

Workshop / Atelier

INTERROGATIVES AND QUESTIONS : MEANING AND INTONATION / INTERROGATIVES ET QUESTIONS : SENS ET INTONATION

14 mai 2007

Université de Paris 7 – 30 rue du chateau des rentiers, 75013 Paris
salle 131 le matin, salle 134 l'après-midi

9h30-10h15 Maria Safarova (Tilburg University)
Rising and falling y/n interrogatives in English

10h15-10h35 discussion

pause

10h45-11h30 Elisabet Engdahl (Göteborg University)
Declarative Questions in Swedish and Norwegian

11h30-11h50 discussion

déjeuner

14h-14h45 Claire Beyssade (IJN, Paris), Elisabeth Delais et Jean-Marie Marandin (LLF,
Paris 7)

Intonation of questions in French

14h45-15H05 discussion

pause

15h15-15h45 Jean-Marie Marandin (LLF, Paris 7) et Hiyon Yoo (ARP, Paris 7)
Mouvements finaux dans les interrogatives. Construction d'un paradigme.

15h45-16H05 discussion

pause

16h15-17h Nicholas Asher (IRIT, Toulouse)
Towards rethinking the prosodic/semantic interface

17h00-17h20 discussion

Organisé par Claire Beyssade avec le soutien
du GDR 2521 *Sémantique et Modélisation* et
du projet ANR *Pro-gram*.

Abstracts / Résumés des interventions

Nicholas Asher : Intonation and Tag Questions : towards rethinking the prosodic/semantic interface

In this talk I will review some work carried out by Brian Reese and myself on tag questions. I will show how intonation changes the conveyed content of this construction. I will then make some general remarks about how to integrate intonational information into the computation of meaning.

Claire Beyssade, Elisabeth Delais & Jean-Marie Marandin : Intonation of questions in French

Partant de l'hypothèse selon laquelle le profil mélodique d'un énoncé peut être analysé en trois zones, que nous appelons pré-nucléaire, nucléaire et post-nucléaire, nous essaierons de décrire les profils mélodiques associés aux questions en français. Nous montrerons, en nous appuyant sur des exemples issus de différents corpus oraux, qu'il n'existe pas en français un contour nucléaire unique permettant de caractériser les questions, ni même un contour unique pour chaque type de question (question *wh* antéposé, question *wh* in situ, question déclarative etc). Nous montrerons en revanche qu'on peut chercher dans l'ancrage du contour nucléaire la marque de la différence de type syntaxique, ou, en d'autres termes, que les modalités d'ancrage du contour nucléaire permettent de faire le départ entre phrases déclaratives et phrases interrogatives.

Elisabet Engdahl : Declarative Questions in Swedish and Norwegian

Whereas all natural languages have means of systematically distinguishing questions from statements, speakers often don't rely on these in ordinary conversations. Instead they use statements (utterances with declarative form) which are interpreted as questions by the interlocutor, who responds as if it had been an interrogative. How then do dialogue participants know whether a declarative utterance is intended to be a statement or a question?

I have analyzed occurrences of declarative questions in spontaneous Swedish and Norwegian dialogues, using Ginzburg's (1996, to appear) notion *question under discussion*. The analyzed turns have declarative clause word order, do not contain any question particles and are not prosodically marked as questions, i.e. by rising intonation. Still it's clear from the addressee's next turn that s/he interprets the declarative as a question. The addressee typically replies by 'yes' or 'no' and sometimes elaborates this short answer. It turns out that the majority of the clear cases of declarative questions involve what Labov & Fanshel (1977) call B-events, i.e. facts that the addressee is likely to have more information about than the speaker. A statement about an A-event, i.e. facts involving the speaker, is not normally interpreted as a question, as can be seen from the addressee's uptake.

Declarative questions rarely seem to cause problems for the interlocutor. If the identification of the speech act depended on syntactic, morphological or prosodic cues, one might have expected declarative questions to be harder to decode, but this is not the case. The fact that declarative questions are handled so smoothly suggests that dialogue participants rapidly evaluate the content of the utterance with respect to the information states of the participants.

Ginzburg, Jonathan. 1996. The Semantics of Interrogatives. In S. Lappin, ed., *The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory*, 385–422. Oxford: Blackwell. **Ginzburg**, Jonathan. to appear. *A Semantics for Interaction in Dialogue*. CSLI and University of Chicago Press. **Labov, W. & D. Fanshel (1977)** *Therapeutic Discourse. Psychotherapy as Conversation*. New York: Academic Press.

Jean-Marie Marandin & Hiyon Yoo : Mouvements finaux dans les interrogatives. Construction d'un paradigme.

Nous nous intéressons aux mouvements mélodiques affectant la dernière syllabe du domaine nucléaire et celle du domaine post-nucléaire dans les interrogatives. A partir de l'observation de 60 interrogatives (interrogatives-qu à contour descendant produites par une même locutrice), nous construisons (par synthèse) le paradigme complet de ces mouvements. Nous testons en reconnaissance leur naturalité et leur signification. On présentera les résultats d'une première étude pilote, ainsi que l'hypothèse selon laquelle ces mouvements peuvent être analysés comme la réalisation du ton de frontière que nous avons postulé dans la définition du contour nucléaire.

Maria Safarova : Rising and falling y/n-interrogatives in English

In American English, about a half of y/n-interrogatives (i.e., questions with subject-verb inversion, as well as reversed and same polarity tag questions) are rising and about a half of them are falling. Why is that? It is generally assumed that falling - but not rising - y/n-interrogatives express speaker's bias. In my talk I will address the notion of bias, present results of some empirical studies and attempt to relate the findings to Hirschberg's claims about scalar implicature.