, 1983 ; Brown & Levinson, 1987 ; Frank, 1990 ; Obenauer, 2005). Ainsi, nous la considérons comme un type de « question rhétorique conflictuelle » (QRC) (Gruber, 2001 ; Koshik, 2003) car l’assertion emphatique implicitement formulée exprime l’agacement voire l’indignation du locuteur à l’égard des paroles ou des actions de son interlocuteur comme en (1) et (2) :

1) *Qu’est-ce t’as été te mêler de ça, toi ?!* (Raï, 1995)
   (= Tu n’avais aucune raison de te mêler de ça !)

2) Nan / mais attendez / *Qu’est-ce que vous m(e) faites chier ?!* / hein / C’est grâce à qui qu(e) vous avez eu les meufs / hein ?? C’est grâce à qui ?! / C’est grâce à moi / non ? (Le Ciel, les oiseaux et....ta mère ! 1998)
   (= Vous n’avez aucune raison de me faire chier !)

Grâce à notre corpus filmique représentatif d’un langage très expressif (d’une durée de 57h environ), nous avons relevé 153 occurrences de questions rhétoriques conflictuelles ayant pour fonction communicative l’expression d’une critique ou d’un reproche sous la forme de la variante non standard en *qu’est-ce que* comme en (1) et (2), soit avec la variante standard en *pourquoi* (3).

3) Morsay (au policier) : *Pourquoi vous venez nous faire chier ?!* On est tranquille
   Policier : On a toujours des problèmes avec des gens comme toi / toujours
   (*Vengeance*, 2011)
   (= Vous n’avez aucune raison de venir nous faire chier !)

Adoptant une approche à la fois variationniste et pragmatique, nous avons trouvé que :
- les deux variantes (*qu’est-ce que* et *pourquoi*) sont utilisées sans distinction d’âge du locuteur mais que la variante *qu’est-ce que* est favorisée par les locuteurs masculins, lorsqu’ils s’adressent un interlocuteur masculin et que ceux-ci sont sur le territoire des pairs ;
- la variante *qu’est-ce que* produit une QRC plus emphatique, plus directe et plus expressive si on la compare à *pourquoi* ;
- la variante *pourquoi* est parfois ambiguë, pouvant se situer entre une question rhétorique et une question ordinaire.

Dans cette communication, nous aborderons des aspects de cette variation encore non explorés à ce jour afin de mieux cerner le fonctionnement de la variante non standard *qu’est-ce que* :

Dans un premier temps nous proposerons une classification des questions rhétoriques conflictuelles en ce qui concerne leur fonction communicative, à l’aide de critères contextuels précis. Nous expliquerons comment nous avons surmonté les difficultés de clarification pragmatique (cf. les difficultés évoquées par Brookes 2016, dans son étude d’un point de variation très semblable en anglais).

Dans un deuxième temps, à l’instar de Brookes (2016), nous étudierons certaines contraintes linguistiques qui pourraient favoriser l’emploi de *qu’est-ce que* dans ce type de questions :
par exemple, la personne du sujet utilisé, la nature du verbe (modal ou autre), la longueur de la proposition interrogative. Ceci nous permettra de découvrir si les contraintes syntaxiques liées à l’utilisation de la variante non standard *qu’est-ce que* sont similaires à celles trouvées par Brookes (2016) pour *Why-for* dans l’anglais multiculturel de Londres.

Bibliographie


Yoshio Endo (U Kanda)

Non-standard questions in French, German and Japanese
Non-standard questions in French, German and Japanese

1. Background

(A) German: Bayer and Obnauer (2011) discuss the rhetorical question (henceforth, nonstandard question) in German formed by the Modal Particle (MP) or Prt.schon in (1).

(1) Wer zahlt schön gerne Steuern?
who. pay SCHON gladly taxes
‘Who gladly pays taxes’ (Bayer and Obnauer’s (2011: 46)

They propose the mechanism of creating non-standard question in (2), where [tQForce] is an unvalued uninterpretable feature on MP headed by Prt, which is valued by the interpretable iQForce of interrogative force through the operation Agree. With the result of this operation, the interrogative force of the utterance is fine-tuned through MP for non-standard question of various types depending on the meaning of the MP.


(B) French: Munaro and Obenauer (1999) propose that in non-standard question or what they call pseudo-questions in French the element que occupies the specifier of a functional projection of what they call Ev(aluative)-CP, by which they capture the fact that the speaker, in the lively expression of a feeling of surprise, annoyance, etc., conveys his/her personal evaluation of the event referred to. They also assume that remnant IP moves across EvCP to give rise to the surface structure of an apparent wh-in situ in French.

2. Proposal (Japanese): With these previous studies in mind, I propose that non-standard questions in Japanese are created in the same way as French and German, where, sentence final particles (SFPs), especially SFPs of evaluative modal type, plays a crucial role. The point is illustrated in (3), where the evaluative SFP yo is found in the statement by B, which was pointed by Shigeru Miyagawa (personal communication). Here, the speaker B expresses his surprise in reaction to the statement by the speaker A. A similar effect of expressing surprise by SFP is also reported in Korean by Cinque (1999).

(3) A: John-wa kyo-o no party-ni ko-nai rasi.
John-Top today-Gen party-to come-Neg seem
‘I hear that John will not come to the party tonight’
B: E! kuru-???(yo).
What! J come-SFP
‘What! he will come’

Following Cinque’s (1999) hypothesis that various modal elements are hierarchically organized in the IP zone, SFPs originate and ordered according to Cinque’s hierarchy in the IP zone (Endo (2007, 2012)), where SFPs yo is valued and is fine-tuned by the Q particle ka of interrogative force through Agree to create a nonstandard question as in (4), which corresponds to the German case in (1):

(4) Imadoki-wa dare-ga suki.konon.de zeikun nanka harau ka yo.
nowadays-Top who-Nom gladly tax epithet pay Q SFP
‘Who gladly pays taxes these days?’

One of the differences between German and Japanese is that SFPs end up in the clause final position in Japanese. Following Abraham’s (2012) idea that MPs move into the head position of ForceP to fix the illocutionary force, I propose that SFPs also move into the CP zone, as depicted in (4a), where the evaluative modal element yo is expressed in the CP zone. After the head-movement of the SFP yo into the CP zone, the remnant IP is moved into the Spec, Speech-actP, as shown in (4b) just like the French case we saw above. Here, I slightly depart from Abraham’s idea to assume that the landing site of SFPs is the head position of Speech-actP partly because SFPs express speech-act and partly because the head of ForceP is already occupied by the Q-particle ka, as depicted in (4a):
The idea that the remnant IP is found in the speech-act projection is supported by the fact that all of the sentences suffixed by SFPs in Japanese exhibit the main clause phenomena, one of which is characterized by the occurrence of the topic particle wa, which is not found in the embedded clauses.

The syntactic nature of non-standard question formations in Japanese can be seen in the fact that they are sensitive to locality principle. Thus, when a modal element of the same type as the Agreeing element intervenes between a Q-particle and SFP as in (6a) below, it loses the sense of non-standard questions. (The sequence ka-mo-yo is only interpretable as a non-standard statement, as in (6b)) I propose to attribute this fact to Relativized Minimality (RM) (Rizzi 1990, 2004), where the local relation between the Agreeing element ka and the Agreed elements yo is blocked by the intervening element mo of the same mood type as the Agreed element (cf. Trotzke 2017 for locality in expressive meaning).

(6) a. Imadoki-wa dare-ga. suki.konon.de zeikin nanka harau ka mo yo.
    nowadays-Top who-Nom gladly tax epithet pay Q Mood SFP
    ‘Who gladly pays taxes’

   b. Imadoki-wa tosiyori-wa zeikin-o tyanto harau ka mo yo.
    nowadays-Top old.people-Top tax-Acc nicely pay Q Mood SFP
    ‘John might pays taxes nicely’

References
Claire Beyssade (U Paris 8) & Elisabeth Delais-Roussarie (UMR6310 & U Nantes)

*French rhetorical questions: Semantic analysis and prosodic realizations*
French Rhetorical Questions: semantic analysis and prosodic realizations

Authors

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Besides ordinary questions, there are all kinds of non-standard questions, whose function is not to request information from the addressee, but rather to convey information about the speaker epistemic or emotional state, like surprise questions, incredulity questions...This paper focuses on Rhetorical Questions (RQs), a sub-kind of non canonical questions. It presents the results of a production experiment on French RQs and it proposes, basing on the prosodic particularities of rhetorical questions, to revisit the semantic analysis that can be made of them. It is therefore a paper at prosody-semantic interface, the purpose of which is to contribute to the general study of the meaning of intonation in French.

1. RQ: a complex speech act, mixing assertion and question
There is quite a large number of studies in pragmatics and in semantics about RQs. In the recent literature, at least three approaches can be distinguished.

• The first one claims that RQs are interrogative sentences which have the illocutionary force of an assertion, and thus, as assertion, they don’t have to be answered (cf. [9]).
• A second approach argues that RQs are true questions, whose answer is known to the Speaker and the Addressee, and they both also know that the other knows the answer as well. As a matter of fact, an answer is not required, but possible (cf. [3])
• The third one, elaborated by [13] and developed by [1], assumes that RQs are interrogatives triggering the presupposition that the context entails the answer. RQs are analysed as redundant interrogatives: instead of informing any discourse participant, RQs are redundant and serve to synchronize Speaker and Addressee beliefs.

Basically, in the first case, the RQs are compared to assertions; in the second case, they are a subtype of questions; and in the third case, they are distinguished from both assertions and questions, but they are compared to presupposition triggers (they don’t provide any new information and only have a discursive role). Can we find in the prosodic realization of rhetorical questions elements that would corroborate one or the other of the theoretical approaches above? To answer this question, it is necessary to compare the prosodic realizations of assertions, information-seeking questions (ISQs) and RQs.

2. The prosody of French RQs
In this paper, we will focus on the comparison between RQs and ISQs. To do this, we replicated an experiment conducted by Braun and colleagues on English, German and Icelandic (see [2],[4],[5]), and we adapted it to French. This is a production experiment, in which native speakers have to elicit a utterance in context. After a visual display of the context, participants had to read aloud the target sentence. Each utterance occurs in two contexts: one triggering an ISQ interpretation (1a) for the uttered question, and another one constraining the question to be interpreted as a RhQ (1b). We considered only two types of interrogative sentences: fronted wh- interrogatives (2) and polar interrogatives (3). We have left aside declarative questions and wh- in situ, which are hardly interpretable as RQs.

An acoustic analysis was done in order to evaluate which prosodic features contribute to the interpretation. Four distinct features are taken into account: speech rate, form of the final contour, pitch range, realisation of the wh-word or the specifically questioned part in polar question. Three features appear as directly relevant for our issue.

• The articulation rate is faster in ISQs than in RQs (both wh- & polar). Since speech rate is also faster in declarative questions than in declarative assertions, this could argue in favor of type-1 approaches, which analyse RQs as assertions.
• A rising contour H%H% is observed at the end of ISQs in 83% of the cases, whereas three
Distinct final contours are observed in RQs. A final H*H% is possible in RQs, but this rise is never the highest rise of the utterance, whereas it is in most ISQs. This appears as an argument against type-2 approaches, which assume that RQs are true questions. As for the rise which can be observed at the end of certain RQs, it can be analysed, in the line of [12], [13] and [7], as marking a call on addressee to commit to an implicit content. This argues in favor of type-3 approaches.

- Phrasing is different in ISQs and RQs. In RhQs, the duration of wh-word in wh-questions is usually longer, pauses before or after this word are observed (whereas the wh-word is phrased with the verb in ISQs), and pitch register is often compressed after the wh-word. In polar RQs, the location of the pitch peak is mostly on the interrogative particle est-ce que, with a downstep on the rest of the utterance (which is not the case in ISQs where est-ce que is never the pitch peak). If phrasing is a marking of argument structure (cf [6]), this indicates that ISQs and RQs differ in argument structure. We will show how this factor affects the meaning of RQs and allows us to explain the similarities between RQs and assertions as well as the differences in their discourse function. In fact, RQs resemble more to presuppositions than to standard assertions.

**Conclusion and perspectives**

Prosodic studies show differences between ISQs and RQS, but also between standard assertions and RQs. These prosodic differences result from the use of various phonetic cues, and analysing the meaning of each of these cues provides new insights about semantics and pragmatics of questions, in line of [8], [10], [11]. RQs share similarities with both assertions and questions: as assertions, they required both Speaker and Addressee commitments, and as questions, they required no updates to the common ground. This is compatible with the idea that RQs force to activate a presuppositional content and present it as particularly relevant at this point of the discourse.

1. **Context A triggering an ISQ interpretation:** You want to cook a dish with spinach for dinner. But your son has invited friends, and you don’t know whether they like this vegetable and will eat it or not. You say to the guests:

2. **Context B triggering an RhQ interpretation:** In the canteen, for lunch, oven baked spinach dish is proposed. However, you know that nobody likes this disgusting vegetable. You say to your friends:

3. **Est-ce que quelqu’un mange des épinards? ‘Does anyone eat spinach?’**

Jenny Doetjes (U Leiden)

*Information structure and scope in non-canonical questions in French*
Information structure and scope in non-canonical questions in French

Jenny Doetjes, Leiden University Centre for Linguistics

As indicated by Ladd (1996), languages can be subdivided in different types depending on the patterns of accentuation we find in wh-questions. In some languages, the prosodic cue that normally signals focus falls on the wh-phrase (e.g. in Romanian and many wh-in situ languages), and in other languages it does not. This latter situation is illustrated by English in (1) (Ladd, 1996: 170-1), where normal accent placement is as in (1b) rather than as in (1a).

(1) a. WHERE are you going?
b. Where are you GOING?

According to Jacobs (1984), the type of prosodic differences illustrated in (1) reflect differences in focus-ground articulation. He defines an illocutionary theory of focus, in which questions have a focus-ground articulation similar to the one more generally adopted for declarative sentences. In both cases, the focus is the part of the content of the sentence that is specifically affected (‘inhaltlich besonderes betroffen’) by the illocutionary operator. Jacobs’ approach was adopted for French by Beyssade, Marandin and Rialland (2002) and Beyssade et al. (2004). In a recent study, Glasbergen-Plas, Gryllia and Doetjes (submitted) offer experimental evidence for making a distinction between narrow focus and broad focus in French wh-in situ questions.

In this paper, I will explore how information structure in non-canonical questions in French interferes with scope. For this, I will examine different types of scopal elements (frequency adverbs, quantified DPs, degree adverbs) and their behavior in two types of non-canonical questions – wh-in situ questions on the one hand, and combien-extraction questions on the other. The two types of non-canonical questions differ (at least) in two respects. In the first place, the two types of non-canonical questions often have different semantic properties: while combien-extraction triggers an amount reading (de Swart, 1992, Obenauer, 1992, Szabolcsi and Zwarts, 1993), in situ wh-phrases may range over discrete individuals (e.g. quel livre). In the second place, they differ in terms of what is left in situ: the wh-expression or other material, and I will argue that this latter difference affects possible focus-ground structures of these two types of non-canonical questions.

References


Caroline Féry (U Frankfurt)

The role of prosody and information structure in rhetorical and declarative questions in French and in German
The role of prosody and information structure in rhetorical and declarative questions in French and in German.

In the first part of the talk, it will be shown that information structure has a very different effect on prosody in French and German. Due to lexical stress, the placement of prominent high tones is regular in German: it obeys a simple version of the Culminativity Principle. In French, however, there is no lexical stress and the effect of Culminativity is blurred. Intonation in French is partly regulated by tunes that carry special pragmatic meanings. The position of phrasal high tones do not necessarily correspond to prominence. The difference in the prosody of German and French will be illustrated with non-canonical questions, especially rhetorical and declarative questions.
Johannes Heim (U Greifswald)
& Martina Wiltschko (U Pompeu Fabra)

Cross-linguistic belief-variation in non-canonical response questions
Cross-linguistic belief-variation in non-canonical response questions

In this talk, we explore the relevance of dialogical common ground management (in the sense of Stalnaker 1978) for the interpretation of non-canonical questions in English, German and Spanish, as exemplified in (1), (2), and (3). Each language has the means to respond to the statement in A with three types of non-canonical questions, depending on the previous knowledge of speaker B. The echo questions in B1 mark a previous belief contradicting A, the surprise questions in B2 mark the absence of a previous belief that is compatible with A, and the tag questions in B3 mark the presence of a previous belief compatible with A. In form, these questions vary in intonation, morphosyntax, and the presence of question words or tags.

(1) A: Peter said he was fired. B1: Peter said WHAT? B2: Peter said he was fired? B3: He did, eh?


(3) A: Pedro me ha dicho que fue despedido. B1: ¿Pedro te ha dicho que qué? B2: ¿Dice que fue despedido? B3: Te lo ha dicho, eh?

To account for the conversational properties of the response questions in B1-3, we propose that interlocutors universally monitor speaker- and hearer-oriented beliefs. This common ground management includes three elements: i) the speaker’s belief set, ii) the addressee’s belief set, and iii) the speaker’s expectation how the addressee will respond to their utterance. This expectation, a so-called call-on-addressee (Beyssade & Marandin 2007), elicits the question interpretation in B1-3. In English and German, it is encoded by a sentence-final rise, in Spanish it is encoded by a fall-rise contour. Heim et al. (2016) show that each of the three elements of common ground management can also be encoded lexically in a range of unrelated languages. The conversational effects of B1-3 can therefore be analyzed as configurations of speaker’s belief, addressee’s belief, and a call-on-addressee (s. Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>speaker’s belief</th>
<th>hearer’s belief</th>
<th>call-on-addressee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Echo question (B1)</strong></td>
<td>-p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>‘please confirm’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surprise question (B2)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>‘please confirm’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tag question (B3)</strong></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>‘please confirm’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Configurations of common ground management for non-canonical questions

The fact that all three languages in (1) to (3) can encode the different configurations of common ground management suggests that interlocutors universally monitor the belief sets of speaker and addressee. Languages differ, however, in how they respond to changes in these belief sets. We hypothesize that the timing of when a belief changes can affect the felicity of the belief configurations above. Support for such a nuanced analysis of common ground management comes from the findings of a small-scale, elicitation study where native speakers of English (n = 27), German (n = 25), and Spanish (n = 17) rated the naturalness of different tag questions depending on when a belief came about. We designed a web-based study with a 2x2-factorial design where participants had to rate the naturalness of the last turn in a storyboard dialogue on a 6-point Likert scale. Stimuli differed whether there was or was not any previous reason that a belief was true and whether there was or was not any current reason that a belief was true. We included two storyboards of each factorial configuration, which were presented in a random
order. Figure 1 presents the possible configurations including one of the two storyboards. Here, two interlocutors talk about the possibility of a third person having a new dog in the upper panels. The addressee either knows or does not know that this is the case. In the lower panels, one of the previous interlocutors runs into the third person on the street, who either does or does not have a dog on a leash. Participants then had to rate the naturalness of the tag-question You have a new dog, eh? or their Spanish or German equivalents. As a control, we added a storyboard only including a current reason to belief, which made the tag question appear out of the blue.

Figure 1: Combinations of +/- previous and +/- current reason to belief

While native speakers of English clearly disproved of the absence of both previous and current reasons to believe (RTB) for the tag-question (i.e. no evidence for a hearer’s belief), any configuration that had some RTB present (previous, current, or both) was acceptable. Native speakers of German showed the same disproval of the complete absence of RTBs, but a more notable preference for previous, but no current RTBs. This trend was even clearer among native speakers of Spanish who only rated the combination of a previous RTB and no current RTB as significantly more natural than the other combinations (see Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>RTBs</th>
<th>+previous, current</th>
<th>+previous, +current</th>
<th>-previous, current</th>
<th>-previous, +current</th>
<th>+current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4.51 (1.53)</td>
<td>4.38 (1.53)</td>
<td>4.12 (1.51)</td>
<td>2.16 (1.47)</td>
<td>3.84 (1.53)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>4.60 (1.82)</td>
<td>3.68 (2.08)</td>
<td>3.68 (2.08)</td>
<td>2.75 (2.08)</td>
<td>2.98 (1.72)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>4.53 (1.72)</td>
<td>2.92 (2.05)</td>
<td>2.76 (1.87)</td>
<td>2.84 (1.93)</td>
<td>2.90 (2.05)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Means (and standard deviations) for naturalness ratings across languages

We explain this cross-linguistic variation in the sensitivity of when a belief changes with culturally-shaped differences of how readily addressees accommodate a belief. The fact that English, German, and Spanish all have constructions that allow to express the speaker’s attitude toward their belief and that of their addressee (see B1-3) shows that the architecture for monitoring these beliefs is in place in all three languages. Yet the readiness to accommodate is a variable that is not grammatically encoded and therefore is affected by cultural variation. In our talk we compare these findings with other such variables, such as politeness and expertise, in a wider spectrum of languages. This talk therefore serves as a window into the interface between grammaticalized and non-grammaticalized variation of common ground management in the context of non-canonical questions. We thereby arrive at a rich paradigm of belief-variation that has so far gone unnoticed and requires a nuanced account of conversational effects.

Agneès Celle (U Paris 7) & Maud Pelissier (U Agder)

*Surprise questions in French*
This paper investigates the non-canonical use of two types of constituent questions in French: *qu'est-ce que* questions and *c'est quoi ce X*. *Qu'est-ce que* questions are made up of an interrogative *wh*-word (*qu'*) followed by the interrogative particle *est-ce que*, which originates from a grammaticalized cleft. This structure allows moving the *wh*-word to a pre-verbal position while the standard SV order is preserved. The *c'est quoi ce X* structure contains an in situ question followed by a right dislocation. The *wh*-word appears in post-verbal position and refers to an entity that is designated by the noun in the right dislocation. Both structures can be information-seeking questions as in (1) and (2):

(1) *Qu'est-ce que tu en penses ?* (OFROM)
    'What do you think about this?'

(2) *C'est quoi ce mot?* (ESLO)
    'What is this word?'

However, both structures also have non-canonical uses in which they convey surprise as in (3), (4) and (5):

(3) *Je dis c'est quoi ça pis « Stöck » mais qu'est-ce qu'il fout là ce mot là au milieu tu sais avec des umlaut* (OFROM)
    'I say it is what that and “Stöck” but what ecq it is doing there this word there in the middle you know with an umlaut'

(4) *Parce que et qu'est-ce qu'ils veulent faire un RER fribourgeois je sais pas quoi* (OFROM)
    'because why the hell do they want to build a Paris-like commuter line in Fribourg I don’t know what'

(5) *Tu te dis c'est quoi c'te faune vraiment ?* (OFROM)
    'you wonder what this strange crowd is doing there'

*Qu'est-ce que* is used argumentally in (3) and non-argumentally in (4). In (3), the question is not about the activity of the subject referent. The question stresses how incongruous it is to find a German word in a French essay. In (4), *qu'est-ce que* means *how come* and the question conveys the speaker’s disapproval at the building of a Paris-like commuter rail in Fribourg. In (5), the question indicates that there is something unusual about the crowd figuratively designated as wildlife.

The aim of this paper is to account for this non-canonical use in those two patterns. Previous studies by Dekhissi differentiate between those two patterns in terms of their speech act functions. We argue that the difference between those two patterns only concerns their information structure. In (3) and (4), the left periphery is involved, as opposed to the right one in (5). It is claimed by (Dekhissi 2016) that non-argumental *qu'est-ce que* questions are rhetorical challenging questions. These share a feature with rhetorical questions in so far as they do not require an answer. However, we argue that they differ from rhetorical questions on the following features:
i) the speaker does not know the answer in (4), as in (3) and (5). Moreover, the structure of the question makes it impossible to provide a semantic answer. By contrast, qu’est-ce que and c’est quoi used rhetorically in (6) and (7) imply the speaker’s answer:

(6) Qu’est-ce que ça peut faire?
‘What difference does it make?’
Implied answer: ça ne fait rien / it makes no difference

(7) oh ben oui c’est pas le bout du monde avec mon GPS maintenant c’est quoi d’aller à Frankfurt?
(OFROM)
‘Oh yes it’s not on the edge of the world, with my GPS now what does driving to Frankfurt amount to?’
Implied answer: c’est rien / it amounts to nothing.

ii) The speaker does not believe the addressee knows the answer. Nor does the speaker seek the addressee’s commitment. At most, (3), (4) and (5) invite an explanation. The function of these questions is to convey a judgement of incongruity on a situation that contradicts the speaker’s expectations. In the case of qu’est-ce que, this judgement is associated with disapproval and annoyance.

One might then wonder if those questions relate to exclamation in some way. (Dekhissi 2018) claims that the c’est quoi ce X structure is an exclamative question in terms of meaning and intonation. However, (5) is different from (8):

(8) Quelle faune!
What wildlife!

An exclamative sentence is associated with a factive presupposition (Zanuttini and Portner 2003). By contrast, (3), (4) and (5) allow continuation with a nonfactive predicate such as je ne sais pas / I don’t know. In addition, the widening component of exclamatives is not present in (3), (4) and (5), where the speaker’s evaluation blocks the expansion of the domain. In (5), the speaker’s evaluation in final position is triggered by surprise. At the same time, the interrogative structure allows the speaker not to make a commitment to that claim. Similarly in (3) and (4), the interrogative in the left periphery calls into question the appropriateness of a state of affairs. It seems then that there is reason to treat (3), (4) and (5) in a unified fashion. These questions may be viewed as mirative in the sense that they draw the addressee’s attention to some incongruous state of affairs that the speaker refuses to take for granted, hence the questioning response to that state of affairs. This line of thinking is supported by experimental data that point to a prosodic difference between information-seeking questions such as (1) and (2) and surprise questions such as (3), (4) and (5).


Pierre Larrivée (U Caen)
& Alda Mari (IJN/CNRS & U Chicago)

Negative biased questions: The view from epistemic modals
NEGATIVE BIASED QUESTIONS: THE VIEW FROM EPISTEMIC MODALS

Scope and previous approaches A negative interrogative (NI) (1-a), as compared to a standard information request (1-b), has the properties enumerated in (2) (see i.a. Romero & Han 2002; Ginzburg, 2012; Krifka 2017; Silk 2019).


(2) i. It implies that the speaker is committed to \( p \)
ii. The polarity of the answer is expected to be positive.
iii. The speaker seeks for a confirmation that \( p \) is true.

A variety of previous theories have focused on (2i). One approach proposed by Romero et Han (2002) (see Silk 2019 for more recent developments) assumes that the underlying proposition is scoped over by a Verum Focus operator, itself scoped over by the negative. The Verum Focus operator accounts for the commitment of the speaker with respect to the underlying positive proposition, making it possible for NIs to contain a Positive Polarity Items that do not normally stand in the direct scope of negation (Szabolcsi 2004, Larrivée 2012). This assumes certainty in the positive proposition, as with negative (partial) rhetorical questions (Who hasn’t dreamed of learning Italian?), not leading to a confirmatory answer. A second outlook focuses on how negation in a question creates a bias. According to Spector (2006) regarding rhetorical questions, there is a clash about asking a question, which supposes lack of information about the proposition, and enquiring about a negative state of affair, which supposes that the negative state of affairs has been introduced in the antecedent discourse and is therefore known, leading to a reinterpretation (see also Haspelmath 1997). Neither of these perspectives explain the morphosyntactic properties of NI, which occurs exclusively in total questions, with a high negative. In this talk we strive to account for the three main characteristics in (2) by reconsidering NI in the light of the semantic makeup of epistemic modals and proposing an analysis where NI are the mirror of epistemic modal MUST sentences thus expanding the typology of subjective expressions.

Data and discussion §1. NI is characterized by the fact that the question is bearing on the negative itself. This is supported by the morphosyntactic properties of NI such that they occur only in total questions, excluding \( \text{wh} \) questions that would intervene between the question operator the negative marker high up in the syntactic tree; and with a negative in a high structural position in languages allowing high and low realizations. §2. NI convey an epistemic stance with respect to the underlying positive proposition. While the speaker believes that \( p \) is the case (3a), she signals an amount of uncertainty (3b). This is visible in a proper evidential context (4). Such low level of uncertainty separates NI from rhetorical questions, which exhibit complete adhesion to the underlying positive proposition, and which do not call for a confirmatory answer.

(3) Jeanne, ne vient-elle pas ? – Isn’t Jane coming?
   a. Je pensais que oui. b. Je pensais que oui, mais je ne suis pas certain. c. Je pensais que non.
   a. I thought she was. b. I thought she was, but I’m not sure. c. #I thought she wasn’t.

(4) The lights are off. – a. John n’est-il pas à la maison ? b. Isn’t John home?

Such uncertainty is shared with human necessity epistemic modal MUST (see Kratzer 1991; Portner, 2009; Giannakidou and Mari 2018 a.o.), which also convey belief that \( p \) is true, but allows uncertainty on the part of the speaker (5). However, NI does not assert \( p \) (the belief is presupposed, see (3a)), and present \( \neg p \) as an option that is opened by the question, as evidenced by the infelicity of NI in the same context (6). Finally, the comparison with the epistemic modal demonstrates that unlike negated MUST which introduces \( \neg p \) as part of the beliefs of the speaker (7), NI introduces it as a possibility.

(5) The lights are on.
   a. John doit être à la maison, mais je ne suis pas entièrement certain.
   b. John must be home, but I am not entirely sure.

(6) The lights are on. – a. #John, n’est-il pas à la maison? – b. #Isn’t John home?
(7) The lights are off. – a. John ne doit pas être à la maison. – b. John must/must not be home.

Analysis and Predictions Following the work of Kaufmann (2012) on imperatives, we assume that QUES is a modal operator and that the performative content of the question is derived as a separate component responsible for managing the speaker-addressee interaction, which we do not spell out here. We will be using doxastic (DOX) and epistemic (EPIS) modal bases (M), anchored to an individual i. In line with Kartzer 1991 and Portner 2009, we also resort to ordering sources O.

(8) \[ O(M(i)) = \{ w' \in M(i) : \forall q \in O(w' \in q) \} \]

MUST We will endorse here the analysis for human necessity modal MUST in (9) as provided in Kratzer, 1991; Portner, 2009; Giannakidou and Mari, 2018, with universal quantification over the worlds delivered by the ordering source. DOX_i is here an ordering source operating over EPIS_i.

(9) \[ [[\text{MUST}(\text{PRES}(p))]^{EPIS,i,DOX} \text{ is defined only if } EPIS_i \text{ is compatible with both } p \text{ and } \neg p \text{ worlds.} \]
   (Epistemic uncertainty is backgrounded)

If defined, \[[\text{MUST}(\text{PRES}(p))]^{M,i,\neg S} = 1 \iff \forall w' \in DOX_i(EPIS_i)p(w') \]
   (Doxastic certainty is foregrounded)

Human necessity presupposes lack of knowledge (the modal base is compatible with both p and \neg p worlds), and asserts certainty in the doxastic space (all the doxastic worlds are p worlds).

NI We propose that NI is the mirror of MUST with a flip in the backgrounded and foregrounded content. With NI, the certainty in the doxastic space is backgrounded and epistemic uncertainty foregrounded.

(10) NI Questions. \[[\text{QUES NEG}_p]^{EPIS,i,DOX} \text{ is defined only if } \forall w' \in DOX_i : p(w') \] (Doxastic certainty is backgrounded)
   If defined, \[[\text{QUES NEG}_p]^{EPIS,i,DOX} = 1 \iff EPIS_i \text{ is compatible with both } p \text{ and } \neg p \text{ worlds.} \]
   (Epistemic uncertainty is foregrounded).  

The predictions delivered by our analyses are the following. NI conventionally convey the presupposition that speaker believes that p is the case (2i). Because this belief associates to an element of uncertainty, it invites an answer that can be negative. However, given the content of the backgrounded information – that the speaker believes that p is true – the answer is expected to be positive (2ii). The thus speaker seeks for a confirmation of her epistemic state (2iii), while opening \neg p as an option.

Perspectives The bottom line of our account is that NI are to be understood as expressions revealing the speaker’s perspective rather than as context management devices. Very typically a question such as (11) does not aim at determining the status of p in the common ground (which is already settled), but at straightening the speaker’s belief about the temperature in the desert.

(11) Isn’t it cold, in the desert ?

We will also leverage on the private/public status of p to spell out the differences between NI and rhetorical questions. By considering questions as epistemic modal devices with performative content, the conclusion of the talk will pose the question of the scale of epistemic commitment with questions types:

(12) Scale of epistemic commitment with questions
   < p, Rhetorical questions, Confirmation request, NI, yes/no questions >

Christina Tortora (CUNY) & Jason Bishop (CUNY)

What-marked Yes-No questions in New York City

English
What-marked Yes-No questions in New York City English

1. Overview. In this talk we describe and analyze the syntactic and prosodic properties of a non-canonical Yes-No question in colloquial New York City English, which we refer to as what-marked Yes-No questions. Consider (1) versus (2):

(1) Did he grow up on Staten Island?  true Y-N
(2) What did he, grow up on Staten Island?  what-marked Y-N

2. Description of properties. The sentence in (1) is a true question — a genuine request for information. In contrast, the question in (2) — used by New York City English speakers — conveys that the hearer knows or believes the answer is Yes. It is therefore a rhetorical question, though in discourse it leaves open an invitation to the hearer to expand on a topic. As a rhetorical question, it is also used accusatorily or sarcastically (What am I, an idiot? What are you, some kind of jack-ass?), but it is not restricted to such contexts (v. (2)).

In addition to the meaning and function of the what-marked Yes-No question, there are several restrictions on its form which set it apart from other kinds of interrogatives in English.

2.1 Prosodic characteristics. In (3) we illustrate the preferred prosodic rendering of the what-marked Yes-No question:

(3) \( (A \ \text{WHAT did he}) \ (B \ \text{grow up on Staten ISLAND})? \)
    \( \text{what-marked Y-N} \)

For the purposes of prosodic description, we utilize the Tones and Break Indices (ToBI) conventions for English (Beckman & Ayers 1997), which are based on a phonological model of the language’s intonation (Beckman & Pierrehumbert 1986). Notable about the prosody of the what-marked construction is the following. First, the what- and Yes-No elements occur in two separate Intonational Phrases (A and B), a grouping that is not straightforwardly derivable from their syntax, as A does not correspond to any discernible syntactic phrase (*What did he?). Second, although the shape of the nuclear contours in A and B are consistent with standard wh- and Yes-No questions, respectively, the nuclear pitch accent (or ‘nuclear stress’) in A falls earlier than in standard wh-questions, on the interrogative pronoun.

The prosodic structure in (3) contrasts with a similar-looking but distinct question form in American English, which we refer to as the wh-question/answer (wh-Q/A) (v. Merchant 2004):

(4) \( (A \ \text{Where did he grow UP}) \ (B \ \text{on Staten ISLAND})? \)
    \( \text{wh-Q/A} \)

2.2 Restricted to what. Regardless of the constituent that is in focus (TP, NP, PP, VP), what-marked Yes-No questions can be introduced only by what. Note that the what-marked Yes-No question in (2)/(3) is ambiguous: it can have wide or narrow focus, just like the true Yes-No question in (1) (narrow focus > Was Staten Island where he grew up?). However, in contrast with the wh-Q/A (4), which only has narrow focus on the PP on Staten Island, the narrow focus reading of the PP in the what-marked Yes-No (2)/(3) unexpectedly does not allow use of the wh-phrase where, as in (5); the example in (6) further illustrates this restriction to what:

(5) \* (A WHERE did he), (B grow up on Staten ISLAND)?  (cf. wh-Q/A in (4))
(6) \* (A WHY did he), (B do it because he wanted REVENGE)?  what-marked Y-N
    OK: (A WHAT did he), (B do it because he wanted REVENGE)?  what-marked Y-N
2.3 Restricted material in the first prosodic unit. First (i), the what-marked Yes-No question seems to be restricted to pronominal subjects (I, you, she, he, it, we, they):

(7) *(A what did your father), (B grow up on Staten Island)?

Additionally (ii), the what-marked Yes-No is restricted to positive polarity (8a), contrasting with true Yes-No questions, which allow negation (8b):

(8) a. *(A what didn’t he), (B grow up on Staten Island)?
   b. Didn’t he grow up on Staten Island?  

what-marked Y-N true Y-N

Furthermore (iii), the what-marked Yes-No is restricted to the non-modal auxiliaries do, did, am, is, are, was, were, have, and has; modal auxiliaries are not permitted:

(9) a. *What could they, be stuck in traffic? (cf.: Could they be stuck in traffic?)
   b. cf.: What are they, running late because of traffic?

(10) a. *What should he, run the whole company? (cf.: Should he run the whole company?)
   b. cf.: What does he, run the whole company?

And finally (iv), the auxiliary — although prosodically weak — cannot be a contracted form:

(11) *What’s he, a Staten Island resident?
   (cf.: What is he, a Staten Island resident?)

3. Analysis. It is well-known that many of the world’s languages mark Yes-No questions with a question-marker that is morphologically identical to (the language-relevant form) what. The four restrictions in 2.3 (pronominal subjects only; positive polarity only; non-modal aux only; non-contracted aux only) however make a straightforward mono-clausal analysis (along the lines of e.g. Lusini 2013; Munaro 2019 for the Italian dialects) difficult to maintain for English. Instead, as a guide to our analysis, we capitalize on the fact that copular amalgams in English (12) exhibit the same series of restrictions that we see in our what-marked Yes-No questions.

(12) [That’s what she needs] is [she needs a break]  

O’Neill (2015) argues that copular amalgams involve a root Fin⁰, where the auxiliary is merged (is in (12), linking a logical subject and a predicate, hence the restriction to non-negated, non-contracted, non-modal aux. For O’Neill, the logical subject of a copular amalgam is a proposition; in our “amalgam” analysis of what-marked Yes-No questions (13), we take the first conjunct not to be propositional, but rather nominal (XP in (13)); however given that it is not born inside TP, it can contain only informationally light subjects, hence the restriction to pronouns. The predicate (complement to Fin⁰) is a TP with elision, leaving a fragment. We take the form what to be merged in PolP, as a marker of the interrogative type (Yes-No), attracting the aux is from Fin⁰ to Pol⁰. The prosodic phrasing (in red parentheses) reflects the syntactic independence of the predicate, and encodes the meaning associate with this construction:


Alessandra Giorgi (U Venice)

Surprise and surprise-disapproval questions: The counter-expectational particle ma/but in Italian and English
Surprise and surprise-disapproval questions: the counter-expectational particle *ma*/*but* in Italian and English

1. Aim of this work
In this work I investigate the property and distribution of the adversative particle *ma* in Italian and *but* in English, when introducing surprise and surprise-disapproval questions. In these cases, this particle conveys a counter-expectational semantics – as opposed to a corrective or a semantic opposition one (see Toosarvandani, 2014) – and (roughly) corresponds to Spanish *pero* – as opposed to *sino* – and German *aber* – as opposed to *sondern*. I argue that the counter-expectational particle is a *discourse head* that lies outside the sentence, projecting a phrase having the sentence as its complement and the counter-expectational premise as its specifier, giving rise to a *micro-discourse*. I show that in special questions – and only in these cases – the premise can be absent and that, at least for some speakers, the particle itself can be omitted. I show that an *integrated model* of syntax, prosody and gesture can provide an explanation for these data and can be generalized to other languages as well, such as Spanish and German.

2. The data
The typical case of counter-expectational usage of *ma* and *but* is the following one:

(1) Maria è ricca, *ma* non è felice
(2) Mary is rich, but she is not happy

Note that this sentence can also be uttered by two different speakers. Speaker A might utter the first part, the *premise* – *Mary is rich* – and speaker B the second one – *but she is not happy*. The semantics to be attributed to the particle would be the same in both cases. The interesting observation is that in this case the premise cannot be omitted, in that a sentence containing only the *but* clause would be infelicitous. This sharply contrasts with the special question cases. Consider the following surprise question:

*Context*: I know that John is allergic to cats. One day I see him with a big cat in his arms. I am surprised and say:

(3) Ma non eri allergico ai gatti?
(4) But weren’t you allergic to cats?

In this case no premise is lexicalized and the sentence can be uttered out of the blue. For some speaker *but* can be omitted and yet the counter-expectational interpretation is still there. Consider now the following disapproval case:

*Context*: My son John should study math. I find him reading comics. I’m disappointed and say:

(5) Ma cosa fai?
(6) (But) what are you doing?

The same considerations given above apply in this case as to the counter-expectational interpretation – i.e. no premise and possible, or even obligatory, omission of *but*. Note also that in these cases it is easy to introduce an aggressive expression in the interrogative phrase, as in the following example:

(7) Ma che cazzo fai?
(8) (But) what the fuck are you doing?

3. Hypothesis
I capitalize here on previous research on special questions (Obenauer, 2004, 2006, Obenauer & Poletto, 2000, Hinterhölzl & Munaro 2015, Vicente, 2010, Giorgi 2016, 2018). I will propose that counter-expectational *but* is a discourse head, both in cases such as (1) and (2) and in the special question cases. Furthermore, I will argue that the special question is
dominated by an evaluative projection – occasionally surfacing as an aggressive expression incorporated in the wh-phrase, as in examples (7) and (8). The basic syntax is therefore as follows:

\[(9) \, [\text{DIS} \, \text{P} \, [\text{CP} \ldots] \, [\text{but} \, \text{DIS} \, \text{EVAL} \, [\text{WH} \, [\ldots]]]]\]

Further derivations are required to obtain the actual sentences in the various cases. The whole structure is a discourse – I dub it a micro-discourse. In the case of sentence (1)-(2), on the left of the adversative particle we have Mary is rich (irrelevantly, in these cases the structure on the right of but is a different one). In the special question cases this CP is empty and is retrievable from the context.

4. What does retrievable from the context mean? An integrated model

My hypothesis is that prosody and gesture come into play to make the premise retrievable and consequently omittable. The same holds of the counter-expectational particle itself.

There is robust cross-linguistic experimental evidence for claiming that in these cases syntax, prosody and gesture are aligned – Giorgi & Dal Farra, 2019, for Italian; Dal Farra, Giorgi & Hinterhölzl, 2018, for German; Furlan, 2019, for Spanish; Petrocchi, work in progress, for Japanese, Vietnamese and Korean.

I will argue that the evaluative projection is a trigger on the one hand for the sensori-motor interface to realize a peculiar prosodic pattern (special questions significantly differ from the normal ones) and accompanying gestures, on the other, for the special interpretation to obtain.

5. Further research

Finally, I will argue that this model can be extended to other cases as well, such for instance warnings. Warnings can be introduced by special warning expressions, such as in the following case:

\[(10) \, \text{Attento, c'è una pozzanghera!}\]
\[(11) \, \text{Watch out, there is a puddle!}\]

Or can be apparently identical to normal sentences, as in the following case:

\[(12) \, \text{C'è una pozzanghera!}\]
\[(13) \, \text{There is a puddle!}\]

The task of making (12)-(13) into warnings is once again left to prosody and gesture. The syntax in this case is similar to the one of imperative sentences (see among others, Alcázar, Saltarelli, 2017; Zanuttini, 2008).

References