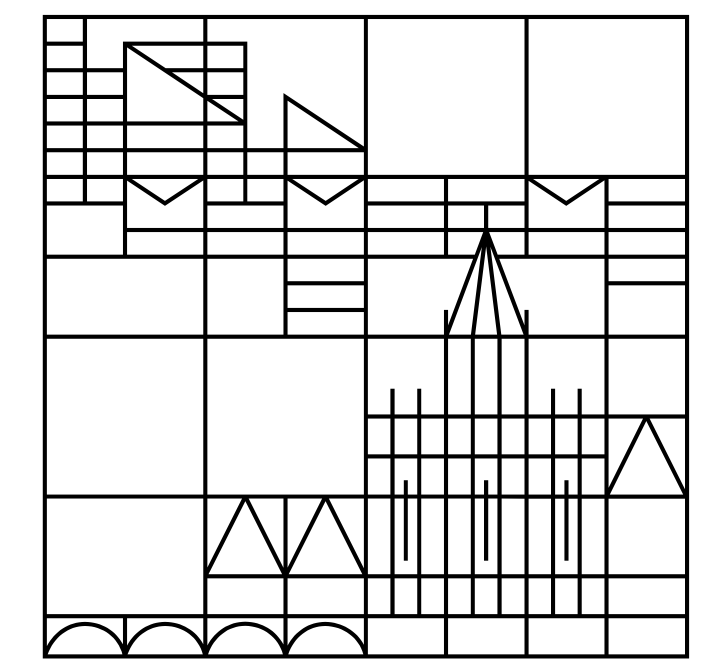# Question Variation: French wh-in-situ questions. An Interface Approach

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The Puzzle: Which question would French speaker choose:

1. **Qu**'est-ce que tu fais ce soir?	2. Tu fais **quoi** ce soir?
What (+est-ce que) you do tonight	You do what tonight

"What are you doing tonight?"

Literature:
- Both wh-in-situ as well as wh-fronted questions are possible strategies to form questions in spoken continental French.
- Earlier proposals categorized these questions as "presuppositional" in that they should license a positive answer (e.g. Chang (1997), Cheng& Rooryck (2000), Boeckx (2000), Zubizarretra (2003)).
- More recent proposals (e.g. Adli (2006), Baunaz & Patin (2011), Hamlaoui (2010), (2011)) point out that fronted and in-situ license the same answers (i.e. in a standard Hamblin framework for questions).
- Nevertheless, it is still maintained that the distribution of in-situ questions is more pragmatically constrained.
- Currently, there seems to be agreement that the in-situ interrogatives convey givenness, in the sense that that the non-wh-part of the question has to be given (in a broad sense, i.e. evoked) to only keep the wh-word non-given.
- **=> Wh-in-situ require some notion of givenness.**

A fresh look at wh-in-situ questions:

Interrogatives without wh-fronting can have an information-seeking interpretation (WiQs) or an echo interpretation (Echos). They behave different pragmatically, syntactically and have different prosodic features.

Pragmatic distribution

Information-seeking Questions:
- Pose a subject-matter for inquiry
- Can be uttered out of the blue
- Propose a new topic or are part of a discourse strategy to find an answer to an ungoing question.
- No constraints
- Example:
  A: *"What did you eat tonight?"*
  B: *"I ate pasta tonight."*

Echo Questions:
- Investigate what has been said
- Not possible out of the blue
- Try to clarify the previous discourse move
- Have strict discourse and intonational constraints (parallelism)
- Example:
  B: *"I ate a skunk tonight."*
  A: *"You ate what (?!) tonight?"*

Syntactic Differences: well-formed surface structures in French in-situs

WiQ	Echo	Question Variation:	Manipulation
x	✓	Anne vient au concert avec qui?	Subject: full DP Object: full DP
x	✓	Anne vient avec qui?	Subject: full DP
✓	✓	Elle vient avec qui?	Subject: clitic
✓	✓	Elle vient avec qui, Anne?	Subject: dislocated
x	✓	Elle vient au concert avec qui?	Subject: clitic Object: full DP
✓	✓ (?)	Elle vient avec qui au concert?	Subject: clitic Object: word order
✓	✓ (?)	Elle y vient avec qui, Anne, au concert?	Subject: dislocation Object: dislocated

Issue:
- WiQs and Echos do not show the same surface structure:
  - For WiQs, **full DPs** cannot appear as arguments, only clitics.
  - For Echos, **full DPs** are fine.
- When reference to the clitic cannot be provided by the context, WiQs use syntactical means to remain minimal.
- WiQs use word order variation, (left and right) dislocation or clefting.

WiQs are only possible with clitics, no matter the "givennes" status of the arguments.

Where is the sense of „givenness" coming from?
- The inference that all referents are cliticized can be confounded with „givenness".
- However, dislocation is an information-structuring move and **not** derived by the need to mark givenness (De Cat (2007) and Delais-Roussarie et.al. (2004), e.g. contra claims in Hamlaoui (2011)):
- Example (indefinite and brand-new dislocated element):
  (1) You are visiting your brother in a new city. You want to buy a newspaper in the morning. You ask him:
  A: Je trouve ça   où   , un tabac ?
    I   find   that where   a kiosk
    "Where can I find a kiosk?"

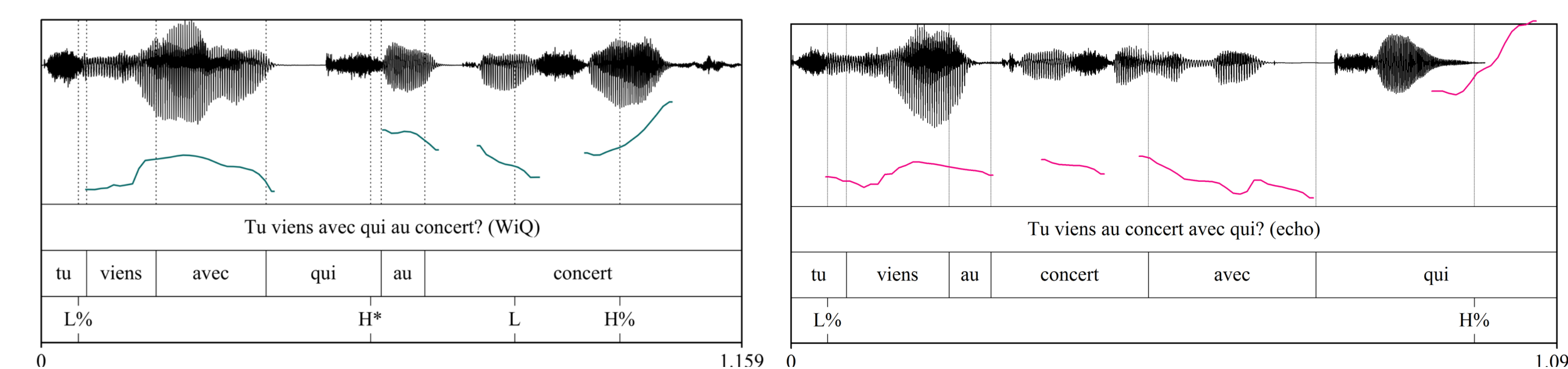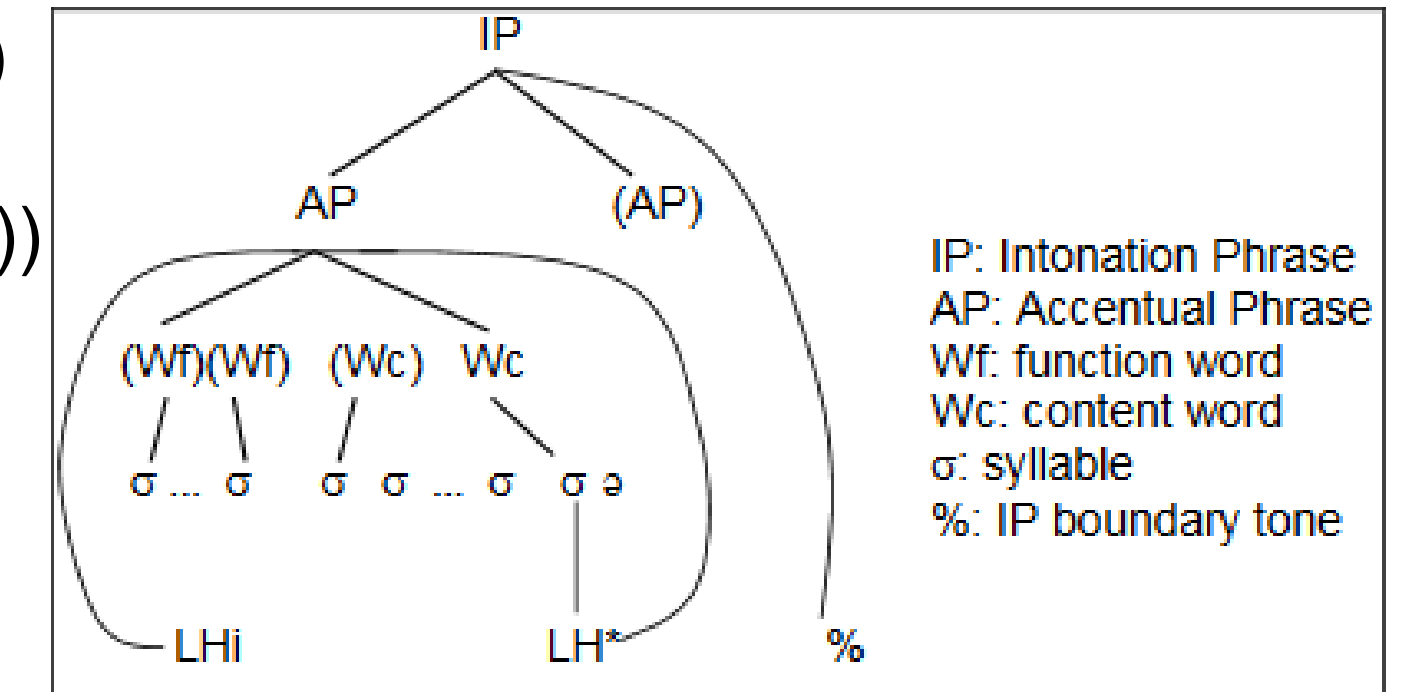## Other syntactic strategies driven by prosodic constraints: Focus

Focus realization is dispreferred in those cases, in which focus does not correspond to a default phrasing. If permitted by the syntax, clefting is used (Féry (2001)).

(Who has climbed the mountain?)	=> preferred clefted structure:
(2a) ***Anne** a escaladé la montagne.	(2b) C'est **Anne** qui a escaladé la montagne
Anne has climbed the montain	It is Anne that has climbed the mountain
*"**Anne** has climbed the mountain"*	*"**Anne** has climbed the mountain"*

(What did Anne climb?)	=> preferred clefted structure:
(3a) *Anne a escaladé **la montagne**.	(2b) C'est **la montagne** que Anne a escaladée.
Anne has climbed the montain	It is the mountain that Anne has climbed
*"Anne has climbed **the mountain**"*	*"Anne has climbed **the mountain**"*

Proposal: WiQs form a single Accentual Phrase (AP).
Constraint: The wh-word, the verb + arguments have to fit in one AP

Prosodic Cues to French WiQs:
- French (unlike other Romance languages) possesses no freely applicable lexical stress (e.g. Delais-Roussarie et. al. (2015))
- Stress-marking is generated by the position of the word in the sentence.
- A sentence is divided into Intonational phrases (IPs)
- IPs are again divided into accentual phrases (APs)

IP: Intonation Phrase
AP: Accentual Phrase
Wf: function word
Wc: content word
σ: syllable
%: IP boundary tone

Jun & Fougeron (2002): AP structure

- A word gets stress when it occupies the right-most position of an AP or the last of an IP
- Jun & Fougeron (2002): AP-prosody is default movement pattern of /L(HiL)H*/
- The final H* is the pitch accent.
- An AP can contain one or more content words plus function fords.

Tu viens avec qui au concert? (WiQ)

Tu viens au concert avec qui? (echo)

WiQ prosody: H* is assigned to the wh-word "qui" at the end of the first AP, while the object is outside of the first AP. Here, an additional boundary rise H% is on "concert".

Echo prosody: The wh-word gets sentence stress by closing the IP with the boundary tone H% at a much higher pitch. **Only in echos can full DPs be dephrased.**

Conclusion:
- From the AP constraint follows:
  - Use of clitics
  - Syntactic restructuring with dislocation and clefts
  - Appearance of "givenness" as a byproduct

Future work:
- Where is this constraint coming from?
  - Are wh-insitu questions tied to the prosody of declaratives?
  - How is the interplay between prosody, syntax and information structure?
  - What drives the different prosodic features in interrogative sentences?
  - …

(suggestions are very welcome!)

References: Adli. 2006. French wh-in-situ questions and syntactic optionality. • Baunaz &Patin. 2011. Prosody refers to semantic factors. • Boeckx. 2000. Decomposing French questions. • Bošković. 1998. LF movement and the Minimalist program. • Chang. 1997. Wh-in-situ phenomena in French. • Cheng & Rooryck. 2000. Licensing wh-in-situ. • Delais-Roussarie et. al. 2004. Dislocation. In: French Semantics. • Delais-Roussarie et. al. 2015. Intonational Phonology of French. • Déprez et al. 2012. Interfacing information and prosody: French wh-in situ. • Déprez et al. 2013. Interaction of syntax, prosody, and discourse in licensing French wh-in-situ questions. • Féry. 2001. Focus and phrasing in French. • Hamlaoui. 2011. On the role of phonology and discourse in Francilian French wh-questions. • Jun & Fougeron. 2002. Realizations of accentual phrase in French intonation.

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