

**Regularity and Variation**  
**in French Direct Interrogatives:**  
**The Morphosyntax and Intonation of Question**  
**Forms in Reality TV Shows, Audio Books and**  
**Teaching Materials**

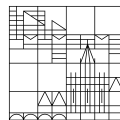
**Thesis submitted**  
**for the degree of**  
**Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.)**

by

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at the

Universität  
Konstanz



*Geisteswissenschaftliche Sektion*

Linguistics

Konstanz/Constance, 2019

Date of oral exam: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019

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## Summary (English version)

In this thesis, I investigate the morphosyntactic and intonational variation of French direct interrogatives. More precisely, I examine language use with regard to the choice of inversion, the interrogative particle and the sentence-final intonation pattern. The selection of question forms shall not only be qualitatively and quantitatively described, but also be systematised by detecting influence factors and their effect sizes.

For this purpose, I conducted four studies. The first of my studies investigates the intuitions and beliefs of a hundred native speakers of hexagonal French about concrete interrogatives and possible contexts. By means of a questionnaire, previous hypotheses on morphosyntactic variation are tested and further developed. Put in a nutshell, one can say that inversion is indeed regarded as more formal, and variation in *wh*-interrogatives highly depends on the question word. In the second study, almost three thousand interrogatives uttered in French reality TV shows are investigated. The most important findings of this study are that there are several linguistic factors (e.g. question word, semantic type and subject type), but also extralinguistic factors, such as pragmatic meaning (e.g. reflection question vs. information request) and speech type (e.g. off-voice comment vs. on-screen interaction), which influence the – morphosyntactic and intonational – form of a question. The third study comprises an automatised analysis of the morphosyntactic form of all sentences ending in a question-mark of ten detective novels as well as the manual analysis of all ‘where’-questions and a comparable sample of yes/no-interrogatives pronounced in the novels’ audio-book versions. Also here, linguistic factors, pragmatics and speech type (i.e. narration vs. direct speech) play an essential role: Inversion is more likely in *wh*-interrogatives than in yes/no-interrogatives, questions that merely explicate thoughts are significantly more often morphosyntactically marked, and direct speech promotes the use of straight word order and final rises. One of this study’s most important additional findings is that *wh*-postverbal interrogatives are pronounced more often with a final rise than *wh*-preverbal ones, but both types do exist with final rises as well as final falls. In the fourth and last study, a pedagogical norm is developed and compared to the current state of teaching by examining the interrogatives of two German and two French FLE-textbooks for beginners. In this study, it is mainly shown that the prevalence of declarative structures in spoken language is reflected, but at least in the German materials there seems to be an unauthentic overuse of *wh*-questions with *EST-CE QUE*. Also, intonational variation is represented in a more or less authentic way, but explicitly taught rules tend to be inaccurate with regard to authentic language use. The last chapter compiles the results of all four studies and draws conclusions. All in all, it is concluded that there is at least some regularity in the variation of French interrogative forms.

As for morphosyntactic variation, there are some consistencies in the use of the question particle and subject-verb inversion. For instance, if a question shall be put as overtly interrogative (e.g. because the

interlocutor has not given an answer to the previous utterance), the use of *EST-CE QUE* is expected. Also, the question word *QUE* is the only question word commonly used in periphrastic structures (i.e. structures with *EST-CE QUE*), so the mere fact of a question being a ‘what’-question makes the use of the question particle more likely. In contrast, word order depends mostly on the speech type: Conceptually written interrogatives (such as scripted voice-overs in reality TV, narrative parts in novels or instructions in textbooks) seem to be the only ones disavouring straight word order. In spoken language, inversion normally only occurs in formal or ritualised situations (e.g. during wedding ceremonies) or in quasi-lexicalised structures (e.g. *Comment allez-vous ?*). Indeed, frequency in use plays an important role all together. Certain structures (e.g. *Comment ça va ?*), which are very common in every-day interactions, are virtually lexicalised and seem to block the use of other – theoretically possible – structures (e.g. <sup>?</sup>*Comment est-ce que ça va ?* and <sup>?</sup>*Ça va comment ?*). The choice of a morphosyntactic variant is thus partly predictable by the intended meaning, speech type and the degree of formality, but also by its general frequency or lexicalisation status. On the other hand, there is evidence that, at least for some situations, there are also cases of completely free variation. Some morphosyntactic variants (e.g. *C’est quoi ?* and *Qu’est-ce que c’est ?*) can thus be considered as (partially) synonymous structures.

As for intonational variation, the choice of a sentence-final contour is shown to be connected to the interrogative’s information gap (yes/no-interrogatives (=>missing truth value), wh-interrogatives (=>missing constituent) and disjunctive interrogatives (=>missing selection of one alternative)) and – as applicable – wh-word position (i.e. preverbal vs. postverbal), but it is certainly even more dependent on the utterer’s meaning (i.e. pragmatic intention aka communicative sense (cf. Löbner 2003), and part of discourse unit (i.e. macro-syntactic function). Although disjunctive and wh-interrogatives are more often falling than yes/no-interrogatives and wh-postverbal interrogatives are more often rising than their wh-preverbal counterparts, such a systematisation does not seem to be based on strict constraints: Wh-fronted structures can too be rising, and question-word final structures and yes/no-interrogatives can too be falling. Likewise, morphosyntactic marking certainly gives greater leeway in intonational patterns, but it does not automatically lead to a falling contour. On the other hand, if a question is presented as a fact (i.e. ‘The question is...’) or as the last item of a list, it will definitely be pronounced with a final fall.

On the whole, it is shown that the forms of French direct interrogatives can be only partly systematised. Variation in French interrogatives is hence regular – not in the sense of ‘plainly systematic’, but in the sense of ‘very common’. This goes for morphosyntax as well as intonation.

## Zusammenfassung (deutsche Version)

In meiner Arbeit geht es um die morphosyntaktische und intonatorische Variation direkter Interrogativsätze im Französischen. Genauer gesagt untersuche ich den Sprachgebrauch hinsichtlich der Wahl von Inversion und Fragepartikel bzw. des satzfinalen Tonhöhenverlaufs. Die Wahl der Frageform soll dabei nicht nur beschrieben und empirisch erfasst werden, sondern es sollen auch Faktoren ermittelt werden, die diese Wahl systematisieren.

Dazu habe ich vier Studien erstellt. Die erste meiner Studien untersucht die Intuitionen und Überzeugungen von hundert Muttersprachlern des hexagonalen Französischs hinsichtlich konkreter Fragesätze und möglicher Kontexte. Mittels eines Fragebogens werden bereits aufgestellte Hypothesen bezüglich morphosyntaktischer Variation überprüft und weiterentwickelt. Will man die Ergebnisse auf einen einzigen Satz herunterbrechen, so kann man festhalten, dass Inversion tatsächlich als formeller angesehen wird und die Variation in W-Fragen zusätzlich stark vom Fragewort abhängt. In der zweiten Studie untersuche ich dann fast drei tausend Interrogativsätze, die im französischen Reality TV geäußert wurden. Diese Studie hat ergeben, dass die – morphosyntaktische und intonatorische – Form einer Frage von einer Vielzahl von innersprachlichen (z.B. Fragewort, semantischer Typ und Subjekttyp) und außersprachliche Faktoren wie pragmatische Bedeutung (z.B. reflektierende vs. informationssuchende Frage) und Redeart (z.B. Kommentar der Off-Stimme vs. Interaktion zwischen Kandidaten) beeinflusst wird. Die dritte Studie knüpft an diese Faktoren an und umfasst sowohl eine automatisierte Analyse der Morphosyntax aller auf ein Fragezeichen endenden Sätze aus zehn Kriminalromanen als auch die manuelle Analyse der Morphosyntax und Intonation einer Teilstichprobe von ihnen. Diese Teilstichprobe umfasst alle Fragesätze mit *où* ('wo') und dieselbe Anzahl vergleichbarer Entscheidungsfragen, welche in der Hörbuchversion der Kriminalromane vorkommen. Auch hier spielen linguistische Faktoren, Pragmatik und Redeart (d.h. hier Narration vs. direkte Rede) eine essentielle Rolle: Inversion ist in Ergänzungsfragen wahrscheinlicher als in Entscheidungsfragen, reflektierende Fragen sind signifikant häufiger morphosyntaktisch markiert als informationssuchende, und direkte Rede fördert Nicht-Inversion und einen finalen Anstieg der Tonhöhe. Eines der wichtigsten zusätzlichen Ergebnisse dieser Studie ist, dass Interrogativstrukturen zwar mit postverbalem Fragewort häufiger mit steigender Intonation gesprochen werden als solche mit präverbalem Fragewort, aber dass beide Typen sowohl mit einem Tonhöhenanstieg als auch mit einem Tonhöhenabfall existieren. In der vierten und letzten Studie wird eine pädagogische Norm etabliert und mit der aktuellen Unterrichtspraxis verglichen, indem die Interrogativsätze von zwei deutschen und zwei französischen Französisch-als-Fremdsprache-Lehrbüchern für Anfänger morphosyntaktisch und intonatorisch analysiert werden. In dieser Studie wird in erster Linie deutlich, dass die weite Verbreitung von Strukturen mit nicht-invertierter Wortstellung in authentisch

gesprochener Sprache durchaus reflektiert wird, aber zumindest in den deutschen Lehrwerken scheint *EST-CE QUE* in W-Fragen übermäßig oft eingesetzt zu werden, was dem natürlichen Sprachgebrauch (d.h. dem Sprachgebrauch außerhalb des Unterrichtskontextes) entgegensteht. Außerdem ist festzuhalten, dass intonatorische Variation zwar mehr oder weniger authentisch repräsentiert wird, explizit unterrichtete Regeln aber eher weniger den tatsächlichen Sprachgebrauch widerspiegeln. Das letzte Kapitel trägt die Ergebnisse der vier Studien zusammen und zieht Schlüsse daraus. Letztendlich zeigt sich, dass die Variation in französischen Interrogativsätzen immerhin zu einem Teil regelmäßig – und somit vorhersagbar – ist.

Was die morphosyntaktische Variation betrifft, gibt es gleich mehrere Regelmäßigkeiten in der Benutzung der Fragepartikel und von Subjekt-Verb-Inversion. Wenn der Fragestatus einer Frage z.B. betont werden soll (z.B. weil der Gesprächspartner keine Antwort auf die vorausgehende Äußerung gegeben hat) ist der Gebrauch von *EST-CE QUE* zu erwarten. Gleichmaßen erhöht das Fragewort *QUE* ('was') die Wahrscheinlichkeit des Gebrauchs von *EST-CE QUE*, da dieses Fragewort das einzige ist, welches nicht nur in Ausnahmefällen in periphrastischen Strukturen (d.h. Strukturen mit *EST-CE QUE*) verwendet wird. Im Gegensatz dazu hängt die Wortstellung hauptsächlich von der Redart ab: Konzeptuell geschriebene Interrogativsätze (wie geskriptete Kommentare oder narrative Passagen in Romanen) scheinen die einzigen zu sein, welche in offensichtlichem Maße Inversion fördern. In (medial) gesprochener Sprache kommt Inversion hingegen fast ausschließlich in formellen oder ritualisierten Situationen (z.B. während der Hochzeitszeremonie) bzw. in quasi-lexikalisierten Strukturen (z.B. *Comment allez-vous ?*) vor. In der Tat ist es so, dass die generelle Häufigkeit eines Frageausdrucks eine nicht zu vernachlässigende Rolle spielt. Gewisse Strukturen (z.B. *Comment ça va ?*), welche in alltäglichen Interaktionen weit verbreitet sind, sind nahezu eingefroren und scheinen den Gebrauch anderer – theoretisch möglicher – Strukturen zu blockieren (z.B. *?Comment est-ce que ça va ?* und *?Ça va comment ?*). Die Wahl einer morphosyntaktischen Variante ist daher teilweise vorhersagbar durch deren intendierte Bedeutung, Redart und Grad der Formalität, aber auch durch ihre generelle Häufigkeit bzw. ihren Grad an Lexikalisierung. Andererseits gibt es aber auch Belege dafür, dass zumindest in manchen Situationen Strukturen in freier Variation vorliegen. Einige morphosyntaktische Varianten (z.B. *C'est quoi ?* und *Qu'est-ce que c'est ?*) können demzufolge als (partiell) synonyme Strukturen angenommen werden.

Was die intonatorische Variation betrifft, kann die Wahl des satzfinalen Tonhöhenverlaufs tendenziell durch die Art der Informationslücke (d.h. Wahrheitswert vs. fehlende Konstituente vs. Auswahl von Alternativen) und die Fragewort-Position (d.h. präverbal vs. postverbal) vorhergesagt werden. In noch höherem Maße scheint das Intonationsmuster jedoch von der Sprecherbedeutung (d.h. der pragmatischen Intention) und der Rolle der Äußerung in Bezug auf den gesamten Diskurs (d.h.



makrosyntaktische Funktion) bestimmt zu werden. Obwohl disjunktive und W-Fragen häufiger fallende Intonation aufweisen als Ja/Nein-Fragen und wh-in-situ-Fragesätze öfter steigende Intonation aufweisen als ihre wh-ex-situ-Äquivalente, scheint eine solche Systematisierung nicht auf kategorischen Restriktionen zu beruhen: Die Tonhöhe kann auch bei Fragewort-initialen Strukturen ansteigen und bei Fragewort-finalen Strukturen fallen. Gleichmaßen liefert die morphosyntaktische Markierung zweifelsfrei mehr Spielraum in Bezug auf die Wahl von intonatorischen Mustern, aber sie führt keineswegs automatisch zu einer fallenden Kontur. Wird eine Frage dagegen als eine Tatsache (d.h. '... – das ist hier die Frage.') oder als das letzte Element einer Liste präsentiert, wird sie definitiv mit einem finalen Tonhöhenabfall artikuliert.

Insgesamt wird gezeigt, dass die Formenwahl französischer direkter Interrogativsätze nur teilweise systematisiert werden kann. Variation in französischen Fragesätzen ist somit regulär – nicht im Sinne von 'völlig systematisch', sondern im Sinne von 'sehr verbreitet'. Dies trifft sowohl auf Morphosyntax als auch auf Intonation zu.

## Acknowledgements

Since my mother tongue is the language closest to my thoughts and heart, I will switch to German for expressing my sincerest thanks to the people who accompanied me throughout the working process of this thesis.

*Zunächst einmal möchte ich meinem Lebensgefährten, meinen Freunden und meinen Eltern danken, dass sie mich stets unterstützt haben, wo sie nur konnten. Es liegt auf der Hand, dass das Verfassen einer längeren wissenschaftlichen Arbeit nur möglich ist, wenn einem der Rücken freigehalten wird. Dementsprechend möchte ich auch meinem Erstbetreuer (bzw. der Universität Konstanz und dem Land Baden-Württemberg) und der Region Rhône-Alpes<sup>1</sup> meinen Dank aussprechen für die finanzielle Sicherheit während meines Schreibprojektes. Meine damit verbundene Lehrtätigkeit an der Universität Konstanz und mein Forschungsaufenthalt in Lyon haben mich um zahlreiche Erfahrungen bereichert und mir zudem auch große Freude bereitet. Darüber hinaus möchte ich mich bei meiner Schreibgruppe bedanken, die mir nicht nur den interdisziplinären Austausch ermöglichte, sondern auch für den zur Ausarbeitung einzelner Textabschnitte nötigen Zeitdruck sorgte. Auch die Anmerkungen von zahlreichen Kollegen und Experten, wie u.a. Bettina Braun, Elisabeth Delais-Roussarie, Simon Dold, Katharina Kaiser, Ramona Wallner, Carmen Widera und Michael Zimmermann, haben mir sehr geholfen. Abschließend würde ich gerne hinzufügen, dass meine beiden Betreuer (Georg Kaiser und Jenny Doetjes) sowohl mit ihren äußerst hilfreichen Kommentaren als auch durch die Möglichkeiten, meine Arbeit auf zahlreichen Konferenzen & Workshops zu präsentieren und diskutieren, einen wesentlichen Beitrag geleistet haben. Insbesondere die Tatsache, dass mir eine nahezu uneingeschränkte Themen- und Methodenwahl sowie meine ganz persönliche Schwerpunktsetzung zugestanden wurde, eröffnete mir Möglichkeiten, von welchen die meisten Promovierenden nur träumen können. Ohne ihre Hilfe – und ihr Vertrauen in mich – wäre eine Arbeit in dieser Form nicht möglich gewesen.*

Finally, I would like to thank every single reader of this thesis. Any piece of writing would be of no use if it was not read. So, last but not least, I would like to thank you for doing me the honour of reading my thesis.<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> During my semester at the ENS Lyon, I received a scholarship of the programme CMIRA.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, I will always be grateful for useful comments and constructive criticism, so feel free to contact me under [janina.reinhardt@uni-konstanz.de](mailto:janina.reinhardt@uni-konstanz.de).

## Reading guide

**Abbreviations:** Shortened word forms or encodings are explained in the list of abbreviations (see next page).

**Abstract:** Every main chapter (i.e. chapters four to seven) is preceded by a short paragraph that outlines the structure and summarises the most important findings of the study.

**Chapters:** The chapters are separately readable, but cross-references are made on a regular basis. If interested in a particular study, the reader can skip the chapters preceding it and only look up the details (s)he needs.

**Examples:** In order to visibly distinguish examples from my three corpora from other ones, I decided to use blue colour for examples taken from one of the corpora. When examples are in black, they are either constructed or taken from another source. As cross-references may be made to different chapters, I chose to chronologically number all examples without resetting the example number at any point.

**Percentages:** In tables, percentages may exceed one hundred due to rounding methods. Numbers were rounded to tenths.

**Phonetic transcriptions:** For reasons of practicality, phonetic transcriptions will be given in SAMPA.

## List of abbreviations

- \* *This form is not part of the French language system*
- ? *Is unclear whether this form is part of the French language system*
- {QE}={s/S} *wh-word with question particle which function together as the subject + (conjugated) verb (= wh-preverbal structure with question particle and without a subjective non-wh element)*
- ADDI *L'addition s'il vous plaît*
- BVAC *Bienvenue au camping (reality TV show)*
- BVAH *Bienvenue à l'hôtel (reality TV show)*
- BVCN *Bienvenue chez nous (reality TV show)*
- CHAP *Chasseurs d'appart' (reality TV show)*
- CLD *subject type of clitically doubled clitic ; 's' + 's'*
- CLO *subject type of clitic only; 's'*
- CO *Speech type of off-voice comment*
- COM *structures with declarative word order and implicit wh-phrase; see also 'sVØ' and 'SVØ'*
- cQksV *C'est + wh-word + que + clitic subject + (conjugated) verb; e.g. 'C'est où que tu vas ?'*
- CSQD *Cinq salons qui décoiffent (reality TV show)*
- DEC *structures with declarative word order without a question word; see also 'sV' and 'SV'*
- DSI *disjunctive interrogative (aka alternative-question form)*
- DSQ *Disjunctive Question, i.e. a question offering several explicit answer alternatives*
- ELL *elliptical structures other than ELS, INF and TAG, such as subject or wh-word only*
- ELS *Elliptical question forms with 'si' as introducing element; structure typically used for suggestions*
- ESK *question form with the question particle 'est-ce que', aka periphrastic interrogative; see also 'EsV', 'ESV', 'QEsV', and 'QESV'*
- EsV *'est-ce que' + pronominal subject + (conjugated) verb (= periphrastic interrogative without question word)*
- ESV *'est-ce que' + noun subject + (conjugated) verb (= periphrastic structure without question word)*
- FRO *wh-fronted structures with declarative word order; see also 'QsV' and 'QSV'*
- H% *high boundary tone, i.e. a high tone associated with the end of an intonation phrase*
- H\* *high pitch accent, i.e. a high tone associated with a prominent syllable*
- H\*H% *final simple rise, i.e. the last stressed syllable (+following syllable) is perceived as rising or staying high*
- H\*L% *final risefall, i.e. the last stressed syllable (+following syllable) is perceived as first rising or staying high and then falling*
- IA *Speech type of on-screen interaction*
- INC *complex clitic inversion; see also 'SVs' and 'QSVs'*
- INF *infinitive question, see also 'QV<sub>nc</sub>'*
- INS *stylistic inversion; see also 'QVS'*
- INV *simple clitic inversion; see also 'Vs' and 'QVs'*
- IW *Speech Type of Interview*
- L% *low boundary tone, i.e. a low tone associated with the end of an intonation phrase*
- L\* *low pitch accent, i.e. a low tone associated with a prominent syllable*
- L\*H% *final fall-rise, i.e. the last stressed syllable (+following syllable) is perceived as first falling or staying low and then rising*
- L\*L% *final simple fall, i.e. the last stressed syllable (+following syllable) is perceived as falling or staying low*
- MBOU *La meilleure boulangerie de France*
- NLC *subject type of clitically doubled long (= 2 or more lexemes) nominal phrase; 'S<sub>long</sub>' + 's'*
- NLO *subject type of long (=2 or more lexemes) nominal phrase; 'S<sub>long</sub>'*
- NNN *undeterminable value for a certain variable*
- NP *nominal phrase*
- NPC *subject type of clitically doubled non-clitic; 'S' + 's'*
- NPO *subject type of non-clitic only; 'S'*
- NQO *subject type of quantifying indefinite pronoun*
- NSC *subject type of clitically doubled short (=1 lexeme) noun phrase; 'S<sub>short</sub>' + 's'*
- NSO *subject type of short (=1 lexeme) noun phrase; 'S<sub>short</sub>'*
- NUL *subject type of null subject*
- PI *Speech type of off-voice pseudo-interaction*

- Q={s/S}V *wh-word functioning as subject + (conjugated) verb (= wh-preverbal structure without a subjective non-wh element)*
- Qck{s/S}V *wh-word + c'est qu{e/i} + subject + (conjugated) verb*
- QEsV *wh-word + 'est-ce que' + pronominal subject + (conjugated) verb (= periphrastic structure with question word)*
- QESV *wh-word + 'est-ce que' + noun subject + (conjugated) verb (= periphrastic structure with question word)*
- QeVS *wh-word + 'est-ce que' + (conjugated) verb + pronominal subject (= periphrastic structure with question word and stylistic inversion)*
- QI *Speech type of quiz introduction*
- QksV *wh-word + 'que' + pronominal subject + (conjugated) verb (= reduced periphrastic structure with question word)*
- QkSV *wh-word + 'que' + nominal subject + (conjugated) verb (= reduced periphrastic structure with question word)*
- QkVS *wh-word + 'que' + (conjugated) verb + nominal subject (= reduced periphrastic structure with question word and stylistic inversion)*
- QsV *wh-word + pronominal subject + (conjugated) verb (= declarative interrogative with ex-situ question word), wh-word + pronominal subject + (conjugated) verb (= wh-preverbal structure with declarative word order)*
- QSV *wh-word + noun subject + (conjugated) verb (= wh-preverbal structure with declarative word order)*
- QSVs *wh-word + noun subject + (conjugated) verb + pronominal subject (= structure with complex clitic inversion and a wh-word)*
- QU *Speech type of SMS quiz*
- QUAM *Quatre mariages pour une lune de miel*
- QV *infinitive question, i.e. wh-word + infinitive*
- QVs *wh-word + (conjugated) verb + pronominal subject (= wh-interrogative with simple clitic inversion), wh-word + (conjugated) Verb + pronominal subject (= structure with simple clitic inversion and wh-word)*
- QVS *wh-word + (conjugated) verb + non-pronominal subject (= stylistically inverted interrogative), wh-word + (conjugated) verb + noun subject (= structure with stylistic inversion)*
- RTV *Reality television*
- SHOP *Les reines du shopping (reality TV show)*
- SIT *wh-in-situ (= wh-postverbal structure, always with declarative word order; see also 'sVQ' and 'SVQ')*
- st *semitone*
- SUB *structure with a wh-pronoun functioning as the subject pronoun, structures with a wh-subject; see also 'Q={s/S}V' and '{QE}={s/S}V'*
- sV *pronominal subject + (conjugated) verb (= structure with declarative word order and without a wh-word)*
- SV *noun subject + (conjugated) verb (= structure with declarative word order and without a wh-word)*
- sV∅ *pronominal subject + (conjugated) verb (= structure with declarative word and no question word although asking for a constituent)*
- SV∅ *noun subject + (conjugated) verb (= structure with declarative word and no question word although asking for a constituent)*
- sVQ *pronominal subject + (conjugated) verb + wh-word (= wh-postverbal structure with declarative word order aka wh-in-situ structure)*
- SVQ *noun subject + (conjugated) verb + wh-word (= wh-postverbal structure with declarative word order)*
- SVs *noun subject + (conjugated) verb + pronominal subject (= structure with complex clitic inversion but without a wh-word)*
- sVt *pronominal subject + (conjugated) verb + question tag (= structure with declarative word order and a question tag)*
- SVt *noun subject + (conjugated) verb + question tag (= structure with declarative word order and a question tag)*
- T% *boundary tone, i.e. a high or low tone associated with the end of an intonation phrase*
- T\* *pitch accent, i.e. a high or low tone associated with a prominent syllable*
- TAG *tagged declarative structures*
- UDPP *Un dîner presque parfait (reality TV show)*
- Vs *(conjugated) verb + pronominal subject (= structure with simple clitic inversion and without wh-word)*

WHI *wh-interrogative (aka partial or constituent-question form)*

WHO *subject type of wh-phrase only*

WHQ *Wh-question, i.e. a question semantically requiring some complementary information as its answer*

YNI *yes/no-interrogative (aka total-question form)*

YNQ *Yes/no-question, i.e. a question that is semantically offering the choice between the answers 'yes' and 'no'*

## 1. Introduction: *Pourquoi les interrogatives et pourquoi ces corpus ?*

When learning French as a foreign language, one cannot but be overwhelmed by the number and diversity of question forms. French interrogatives are a typical instance of polymorphism (Valdman 1967: 5), and the French interrogative system is very complex. As (Behnstedt 1973: 207) puts it, it seems to be a real *buisson touffu* ('dense bush'). Knowing that there are several morphosyntactic as well as intonational variants of French interrogatives, the question arises whether those different forms are equivalents or used under different conditions (see also Beyssade 2006: 173f.).

This is precisely what numerous linguists have tried to find out, inter alia Ashby (1977), Behnstedt (1973), Borillo (1978), Boucher (2010), Coveney (2002), Dewaele (1999), Druetta (2009), Elsig (2009), Fromageat (1938), Hamlaoui (2010), Myers (2007), Pohl (1965), and Quillard (2000). Interrogation kindles interest for the very reason that it comprises various interfaces; it is "le véritable carrefour linguistique où se rencontrent la prosodie, la morpho-syntaxe, la sémantique et la pragmatique"<sup>3</sup> (Boucher 1994). As has been shown, there is a whole bunch of linguistic and extralinguistic factors determining the use of interrogative constructions. Considering the amount of work that has already been published on the variation of questions, one could think that everything on this topic has already been said. However, up to now, data interpretation seems to be highly controversial. Also, it was only recently that the focus of interest shifted to the mapping of intonation to morphosyntax and/or pragmatic meaning (see Cheng & Rooryk 2000, Druetta 2009, Déprez et al. 2013, Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015). According to Escandell-Vidal (1998), word order and intonation may be related, but they should be regarded as two independent encoding systems. Hence, the morphosyntax-prosody interface leaves space for investigation, and it will be particularly interesting to look at the mapping of morphosyntax and intonation in interrogative constructions. Hitherto, this has only been done on the basis of small corpora (including small-scale experiments): Druetta analysed only 10% of his 800 questions intonationally, and this on a perception base without any prosodic transcription (Druetta 2009). Beyssade et al. (2007) analysed about 300 interrogatives for a study on the prosody of French interrogatives, but they did not present their data in a systematic way and did not indicate the proportions of the wh- and yes/no-questions nor of the three different genres (media speech, everyday conversations, playlets in a soundproof room) they included. As for Déprez et al.'s (2012) production study, interspeaker variation was significant although the study only comprised 12 participants (uttering 35 sentences each). Besides, they mixed speakers from France (10) with speakers from

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<sup>3</sup> English translation: 'the veritable linguistic intersection where prosody, morphosyntax, semantics and pragmatics meet'

Switzerland (2),<sup>4</sup> which might be problematic considering the small number of participants. The greatest problems of those studies are thus their insufficient systematisation, their limitation in terms of the representativeness of their sample, and the small amount of data taken into consideration. As far as I know, no corpus of interrogatives annotated intonationally reached four figures. For a structure with so many variables, or at least potentially contributing factors, a corpus of several hundred tokens will simply not suffice. In my thesis, I thus analyse a few thousand interrogatives, and I pay particular attention to the accountability of my analysis. Unfortunately, everyday speech is as good as impossible to be recorded (unless one is willing to break ethical rules and hide a microphone – and in that case, quality would be very bad anyway) and oral corpora are usually quite limited. Besides, it would be illusory to think that a dissertation project of an individual could consist in building a representative corpus of spoken French. Therefore, I decided to make a virtue out of necessity and specify my research by using recordings of reality television (RTV), audio books and teaching materials. These three corpora were not only easily available, but they also offered new perspectives. Most importantly though, they can be regarded as three different levels of language use: The candidates in RTV shows use language authentically (i.e. they interact/communicate), audio books are standardised readings of linguistic mimicry (i.e. oral language is imitated in conventional way), and teaching materials represent pedagogical standardisation by means of non-authentic input (i.e. an artificially standardised variety is presented). While conversations in RTV shows can thus be expected to be quite close to everyday spoken French, audio books and teaching materials are prone to a certain degree of normative adjustment. Variation can be expected to be substantially reduced, but – as will be shown – this reduction does not lead to a full regularisation of the use of French interrogatives.

My thesis will be structured in eight separately readable chapters. After the present chapter (i.e. chapter one), which merely introduces the topic by showing its relevance for scientific research, my focus of interest (i.e. the specified research questions) and the object of investigation (i.e. interrogatives/questions) are defined (see chapter two). Subsequently, the current state-of-the-art is summarised (see chapter three).

In chapter four, I present the results of a questionnaire survey, which I conducted for getting my bearings on how native speakers estimate morphosyntactic variation in interrogatives. By evaluating the questionnaire answers of the about a hundred participants, I could verify previous hypotheses, adjust them and develop new ones. This study functioned thus as as a first orientation which linguistic

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<sup>4</sup> This might seem unproblematic at first sight, but Delais-Roussarie et al. (2015) found that speakers of Swiss French showed an intonational pattern that differed from speakers of other varieties: Swiss speakers pronounced information-seeking yes/no-questions with a rise-fall while other speakers kept to simple rises or fall-rises.



and extralinguistic factors might have an impact on the choice of a morphosyntactic variant. Also, it gave insight into what native speakers attribute linguistic variation to.

Chapter five is dedicated to the analysis of a corpus of 30 reality TV show episodes. Not only interactions but also comments and quiz questions are examined. For this reason, reality TV is not only interesting as a source for questions of everyday communication, but also interesting in itself as a genre.<sup>5</sup> As Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Lorenzo-Dus (2013: 10f.) point out, micro-analyses of the language use in RTV has not been the main focus of interest of scholarship on RTV. This is thus an innovation of this thesis. Just as the authors suggested, I will advance the work on RTV “by providing systematic, close analysis of its textual practices” (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Lorenzo-Dus 2013: 10f.), giving an overview of the interrogatives used.

In chapter six, the interrogatives of ten contemporary detective novels are analysed. In the first part, the results obtained by an automatic morphosyntactic analysis of all sentences ending in a question mark are presented. Since the Perl script I wrote for this purpose has been published, the tool can also be used to analyse further texts and offers thus the means for future text research. In the second part, the intonational analysis of all *où*-questions and a comparable sample of yes/no-interrogatives is presented. More precisely, the F0-movement between the last stressed syllable (+ following unstressed syllable) and the preceding one is measured by Praat and used as an outcome variable in a linear regression model. Several factors, such as the position of the *wh*-word and morphosyntactic marking, are used as predictors. This chapters’ innovation is thus two-fold: On the one hand, an automatic analysis of morphosyntactic variants allows a much bigger amount of data and the comparison of texts. On the other hand, the evaluation of acoustic measurements of a data set restricted to one question word and a comparable set of yes/no-questions guarantees an empirically sound base for intonational variation. To my knowledge, no such corpus study has been carried out so far.

Another innovation will be the attempt to directly apply my results by drawing implications for *Français Langue Étrangère* (FLE) didactics (see chapter 7). By including previous research as well as the results of my questionnaire and corpus studies, I will conceive a pedagogical norm, in which morphosyntactic and intonational variation has its place and is introduced step by step. More precisely, I will use my findings to develop a syllabus of how to teach questions within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In a second step, this pedagogical norm will be compared to the actual state of FLE-didactics. For this purpose, teaching materials for beginners from France and Germany will be analysed. In particular, I will compare the implicit input (such as the interrogatives used in dialogues

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<sup>5</sup> The term *genre* should actually be replaced by *discourse*, as argue Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Lorenzo-Dus (2013: 9).

or reading-comprehension tasks) with the explicit rules (such as the instruction to use a rising sentence melody for yes/no-questions).

In the last chapter (i.e. chapter 8), I bring together the results of all four studies, first summarising the respective results and then drawing more general conclusions. In that connection, the questions posed in chapter two are answered. Without giving away too much, I can say that regularity and variation both have their place in the French interrogative system: To some extent, variation can indeed be regularised. What is though definitely the most regular phenomenon which can be observed is that French interrogatives vary a lot – morphosyntactically as well as intonationally.

## 2. Theoretical and methodological issues: *Qu'est-ce que les questions ?*<sup>6</sup>

### 2.1 Research questions and methodology: aims and limitations of this thesis

In the following two subsections, I will state the research questions (see 2.1.1) and discuss the methodology of authentic corpora (see 2.1.2).

#### 2.1.1 Stating the research questions

As the title of this thesis suggests, I am interested in the regularity and variation in French interrogatives. More precisely, the morphosyntactical and intonational form of direct questions shall be examined empirically. As the work of Druetta (2009), my research is supposed to be data-driven, leaving a priori assumptions on morphosyntactic and intonational analyses mostly aside. Consequently, I will focus on the question forms as they surface in authentic speech. Based on the findings, I will nonetheless be able to test previous hypotheses, draw conclusions and make new ones. The ultimate aim of this thesis will thus be to, first, describe the French interrogative system based on questionnaire answers and corpus data, and then to detect linguistic and extralinguistic factors which predict the form of a question. My thesis shall therefore be geared towards answering the following two broad questions:

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| A) How are questions realised (a) morphosyntactically and (b) intonationally?<br>B) What (I) linguistic and (II) extralinguistic factors have an impact on the choice of the<br>(a) morphosyntactic and (b) intonational form of a question? |
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These questions will be answered by means of four empirical studies. To show from which angle the different studies will approach these questions, I will conclude this subsection by formulating ten more precise questions which shall be answered in the different chapters of this thesis. The questions can be regarded as an aid to orientation. I will also come back to them in the summary part of the conclusion (see p. 379).

- 1) What do French native speakers put morphosyntactic variation down to? (chapter 4)
- 2) (To what degree) can questionnaire answers be systematised? (chapter 4)
- 3) What are the most common morphosyntactic question forms in reality TV, contemporary detective novels, and teaching materials? (chapters 5 to 7)
- 4) What are the most common final intonation contours of these question forms? (chapters 5 to 7)
- 5) What factors have an influence on the use of subject-verb inversion? (chapters 5 to 7)

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<sup>6</sup> English translation: 'What are (the) questions?' This question evokes a general definition of the term *question* as well as the concrete research questions of this thesis.

- 6) What factors have an influence on the use of the question particle *est-ce que*? (chapters 5 to 7)
- 7) (How) can one predict whether the wh-word will appear pre- or postverbally? (chapters 5 to 7)
- 8) What factors have an influence on the final intonation contour? (chapters 5 to 7)
- 9) How is interrogative variation taught in class? (chapter 7)
- 10) What guidelines for the teaching of interrogative variation can be developed? (chapter 7)

### 2.1.2 Methodological questions: The boon and bane of empirical research

Every approach has its advantages and its disadvantages. Having chosen a **data-driven approach** (see last subsection), time-consuming data collection and analyses were necessary. On the other hand, this enabled me to develop my own claims and to empirically support them. In order to get insight into native speaker's thoughts as well as native speakers' productions, I conducted a questionnaire survey (see chapter 4) as well as two corpus studies with production data (see chapters 5 and 6). Also, I analysed four textbooks for beginners of French as a foreign language (see chapter 7) for gaining knowledge about the classroom teaching of interrogatives. Of course, every of the respective methods has its pros and cons.

In the case of **questionnaires**, it is axiomatic that there are several shortcomings of this methodology: Acceptability is not always reflected in language use (see Adli 2015), participants' intuitions may be overwritten by their linguistic nurture (see chapter 4, p.126), and written forms are used for representing spoken speech (see also Druetta 2002: 81). Even so, they are a good method for gaining insight into native-speaker reflection on interrogative forms. By grouping participants and items, previous hypotheses can be tested, and new ones developed. As speakers are not always able to tell whether they use a certain form or not, answers should though not be misinterpreted as a direct indicator for authentic language production.

For the latter, **corpus studies** (see chapter 5 and 6)<sup>7</sup> were the most obvious choice of methodology. Case-based reasoning helps to be sure of one's ground; and knowing that the French interrogative system is highly complex, a solid base is vital. Also, corpus research is the only means of data collection which can provide speech in a non-laboratory setting. As opposed to experiments, it is not necessarily geared to test a particular hypothesis or structure. Therefore, it can give a more general and overall picture of a phenomenon instead of focussing on a detail. At first sight, corpora may seem the perfect means for casting light on variation phenomena: one does not entirely rely on grammaticality judgments, overall frequency distributions can be given, and statistical tests become available (see also Jacques 2005; Reinhardt 2016). Every methodological choice has though its downsides. Although I

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<sup>7</sup> Although chapter 7 is also a corpus study, it is not a study on authentic speech.

strongly believe that corpus studies are a boon for linguistic research, I have to admit that they also have their weaknesses. The methodology of corpus linguistics entails four major oxymorons: non-evidential evidence, inauthentic authenticity, testing the untestable, and subjective objectivity.

The first problem I encountered was that **corpus evidence is never unequivocal**: If there is positive evidence (i.e. if there are occurrences of a certain phenomenon), it may be due to a non-standard variant or even a performance error, and if there is negative evidence (i.e. if there are no occurrences of a certain phenomenon), the non-use of a certain structure does not mean that the structure is not part of the language system.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the evidence found is actually of no probative value, and when all is said and done, one will have to go back to introspection for testing the limits of the possible (Jacques 2005: 23). Luckily, this is only true for marginal phenomena: While low-frequent occurrences, such as for complex inversion or negated *wh*-questions, are certainly problematic, general frequency distributions and recurrent forms can be a convincing proof. Thanks to the corpus analyses of this thesis, it will be possible to contrast the statistical standard with the normative one (e.g. it will be shown that straight word order is the statistical standard in spoken French although prescriptive grammars may still keep to the use of inversion) and to test previous hypotheses (e.g. it will be possible to contradict Cheng & Rooryk 's (2000) claim that *wh*-in-situ structures are categorically rising). If one is aware of the limitations of the evidence found in corpora, at least some evidence is thus very well of evidential value.

Another problem arises when it comes to generalisability, as **'authentic corpora' are never authentic in the proper sense of the word**, which is 'conforming to an original so as to reproduce essential features'<sup>9</sup> (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary). By *authentic*, one might thus be tempted to understand 'truly representative'. Yet, authentic data are no more than speech that was produced in non-artificial situations of communication (Delais-Roussarie 2008), i.e. linguistic forms that were used for the purpose of communicating and not for linguistic research. In contrast, a representative ideal sample would portray its population in every detail. If we take Hexagonal French interrogatives to be the population, an ideal sample of question forms would thus have to reflect every single distributional aspect of the language system. Obviously, such a sample does not exist. Every corpus is a selection of situations, media and speakers/writers, which sometimes makes it hard to generalise findings. Corpus studies should therefore not be taken for studies on *the French language*. Rather, corpus studies can be seen as individual pieces of a mosaic: They may not divulge the overall picture, but they certainly contribute to it. Hence, findings can not always be used for generalisations and one has to be careful

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<sup>8</sup> In fact, in spontaneous speech data, only explicit corrections (e.g. parents correcting their children) can be taken as sort of negative evidence. However, even here, linguistic nurture may interfere with corrections (e.g. a structure that is sociostylistically marked as low may also lead to corrections or other sanctions of the speech community).

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/authentic> [03/06/2018]

when formulating conclusions (e.g. instead of simply saying that inversion is still quite frequent in French interrogatives, one should opt for saying that inverted structures are the predominant question form in off-voice comments in French reality TV), but even findings that cannot be generalised are valuable and may help to compose the mosaic of French interrogation.

The third problem is harder to dismiss. It concerns the **validity of statistical tests**, i.e. the accuracy and reliability of the conclusions drawn by mathematical evaluation. As empirical research and statistics are inseparable, it may come as a surprise that there is a statistically relevant problem inherent to data from authentic corpora: Since there is no way of controlling production, the testing of variation is not preset by several conditions. In contrast to experiments, the distribution of factors is thus never equal nor obvious in authentic data. Some influence factors will occur only rarely, and other ones may even remain undiscovered. Strictly speaking, corpus data do thus not fulfill the requirements for statistical testing (for more details on those requirements, see Baayen 2008). This is why authentic data will statistically never be as sound as experimental ones.

What is more, data cannot be tested directly, without being made measurable. In other words, the dependent and independent variables must be operationalised. This can be done by categorisation (e.g. labelling of nuclear configurations, see chapters 5 to 7) or by instrumental measurements (e.g. F0-measurement by Praat, see chapter 6 and 7). However, every operationalisation is theory-based and cannot be purely objective. Any data description thus implies an interpretation of the raw data (e.g. the description of tonal movement as a *final rise* implies an auditory or instrumental interpretation of the recording). This is the reason why the proclaimed **objectivity of corpus data is a myth**. Indeed, any data analysis highly depends on their annotation. To word it as a deliberate provocation: If the annotation is wrong, the results will be wrong. This is precisely why I decided against the inclusion of pragmatic types (see 2.2.2) into my corpus analyses: Types were not as categorical as I initially thought them to be. In fact, studies on pragmatics will be extremely difficult without *a priori* establishing clear situations. That said, I still believe that corpus data are very useful for the research on interrogative variation. The only limitation is that one needs to explicit one's choices and reasoning.<sup>10</sup> If data do not allow statistically sound generalisations, one should not try to pretend they would. Instead, in these cases one can explore the data, point out one's ideas, and keep them in mind for further research (e.g. for testing them in an experiment).

As I was also interested in the teaching of French interrogatives, I finally analysed four textbooks. The method of (qualitative and quantitative) **textbook analysis** was used to capture the typical input beginners of French as a foreign language receive. Here, one may object that textbooks are by no means the only source of input because the speech of the teacher, additional materials, and language

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<sup>10</sup> This is also why the next subsection is quite detailed.

contact outside of school will also be of importance. Yet, I think this is an adequate means to determine linguistic divergences from authentic language use. Also, this offers the possibility of making comparisons between the textbooks as well as within the textbooks. For the latter, the explicit introduction of linguistic forms and rules can be compared to the implicit input. What is more problematic is the fact that this method does not allow any conclusions on how successful the teaching of question forms actually is. Such a method does hence not cover all input pupils get neither does it capture the outcome of learning, but it is a first indication how interrogative variation is treated in school.

**In summary**, the methods certainly have their limitations, but their benefit prevails. The collection and interpretation of data is never unproblematic, but my empirical research will nonetheless make a decisive contribution to the research on French interrogatives.

## 2.2 Questions: the structures to be investigated

In the following, I will first define the term *question* in a crosslinguistically applicable way (2.2.1) and then develop a question typology for French (2.2.2). In the course of these two subsections, I will incorporate previous literature on interrogatives to make it usable for my own research. While introducing the terminology used throughout this thesis, I will also give insight into the reasoning behind the selection as well as the classification of structures. In other words, I will elaborate first on what makes a linguistic form a direct interrogative, and then on what (semantic, morphosyntactic, intonational and pragmatic) types are useful to be considered when investigating French question forms.

### 2.2.1 Defining the term *question*

Intuitively, everyone seems to know what a question is. Yet, in everyday speech, we use the term *question* to denominate several things, blending means of expression and meaning. This is only natural since linguistic form and function are very often intertwined, but they should be kept apart when it comes to a scientific definition (cf. Quillard 2000: 32).

For a start, let us keep to the standard idea that a question is **‘the formulation of asking something’**. Putting it differently, when directing a prototypical question to a hearer, the speaker makes explicit what (s)he wants to know. Uttering a question is thus in general a demand of information (see e.g. Grevisse & Goosse 2016: 528; Feuillet 2000: 7). To sum up this basic idea in the words of Kiefer (1983: 4), “questions indicate knowledge-desiderata”. Yet, a question comprises a lot more than just the explication of the desire for some information, and some non-canonical question types (such as rhetorical questions) could not be identified by an expression of ‘wanting-to-know’. This is why a truly scientific definition – and a practically applicable one in particular – needs to be not a prototypical but

a criterial one. As a result, I had to define the criteria which a construction had to fulfill to be counted as an interrogative. The criteria had to be categorical, i.e. they should be necessary and sufficient conditions which determine what can be classified as a 'question form'. In principle, such criteria could be based on formal (=>prosodic/morphological/syntactic) as well as meaning-related (=>semantic/pragmatic) features. In the following, I will argue for a semantic definition, showing why purely formal as well as purely pragmatic criteria are less favourable.

#### From formal marking...

There are three levels on which the meaning of an utterance can be indicated (cf. int. al. Altmann 1993; Coveney 2011: 120f.; Grevisse & Goosse 2016; Kalmbach 2012-2017: 531; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 32; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991b: 88–91; Meibauer et al. 2013; Siemund 2001; Xenaonan 1988):<sup>11</sup>

- (i) Morpholexis
- (ii) Syntax
- (iii) Prosody

In the case of questions, the French language uses all of them, although not necessarily all of them at the same time. On the **morpholexical** level, there is the possibility of marking a question by the question particle *EST-CE QUE* (see (i)). This item can be considered an interrogative grammeme because it implies no more meaning than the functional [+interrogative]. Therefore, it is a purely grammatical marker. Morpholexical marking can though also be performed by question words, such as *COMBIEN, COMMENT, LAQUEL, OÙ, POURQUOI, QUAND, QUE, QUEL, QUI* (see (ii)). In the latter case, the structure is specified not only with regard to its interrogativity but also to what the question is about.

- (i) Est-ce que cette interrogative est marquée ?<sup>12</sup>
- (ii) Elle est marquée par quoi ?<sup>13</sup>

As for the second level of marking, the **syntactic** one, using the strategy of marking an expression as interrogative by word order is very common in Indo-European languages (e.g. English, German and Spanish), although typologically rather marked (cf. Siemund 2001: 1017). Contrary to most of these other languages, it is not obligatory in French, so unlike most other Romance varieties, wh-words other than 'why'-equivalents do also occur postverbally in non-echo questions. Subject-verb inversion is

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<sup>11</sup> Sometimes, morpho-lexis is separated into morphology and lexis, while in other cases morpholexis is not separated from syntax, counting morphosyntax as one level only. As a consequence, some of the authors speak of only two or even four levels instead of three.

<sup>12</sup> English translation: 'Is this interrogative marked?'; in the following, examples are written in blue when they are taken from one of my three corpora (i.e. reality TV shows, detective novels or teaching materials), and in black if they are constructed or taken from other sources.

<sup>13</sup> English translation: 'By what is it marked?' / 'It is marked by what?'



frequent in written language only (Koch & Oesterreicher 2011: 173), but even in spoken language, it is an option for marking a sentence or phrase as interrogative (see (iii)).

(iii) Est-elle marquée par l'inversion ?<sup>14</sup>

On the third level, which is the **prosodic** one, interrogatives can be marked by intonation. Final rises have been claimed to encode *questionness* (Bolinger 1957: 13), and French interrogatives have been mapped to final rises (Faure 1973: 11; Léon 1973: X; Dubois 2007: s.v. "interrogation"; Delais-Roussarie & Herment 2018), but it has also been observed that not all French questions end in a high tone (Zwanenburg 1965; Fónagy & Bérard 1973: 95; Wunderli 1990). This level of marking is yet of particular importance to French because the prevalent type of yes/no-questions in spoken French, the so-called *intonation question*, is marked exclusively by a rising contour (Kaiser 1980: 32; Prüssmann-Zemper 1986: 113) (see (iv)).

(iv) Elle est marquée par l'intonation ?<sup>15</sup> ↑

To complicate things, structures can be marked on all three levels (see (1)) but also on none (see (2)).<sup>16</sup> In the latter case, a purely formal definition would exclude *et toi* from being a question although it is clearly a request for information. It is the typical follow-up prompt for shifting the focus from the current speaker to the current interlocutor. Consequently, any definition of the term *question* should include this structure. Formal marking can thus be a sufficient, but not a necessary condition. In other words, when a structure is marked as an interrogative, it can be counted as a question, but when a structure is not, this should not automatically exclude it from being counted as a question.

(1) Alors quelle influence l'addition aura-t-elle sur leurs jugements ?<sup>17</sup> ↑

(2) Et toi ?<sup>18</sup> ↓

On top of that, there are **several problems** with the unequivocalness of the above-mentioned markers. The presence of a question word does not necessarily mean that the utterance is an interrogative. Sentences such as (3) or (4) may seem interrogative constructions at first sight (or rather *at first hearing*), but they do not offer any room for an answer. Rather, they express the viewpoint of the speaker ('he is extremely stupid') without allowing any objections.

(3) Qu'est-ce qu'il est bête !

(4) Quel imbécile !

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<sup>14</sup> English translation: 'Is it marked by inversion?'

<sup>15</sup> English translation: '{Is it / It is} marked by intonation?'

<sup>16</sup> In most cases, however, they are marked on one or two levels (cf. results in chapters 5 and 6). For more insight into prosodic marking of morphosyntactically unmarked questions, see p.184.

<sup>17</sup> English translation: 'So what influence will it have on their judgments?' (ADDI\_2\_01\_03\_41)

<sup>18</sup> English translation: 'And you?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_13\_03)

Word order is not an unambiguous marker either.<sup>19</sup> There are still some expressions like *peut-être* which may trigger subject-verb inversion. Therefore, the sentences (5) and (6) ('*Maybe he's sick./?*') cannot be distinguished based on morphosyntax. Since *peut-être* evokes uncertainty, one may opt for a question in most cases, but a statement is not excluded per se.

- (5) Peut-être est-il malade.
- (6) Peut-être est-il malade ?

Even more problems arise when it comes to prosodic marking. First of all, prosody is problematic because of its gradience: While an utterance is either morphosyntactically marked or not, prosodic marking can be gradual (Gadet 1989: 143; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991b: 91).<sup>20</sup> Hence, an utterance can have only slightly rising intonation, but the melody curve can also show a very distinct slope. Also, prosodic marking is not automatically restricted to final tonal movement. Strictly speaking, duration or intensity might also play a role in encoding interrogative meaning.<sup>21</sup> For example, Morel & Danon-Boileau (1998: 125) observed that the absence of lengthening in combination with a high pitch at the sentence beginning and a shallow fall may also be a typical intonation pattern for questions.<sup>22</sup> Finally, it is still controversial whether intonation marks certain interrogative sentence types or the pragmatic function of questioning (Péteri 2013: 886). In other words, prosodic marking might rule out certain interrogatives although one wants to include as many interrogatives as possible. If one takes formal marking as a criterion for the definition of a question, this will thus have a great influence on the outcome.

In summary, in many cases formal marking can be used as a justification for counting an utterance as a question. It is, however, not an unequivocal criterion which can be applied to all cases.

... via the pragmatic function...

A purely formal definition having failed, a functional one should be considered. Such a functional definition may be based on the prototypical communicative goal of questions: obtaining information. Hence, a pragmatic definition of the term *question* could be '**a request for information**' (see int. al. Blakemore 1992: 114; Escandell Vidal 1999: 3931; Druetta 2009: 88; Coveney 2011: 112). Such information requests, which are commonly referred to as *asking* or *questioning*, are one of the three basic discourse functions of which languages dispose, namely transmitting knowledge or attitudes,

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<sup>19</sup> Strictly speaking, inversion is not a marker of interrogativity, but of emphaticness or indecision (Berrendonner 2018).

<sup>20</sup> This is particularly valid if you consider explicit marking only.

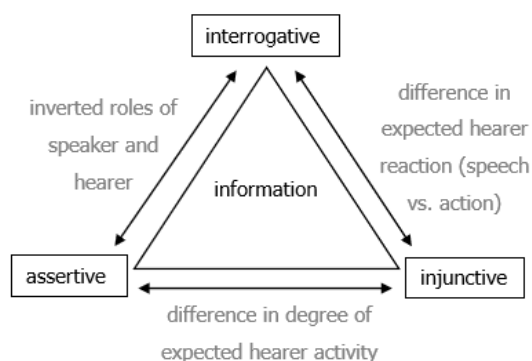
<sup>21</sup> F0, duration and intensity are the three suprasegmental phonetic features of which intonational marking consists (cf. Ladd 2008: 6).

<sup>22</sup> Note, however, that this intonation pattern was described for questions which were morphosyntactically marked by a question word.

giving instructions, and asking for information (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 5).<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, questioning is central in this *trio*, being *le maillon intermédiaire entre l'ordre, et l'assertion* (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 6+9).<sup>24</sup> Also, questioning can be described by the two other discourse functions (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 8): asserting a lack of knowledge and commanding the compensation of this lack of knowledge. However, if the basic discourse function shall be used for a criterial definition, questioning must be delimited from commanding and asserting.

For the first distinction, i.e. questioning vs. commanding, it is important to acknowledge that the speaker is trying to provoke a reaction of the hearer in both cases; the only difference between the two is whether the interlocutor is supposed to react by saying or by doing something (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 6). In contrast, as for the distinction between questioning and asserting, there is a difference in the distribution of roles. When asserting something, the speaker takes on the role of the 'knowledge transmitter' and the hearer the one of the 'knowledge intaker'; when asking something, it is the other way around. Hence, whereas the roles of the speaker as 'the instructor' and the hearer as 'the instructed' are the same in questioning and ordering, the roles of speaker and hearer in questioning and asserting are inverted. This relation between the three speech situations and their corresponding discourse functions can be summarized in a triangular chart as follows:

Figure 1: The enunciative trinity<sup>25</sup>



<sup>23</sup> As Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1991a: 5) formulates it, "trois 'archi-actes'". With A.-M. Diller (1980: 162, cited *ibid.*), one can also speak of the three 'primitive acts' (*actes primitifs*) of describing the world, trying to change the world, and asking about the world. Although this number is surrounded by controversy (see Fónagy & Bérard 1973: 76, and cf. Feuillet 2000: 24), I will follow Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1991a) and Diller (1980) and agree on the idea of a modal trio. One of the most convincing arguments is certainly that, even though exclamatives are linked to the attitude of a speaker, classifying a sentence as 'emotive' or 'emphatic' does not automatically exclude the interrogative, assertive or injunctive form and/or meaning of the message. Consequently, I would see the related kinds of sentences not as one of the basic sentence moods, but as more specific subtypes. Sentences like *Si seulement j'étais riche!* are thus seen as a special subtype of statement, expressing 'I'm pointing out that [I would like to be rich.]'.

<sup>24</sup> English translation: 'the intermediate link between injunction and assertion'

<sup>25</sup> The term *enunciative trinity* and the corresponding chart have been created by myself, but its content is based on the literature cited above. The term *injunctive* is used for the mood of instructing sentences. In French, injunctive sentences are usually expressed by the imperative.

Although these concepts are supposed to be complementary (the three discourse functions are conceived as an enunciative trinity so to speak), it has been claimed that it is sometimes hard to draw the line between them (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 8). There is what one could call “pragmatic blurriness”. As I will show, this may be valid for the discourse functions, but not for the questions themselves.

As for the blurry border between interrogativity and assertivity, we have seen that in a truly interrogative speech situation, the speaker is requiring information and the hearer supposed to give it, while in a truly assertive speech situation, the speaker expresses his thoughts and the hearer is only supposed to take in the information offered by the speaker. There are, however, plenty of speech situations in-between, and asserting and asking are closely connected. Rémi-Giraud (1991: 40–56) comes to the conclusion that the non-existence of a clear boundary is due to the fact that the two discourse functions are of the same interactional nature. In both cases, there is a transition from incompleteness to completeness; this transition takes place (with)in declaratives as well as in the interactional frame of a question + its response.<sup>26</sup> The two speech acts have, thus, a common core function. In addition, the roles as ‘knowledge transmitter’/‘information-giver’ and ‘knowledge in-taker’/‘information-receiver’ are by no means always well separated. Although the inversion of roles is normally conceived as a complementary<sup>27</sup> antonymy, in this case, the antonymy provoked is rather gradual. Even by uttering a clearly assertive sentence, hearers often feel the need for some evaluation in the sense of ‘that’s (not) true’ or ‘I (don’t) agree’ (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 8). An assertion can, therefore, require the turn taking of the hearer. What is more, “lorsqu’on émet une question, on ne fait qu’exprimer, ou extérioriser un doute”<sup>28</sup> (Lyons 1980: 3763, cited in Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 7), so the reflex of answering may be explained by a “simple effet perlocutoire de la déclaration d’incertitude”<sup>29</sup> (Berrendonner 1981: 168f., cited in Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 7). There are thus many declaratives which can be interpreted as demanding the hearer to react by commenting on the uttered (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 8). As a result, I will follow Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1991b), who regards interrogativity and assertivity as the two poles of a continuum.

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<sup>26</sup> As the author explains, the difference lies in the distribution of those two states: In the first case, the transition takes place within an utterance; in the second, the two states are divided by two utterances. As the author explains, seen in an interactional framework, each statement incorporates a question and vice versa, i.e. there is always an entity which is asserted and a predicate that is under question (Rémi-Giraud 1991: 54); own paraphrase): *Le chien(?) (il) dort.* 'Is there a dog?' 'Yes -and he's sleeping.' *Le chien(.) (il) dort?* 'There is a dog.' 'And is the dog sleeping?'

<sup>27</sup> Semantic conversion (alias converse antonymy) usually implies not only a mutually conditioned directedness but also the marking of the two terms as ‘either or’. Just as a human is either ‘dead’ or ‘alive’, in the frame of parenthood, a person to is either ‘parent’ or ‘child’.

<sup>28</sup> English translation: ‘when uttering a question, one only expresses, or exteriorizes, a doubt’

<sup>29</sup> English translation: ‘simple perlocution effect of the declaration of uncertainty’

Correspondingly, it is certainly true that there are hybrid utterances. Yet, unlike Kerbrat-Orecchioni, I do not think that we cannot establish a general distinction between *question* and *assertion*. For instance, rhetorical questions (see (8)) may be pragmatically equivalent to assertions, but they are still questions in form and – to some extent – also in meaning. Hence, I do not think that discrepancies in interrogativity between the form and the function do affect the interrogative status of an utterance per se. On the other hand, there are also cases in which it is indeed very difficult to draw the line.<sup>30</sup> For instance, the classification of morphosyntactically unmarked structures for confirmation requests is clearly more a matter of holistic interpretation than of criterial analysis. These structures undoubtedly approach assertions on the pragmatic level, but still many linguists rather classify them as questions.

As for the distinction between interrogation and injunction, the difficulty is another one. In both contexts, the speaker is trying to provoke a reaction of the hearer. Consequently, it is not surprising that interrogation and injunction have been claimed to belong to the same type of speech act: According to Searle (1969) and other theoreticians, both types are ‘demands’. This relation has materialised even lexically in the French language: The proximity of interrogation and injunction is lexicalised in the meaning of *demande(r)*, which can be read as ‘(to make a) question’ as well as ‘(to give an) instruction’. A similar polysemy can be observed in the English verb *to ask*. It can be used to express the performance of a question (*to ask someone about something*) as well as for an instruction (*to ask someone to do something*). As we have seen, the only difference between an interrogative and an injunctive situation is the kind of reaction expected. While the expectation of a linguistic reaction provokes an interrogative speech situation, a non-linguistic one provokes an injunctive speech situation. Since this is a binary distinction, there cannot be any problem resulting from continuity. There are, however, sentences which combine an interrogative form with an injunctive function (see (7)) and vice versa (for an overview of the different combinations of forms and functions, see p.18).

As Krifka (2011: 1742) points out, not all questions are questioning, i.e. not all questions “try to make the addressee [...] provide a particular piece of information”. Considering the following two examples, we must admit that many questions are, pragmatically speaking, not asking anything:

(7) Est-ce que tu peux me passer le sel, s’il te plaît ?<sup>31</sup>

(8) N’a-t-on pas tout fait pour lui ?<sup>32</sup>

The first example is actually an indirect (polite) command (‘pass me the salt, please’), the second one an indirect assertion (‘we did everything for him’). There are thus not only interrogative questions, but

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<sup>30</sup> In fact, in some occasions speakers may even intend to leave it open whether their utterance is an assertion or an interrogation.

<sup>31</sup> English translation: ‘Can you pass me the salt, please?’ (Kaufmann 2013: 691).

<sup>32</sup> English translation: ‘Haven’t we done everything for him?’ (Hansen 2001: 501).

also imperative and assertive ones. Correspondingly, any affirmative or negative answer would be unexpected. Nonetheless, it seems obvious that the constructions will be counted as ‘questions’ and not as ‘assertives’ or ‘injunctives’. This is precisely why a definition like the one given by Bußmann (2008: 200) will not be useful for this thesis:

“Frage. Sprachlicher Handlungstyp (Illokutionstyp), der eine Einstellung des WissenWollens gegenüber seinem propositionalen Gehalt ausdrückt und in dessen Kontext Aussagen, die das erwünschte Wissen zum Inhalt haben, als Antworten gelten [...].“<sup>33</sup>

Yet, some corpus studies have adopted a pragmatic definition of the term *question*. For example, Druetta (2009) used an operationalised variant of this pragmatic definition: For him, questions were utterances actually entailing a response. Although this definition is certainly practical with regard to its easy applicability and clear limitation, it can be quite problematic. First of all, if such a definition is taken literally, also utterances that are obviously statements (i.e. assertives/ declaratives) would have to be counted as questions when followed by an answer particle (in French: *oui, non* and *si*). This is counterintuitive and might be misleading when counting falling intonation patterns. Also, whenever a question is not answered, for instance because of an interruption, because the next one is asked before any response has been made, or simply because it was a self-directed reflexion, it would have to be excluded from the corpus.

In conclusion, considering the pragmatic function is not enough when defining the term *question*. The presence or absence of an apparent answer will not determine the status of an utterance. Neither will the interrogative speech act be useful to do so. There are interrogative formulations used for asserting or commanding, and there are assertive and injunctive formulations used for asking. Obviously, an interrogative discourse function is neither necessary nor sufficient to count an utterance as a question. The pragmatic use of questions can be manifold. Consequently, one cannot say that questions are information requests or interrogative speech acts in general. Rather, I would see them in the light of relevance theory (Blakemore 1992; Wilson & Sperber 2004, 2012): They are basically a means to present the information gaps contained in their implementations as being relevant for the on-going discourse.

#### ...to a semantic definition

As we have seen in 2.1.1, a definition of the term *question* should not rely on formal marking, and as we have seen in 2.1.2, it should not rely on the pragmatic function of an information request either.

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<sup>33</sup> English translation: ‘Question. Linguistic type of action (illocution type) expressing an attitude of ‘wanting-to-know’ towards its propositional content, and in the context of which statements having as content the desired knowledge are regarded as responses.’

Hence, we need a definition which is at the threshold between form and function. For this reason, we will now start from a slightly different angle: questions as a certain **sentence modality**.

Interestingly, in this context the term *modality* (as well as *mood* or *mode*) does not refer to some expression of obligation (deontic modality, e.g. the modal verb *devoir*) or probability (epistemic modality, e.g. the modal adverb *peut-être*), but rather to the notion of **illocutionary force** and **sentence type**. At first sight, one may be confused about the terminological proximity of two concepts that seem to be set apart from one another. However, there is indeed a common core meaning in what is known as *modal forms* and *sentence modality*: It is the speaker's attitude towards the factual status of the concept to be expressed (see Palmer 1986; Gardes-Tamine 1988: 42; Bußmann 2008: 442). To illustrate, the use of the *conditionnel* as well as the use of a question form transmit a non-factual attitude. While the former expresses a hypothetical verbal status (*event modality* in the terms of Palmer), the latter assigns an open status to the whole sentence (*propositional modality* in the terms of Palmer). In other words, in both cases the speaker presents himself/herself as non-committed to what is said.<sup>34</sup>

In the Larousse dictionary of "linguistique et sciences du langage", we find a definition of *interrogation* which leads in this direction:

"On appelle interrogation le mode ou type de communication institué par le sujet parlant entre lui et son (ou ses) interlocuteur(s) et consistant à faire dépendre ses propositions d'une phrase implicite Je te demande si (= <Je te pose la question>). [...] [L]'interrogation est un type de phrase (ou modalité de phrase) comme l'ordre (impératif) ou l'assertion. C'est un constituant de la phrase de base; s'il est choisi, il déclenche une transformation interrogative qui, entre autres opérations, déplace le syntagme nominal sujet, modifie le contour d'intonation, etc." (Dubois 2007: s.v. 'interrogation')

There are though three weak points in this definition: First, using 'to ask' in a definition for a question makes it somewhat circular, secondly the periphrasis excludes imperative and assertive questions as well as questions without a hearer (i.e. self-addressed questions), and thirdly not all interrogative constructions are subdued to obvious transformation (see *wh-in-situ* questions or *yes/no-interrogatives* without final rise). What we can though retain of this definition, is that a question is the mode of a sentence, i.e. a sentence type.

The notion of sentence type (or mode/modality) is linked to the three archetypical discourse functions mentioned in the last subsection. As we have seen, these functions bring about three prototypical situations which are linked to three general pragmatic meanings:

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<sup>34</sup> In some languages this common core meaning even leads to an overlap in means of expression. As Palmer (1986: 172) points out, there are languages, such as Caddo or Hixkaryana, which use the irrealis marker to indicate a question.

- If the speaker is not demanding anything, i.e. the hearer is not supposed to respond in an active way but simply to take in some information, the pragmatic meaning is assertive.
- If the speaker is demanding and the hearer is supposed to respond by an action, the pragmatic meaning is injunctive.
- If the speaker is demanding and the hearer is supposed to give an answer, i.e. to respond linguistically, the pragmatic meaning is interrogative.

These pragmatic meanings are, thus, conceived as different types of human interaction; they are a matter of passing on information with different aims and are, therefore, also connected to different means of conveying a message. More precisely, the discourse functions are the aims, i.e. (part of) the pragmatic meaning, and the phono-morphosyntactic forms are their implementations, i.e. the linguistic means to achieve these aims. As we have also seen, the discourse functions can be implemented by different forms. To illustrate this, I will give an assertive (i.e. statement), an interrogative (i.e. question), and an injunctive (i.e. order) implementation of each discourse function.

The declaring content (i.e. assertive meaning) of 'The speaker thinks/knows that all children like candy.' can be implemented in the following ways:

- (9) A. Les enfants aiment les sucreries.  
 B. Quel enfant n'aime pas les sucreries ?  
 C. Prends conscience du fait que les enfants aiment les sucreries !

The enquiring content (i.e. interrogative meaning) of 'the speaker wants to know whether Paul is sick' can also be implemented in different ways:

- (10) A. Je voudrais savoir si Paul est malade.  
 B. Paul est-il malade ?  
 C. Di(te)s-moi si Paul est malade !

Equally, the instructive content (i.e. injunctive meaning) of 'the speaker wants the hearer to do his homework' can be implemented in three different constructions:

- (11) A. Je veux bien que tu fasses tes devoirs.  
 B. Pourrais-tu faire tes devoirs ?<sup>35</sup>  
 C. Fais tes devoirs !

Whereas an utterance such as (A) focusses on the mere explication of the speaker's knowledge or attitude, (B) is formulated as an utterance leaving undefined a part of the truth conditions, and (C) even excludes the attribution of any truth value to this sentence (see also Feuillet 1994: 25; Rémi-Giraud 1991: 45f.). Nonetheless, all three can be used to bring about that the hearer knows how the

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<sup>35</sup> Those interrogative requests (*questions-requêtes*) are sometimes iconically called *whimperatives* Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1991b: 105). Since they usually do not incorporate question words, I think the term *interro-imperatives* would be more adequate for those orders in a question's skin.



speaker wants him to act, i.e. 'take it for granted that...' in (9), 'tell me...' in (10), and 'do...' in (11). Hence, one could argue, in the terms of Löbner (2003: 12f.), that all three implementations have the same communicative sense<sup>36</sup>, although their literal meaning (i.e. their *expression* and *utterance meaning*, *ibid.*: 10f. + 383) is certainly not the same. To make this clearer, the speaker's intended reaction of the interlocutor does not change, i.e. his viewpoint of what is to be done after hearing the sentence stays the same. Contrary to this, the linguistic (i.e. semantic) content varies, such that the relation between the means and the aims of the utterances is different for every sentence type. In other words, the attitude of a speaker towards the content of the sentence uttered is variably expressed by these three sentence modes (see also Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 5). As a consequence, each sentence has the potential for several illocutions, consisting of direct and indirect speech acts (cf. Meibauer 2013: 726). While direct speech acts are the ones directly encoded in the sentence type, indirect speech acts are the ones derived from interpretation. For instance, if an actual order is formulated as a question (see (11c)), it is expressed in a less direct way and, consequently, in many languages interpreted as a politer demand. By contrast, using a rhetorical question to formulate an assertive meaning (see (9b)), is often seen as more emphatic (Coveney 2002: 126) and might in some contexts even be interpreted as offensive. Each sentence type corresponds, thus, to the way of transporting a pragmatic meaning and can be used to add a secondary (e.g. emphatic) meaning or to adapt the original one.

To sum up, the three sentence modes describe the way in which information is passed on. They are not (directly) linked to the roles of hearer and speaker but to the speaker's attitude. When formulating a sentence, the speaker has a choice between different ways of directing his speech to the hearer –he can use the sentence type corresponding to the discourse function, but he can also select a different one. Hence, the definition of an assertion, an interrogation and an injunction cannot be the same as the one of the corresponding discourse functions.

The continuity within the enunciative trinity is thus true for the discourse functions, but only to a certain extent for the corresponding sentence types, i.e. it is not generally transferable to sentence mode. Form and function should thus be kept apart. More precisely, one can distinguish **three levels of interrogativity**: the interrogative speech act (i.e. the concrete function), the interrogative sentence mode (i.e. the abstract form and its semantic meaning) and the interrogative construction (i.e. the concrete form). The descriptive benefit becomes clear when looking more closely at utterances which

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<sup>36</sup> N.B. that Löbner uses this term in a more concrete way, e.g. for 'warning', 'polite demand' or 'refusal of an offer'. Yet, an assertive, interrogative or injunctive meaning is, to my knowledge, the basis for all possible communicative senses.

incorporate an interrogative discourse function and an assertive form, i.e. which are pragmatic questions in the skin of a statement or an order, or vice versa.

Let us first consider the case of interrogative assertions, i.e. assertive sentences with the pragmatic meaning of a question. Going back to example 10a (*Je voudrais savoir si Paul est malade*), it is certainly uncontroversial that such a sentence is assertive not only in its construction, but also in its mode. The attitude of the speaker is clearly of the character 'I want you to know that...'. Only the discourse function is thus linked to interrogativity.

Conversely, formal interrogativity is found in example (11b) (*Pourrais-tu faire tes devoirs ?*), a sentence type I am willing to classify not as an order but as a question, even though its pragmatic meaning may be an injunctive speech act. Of course, the construction and punctuation could be misleading. Yet, the choice of the sentence type of 'question' for such a politer demand is conventional in many languages and there is certainly a difference in the attitude of a speaker towards the formulations (11b) and (11c). Although the same applies to assertives in the skin of a question (see (9b)), there is more controversy on the status of rhetorical questions. Kerbrat-Orrecchioni (1991a: 15), for instance, calls this question type a "truly false question" (*vraies fausses questions*), considering the fact that the interrogative construction performs an assertive speech act. On the other hand, no one would argue that the content of (9a) and (9b) is *exactly* the same – if this was the case, the sentences would be freely interchangeable. Already the fact that in translations, the semantico-syntactic construction of a rhetorical question is usually maintained shows that a sentence type is not identifiable by its discourse function only.

Although it can neither be exclusively the concrete form that attributes a mode to a sentence (see 2.1.1), the form(ulation) plays a greater role than the discourse function. Accordingly, based on its form example (10c) (*Di(te)s-moi si Paul est malade !*) cannot be classified as a question but as an order. The attitude of the speaker could be paraphrased as 'I am explicating what I want you to do'. There is therefore one limitation to add to the concept of interrogativity, when talking about the sentence type: an interrogative is a sentence provoking some linguistic reaction WITHOUT MAKING EXPLICIT THE SPEECH ACT (i.e. without giving instructions about telling or letting the speaker know).

To illustrate the position of the interrogative sentence mode, I will summarize the relations between the three levels of interrogation in the following table. While an interrogative form implies an interrogative mood (i.e. sentence mode), interrogative illocutionary force does not do so. Every question is realised as an interrogative construction, but it can function as all three speech acts. Therefore, every question can be sub-classified according to its pragmatic function. For the semantic definition of a question, the decisive levels are though the two columns on the right-hand side only.

Table 1: Interrogativity: speech act, sentence type & formulation

Concrete function	Function & form	Semantic meaning & abstract form	Concrete form
Pragmatic meaning / speech act	Pragmatic sentence type	Mood / General sentence type/mode	Phono-morphosyntactic formulation
ASSERTING/DECLARING/ STATING <sup>37</sup>	ASSERTIVE ASSERTION	ASSERTION/DECLARATION/ STATEMENT	ASSERTIVE/DECLARATIVE [CONSTRUCTION]
QUESTIONING/ ENQUIRING	INTERROGATIVE ASSERTION		
ORDERING/ COMMANDING	IMPERATIVE ASSERTION		
ASSERTING/DECLARING/ STATING	ASSERTIVE QUESTION	QUESTION / ENQUIRY	QUESTION FORM / INTERROGATIVE [CONSTRUCTION]
QUESTIONING/ ENQUIRING	INTERROGATIVE QUESTION		
ORDERING/ COMMANDING	IMPERATIVE QUESTION		
ASSERTING/DECLARING/ STATING	ASSERTIVE ORDER	ORDER/COMMANDMENT/ INJUNCTION	INJUNCTIVE/IMPERATIVE [CONSTRUCTION]
QUESTIONING/ ENQUIRING	INTERROGATIVE ORDER		
ORDERING/ COMMANDING	IMPERATIVE ORDER		

As we have seen, interrogative constructions do not necessarily have an interrogative function. The expression *interrogative construction* makes though only sense if one admits that those structures have the vocation to express the interrogative speech act (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 12; Rémi-Giraud 1991: 39). In other words, an interrogative construction is the form prototypically expressing an interrogative speech act (cf. Kaufmann 2013). As (Wilson & Sperber 1988) (1988: 91) put it, “interrogatives standardly or conventionally have the force of questions, where questions are defined as requests for information.” Subsequently, if there are constructions sharing this vocation, they are likely to share some abstract content. The sentence type ‘question’ incorporates thus the shared semantics of interrogative constructions which allows us to recognize those constructions as interrogatives.

It remains the question how this shared abstract content can be captured and operationalised. As we have seen, formal marking cannot be taken as a necessary but only as a sufficient condition for a structure to be counted as a ‘question’. Therefore, the semantics of interrogativity, i.e. the concept of

<sup>37</sup> N.B. that Searle 1975 makes a difference between declaratives and assertives, which is neglected since it is not important for this thesis.

the interrogative sentence mode, has to be determined. This can be done by the potential of answering which is encoded in all interrogative sentences. There is thus a structurally inherent room for an answer, which can be phrased as an **openness of propositions** (cf. Lohnstein 2013: 79–81).<sup>38</sup> In other words, all questions comprise an open proposition which is supposed to be closed by congruent answers (Reis 2013: 105), i.e. answers that “satisfy the informational need expressed by the question” (Krifka 2011: 1750).<sup>39</sup> Putting it differently, every question determines a set of possible answers by leaving a gap which is specified with regard to its potential fillers: For example, a question containing the interrogative lexeme *où* usually requires a place as a congruent answer. The proposition contained in a question is thus partly unspecified (Krifka 2011: 1743), although the unspecified part is not completely unambiguous. This structural openness (or ‘incompleteness’ (Rémi-Giraud 1991: 50)), shall be taken as the key concept for interrogativity. The following definition is thus based on the inherent semantic blank of questions:

An **INTERROGATIVE** is a concrete (morphosyntactic) structure encoding an information gap.  
A **QUESTION** is an abstract (semantic) structure encoding an information gap.

Consequently, any utterance formally marking such an information gap will be considered a question.<sup>40</sup> The French markers of propositional openness are inversion (i.e. verb-subject order) without any other trigger, an interrogative lexeme (e.g. *quand*), an interrogative grammeme (i.e. *est-ce que*)<sup>41</sup>, a question mark in writing or some questioning intonation in speaking (which should not a priori be restricted to a final rise) (see 2.1.1). For the disambiguation of these markers, the concept of an information gap is also very helpful. To illustrate, the non-interrogative status of examples (3) and (4) could be explained by their missing room for an answer (see p.11). When it comes to the application of this definition, the greatest problem will be that there can be cases of morphosyntactically unmarked structures in which intonational cuing is not clear (or even clearly absent). In other words, the structures without any determinable explicit marking will be the most difficult ones to detect. In cases of doubt, I will take into account the context as well. I will, however, not limit my choice to actual responses but rather to the literal content of the utterance (e.g. the combination with the second person and a verb of thought or opinion, such as *vous croyez que c’est possible* is usually not linked to assertives) as well as general

<sup>38</sup> Hence, it is not surprising that the semantic meaning of questions has often been described based on their answers (see also Krifka 2011: 1750; Kaufmann 2013: 693; Lohnstein 2013: 69–79): Hamblin (1973) defines it as the set of possible answers, and Karttunen (1977) as the set of true answers.

<sup>39</sup> Of course, not every answer is a congruent one. As Hiž (1978: 211) puts it, “[n]ot every response is an answer.” For example, the answer *Rien*. (‘Nothing.’) is a pragmatically possible answer for a *wh*-question like *Qu’est-ce que tu as acheté ?* (‘What did you buy?’), but semantically the question implies that something has been bought. Consequently, it is not a congruent answer.

<sup>40</sup> Grammaticalizations like *n’est-ce pas* (cf. Combettes 2016) or *tu vois* appearing within an assertive or imperative construction should be kept apart.

<sup>41</sup> The antiquated/dialectal question marker *-tu* would also be counted as such (see Behnstedt 1973).

aspects of the situation (e.g. a gesture of holding a glass of water to the addressee can indicate that the utterance *tu veux de l'eau* should be interpreted as an offering question). The central idea when judging on an utterance will be whether the structure could rather be an assertive reinterpreted as an interrogative in a certain context, or a linguistic form which (explicitly or implicitly) encodes a blank to be filled in. Only the latter will be counted as a question.<sup>42</sup>

## 2.2.2 Developing a question typology for French

When analysing question forms, one needs to define the different interrogative types first. However, in the literature, form- and function-related interrogative types are usually not sufficiently distinguished (see also Partee 2009). In many cases, they are not treated separately at all (see e.g. Bolinger 1957), suggesting for instance that a polar question and an echo question would be on the same level of distinction (see e.g. Bußmann 2008: 200). As far as I am concerned, this confusion should be avoided. In order to give a systematic overview, I will keep four different classifications apart: I will start with the semantic types, then move on to the different forms (i.e. morphosyntactic and intonational types), and finally elaborate on the manifold pragmatic types.

### 2.2.2.1 Semantic interrogative types<sup>43</sup>

As for the contextually independent meaning-related types, there are usually mentioned three broad categories in the literature (int. al. Ashby 1977: 37<sup>44</sup>; Bußmann 2008: 200; Dethloff & Wagner 2014; Feuillet 1994: 7; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 18f.; Krifka 2011: 1744):

- 1) Yes/no- (aka global / total / closed / polar / sentential / *Entscheidungs*- 'decision') questions
- 2) Wh- (aka partial<sup>45</sup> / constituent / open / explanatory<sup>46</sup> / *Ergänzungs*- 'completion') questions
- 3) Alternative<sup>47</sup> (aka disjunctive / option-choice<sup>48</sup> / double) questions.

These three types share the fact that they incorporate some kind of information gap (otherwise they would not be interrogatives, cf. the previous subsection), but they also differ in this respect: It is the gap of information which gives them "three types of interrogative sentence radicals" (Krifka 2011:

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<sup>42</sup> For an example of a borderline case that will be interpreted as an assertion, see (II) on p. 94.

<sup>43</sup> Most authors simply speak of the *type of question*. Since such a denomination is not specifying the kind of difference, I looked for a term which makes clear in which aspect these question forms differ. The term is based on Krifka 's (2011: 1744) observation that the traditional question types encode different information gaps: "We can distinguish three types of interrogative sentence radicals, and correspondingly, of questions, according to the type of the lacking information: constituent questions, polarity questions and alternative questions."

<sup>44</sup> Ashby only mentions yes/no- and wh-interrogatives.

<sup>45</sup> Bolinger (1957) uses this term for something else, namely the syntactical completeness of an utterance.

<sup>46</sup> Bolinger (1957: 7) uses this term as a generic one to subsume 'how-why questions' (i.e. constituent questions with a realised question word) and 'complementary questions' (i.e. constituent questions without an explicit question word).

<sup>47</sup> Note that Delais-Roussarie et al. (2015: 88) present this term as a synonym for constituent questions.

<sup>48</sup> Strictly speaking, yes/no-questions also offer two choices: 'yes' and 'no'. Therefore, Bolinger (1957) uses a similar term (*multiple-choice questions*) to denote the generic class of yes/no- and alternative questions.

1744), i.e. three different ways of leaving some part of the description of their content unspecified. The information gap can be described by determining possible congruent answers. As we will see, there are three possible sets of congruent answers: answers indicating the truth value of the proposition, answers containing some missing detail and answers consisting of a choice between different alternatives. To make the different semantics of those three types even clearer, I will also give their formal semantic representations as proposed in the *functional approach* (for an overview of this one as well as other approaches, see (Krifka 2011: 1753–1757)).

### Yes/no-questions

As the name YES/NO-QUESTION (YNO) already suggests, a congruent answer for this type is ‘yes’ or ‘no’, but it can also be a positive or negative reformulation of the question as an assertion. As a consequence, the information gap is the truth value of the utterance’s proposition (cf. Bußmann 2008: 166f.; Fónagy & Bérard 1973: 75; Krifka 2011: 1747, Rémi-Giraud 1991: 45f.; Krifka 2011: 1747). As Krifka (2011: 1753–1757) puts it in the light of the functional approach, “we can assume a function that has two functions in its domain, the identity function and the negation for truth values [...]. This is reminiscent of the Chinese way of forming such questions [...]. The operators  $\lambda t.t.$  and  $\lambda t-\neg t$  correspond to the possible answers *yes* and *no*.”

whether Bill read ‘War and Peace’  
 $\lambda i \lambda f \in \{\lambda t.t., \lambda t-\neg t\} [f(\text{read}_i(w\&p)(\text{bill}))]$   
 (Krifka 2011)

Putting this formalisation into plain English, the sentence radical expresses ‘for some possible world(s), there is either a positive or a negative truth value for the proposition ‘Bill read W&P’.’

**A YES/NO-INTERROGATIVE (YNI) is a question form encoding an open truth value as an information gap.**

Of course, within this category one could distinguish subtypes according to several criteria. There is though only one relevant to this thesis.<sup>49</sup> It concerns the tendency towards a positive or a negative answer. If there is no bias, i.e. an affirmation is considered as being just as likely as a denial, we speak of a NEUTRAL YNI. If there is a speaker preference for either of the poles (i.e. ‘yes’ or ‘no’), I will use the term BIASED OR ORIENTED YNI (cf. Feuillet 1994: 18). This terminological precision is particularly important because of the possibility to use a neutral yes/no-question in a context of confirmation-seekingness

<sup>49</sup> One of the most interesting criteria which can be used to determine subtypes of YNI is focus. In this case, the crucial distinction is whether the question is a global/total one in the proper sense of the word, i.e. whether the open truth value is linked to the whole utterance, or whether it is linked to only a part of the utterance, i.e. whether a constituent is focussed. An example for a yes/no-question with a narrow focus would be *C’est (bien) à la plage que tu vas ?*

(cf. pragmatic interrogative types according to the degree of information-seekingness). In other words, the sentence type used is not always to be understood literally.<sup>50</sup>

Neutral YNI	Biased YNI
(12) Tu vas à la plage ?	(13) Tu vas bien à la plage ?

### Wh-questions

While polar questions leave open the truth value of a proposition, WH-QUESTIONS (WHQ) require information completion, i.e. the precision of one or more details of the situation presented in the question. In other words, those questions lack one or more utterance constituents, i.e. one or more semantic units of the proposition (cf. Bußmann 2008: 170). As Krifka (2011: 1744) puts it, “[c]onstituent questions create an open proposition by leaving [one or more] parts of the description of the proposition unspecified.” Consequently, this semantic type of question is less closed than yes/no-questions (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991a: 19): The possible congruent answers are typically a set of entities with special characteristics whereas the congruent answer options of YNQ are limited to the decision between an affirmation or a denial.

Those characteristics can be described by a function building the sentence radical of the question. For the question *Which novel did Bill read?*, this would be the following:

which novel Bill read  
 $\lambda i \lambda x \text{NOVEL}_i[\text{READ}_i(x)(\text{BILL})]$   
 (Krifka 2011): 1753

A reformulation of this formula in plain English is ‘In some possible world(s) in which x is a novel, it is true that Bill read x.’

**A WH-INTERROGATIVE (WHI) is a question form encoding a missing constituent as an information gap.**

Within this class, I will distinguish two subtypes. They are determined according to the number of information gaps, normally expressed by the interrogative words. If there are two or more blanks, the question will be classified as a MULTIPLE WH-QUESTION. To make clear why this is a criterion worth being distinguished, I would like to point to the fact, that the number of information gaps leads not only to the insertion of another lambda operator in the formal representation, but also to different syntactic constructions, as in *Who read which novel?*

<sup>50</sup> Note that there are also yes/no-questions which are used for obtaining information as encoded by wh-questions: The interrogative *Vous savez l’heure ?* ‘Do you know what time it is?’ is commonly used to elicit an answer for *Quelle heure est-il ?* ‘What time is it?’. In this case, I would speak of semantic yes/no-questions which are pragmatically reinterpreted as wh-questions.

who read which novel?

$\lambda i \lambda x \epsilon \text{person} i \lambda y \epsilon \text{novel} i [\text{READ}_i(y)(x)]$

(Krifka 2011): 1754

One missing constituent WHI	Multiple missing constituents WHI
(14) Qui a lu 'War and Peace' ?	(15) Qui a lu quel roman ?

### Disjunctive questions

The third semantic question type is the one of DISJUNCTIVE QUESTIONS (DSQ). Those questions offer explicit answer alternatives, hence they are also called alternative or option-choice questions (cf. Bußmann 2008: 33). As we will see, this type can be seen as a hybrid of yes/no and constituent questions.

As Krifka (2011: 1749) argues, this “type of questions is semantically related to constituent questions, as they request information to close an open proposition.” This is obviously true, but I would not say that this relation is any closer than the one to yes/no-questions: The fact that YNI and DSI both entail a decision between well-defined options puts these two types next to one another. Bolinger (1957) even subsumes yes/no and disjunctive questions under the term of “multiple-choice questions”. Another argument he gives for this is that disjunctive questions can be paraphrased as two separate yes/no-questions (see also Bußmann 2008: 33). However, such a subsumption approaches disjunctive questions more to yes/no-questions than to wh-questions. In my opinion, this goes too far as well, considering the fact that the request for giving the truth value and the request for explicitly choosing a semantic unit is not the same. While the truth value is only an operator determining whether the situation defined by the predicates themselves or the one complementary to it is the case, a semantic unit is an individual or even a predicate itself.<sup>51</sup>

This hybridity is also reflected in the formal representation of the functional approach, where the alternatives given in the question “specify the domain of the function” (Krifka 2011):

whether Bill read 'War and Peace' or 'Anna Karenina'

$\lambda i \lambda x \epsilon \{w \& p, ak\} [\text{read}_i(x)(bill)]$

(Krifka 2011)

(prototypical) DSI
(16) Bill a lu 'War and Peace' ou 'Anna Karenina' ?

<sup>51</sup> This argumentation has one important consequence: If we think of the fact that there are languages, such as Chinese, which are said to build yes/no-questions by adding the negated verb form (or rather a negator followed by the repetition of the original verb form, cf. Feuillet 1994: 17 and Krifka 2011: 1749), we need to accept that those languages do not really have yes/no-questions. In fact, they only use disjunctive questions for the same purpose as most languages use truly polar interrogatives.



The formula implies that there is a missing constituent as well as a limited set of choices. It can be paraphrased as ‘In some possible world(s), x is either ‘War and Piece’ or ‘Anna Karenina’, and BILL read x.’<sup>52</sup>

A **DISJUNCTIVE INTERROGATIVE (DSI)** is a question form encoding a set of alternatives as an information gap.

### 2.2.2.2 Morphosyntactic question types

In this section, I will give an overview of the types of questions related to word-order and morpholexical marking. Since abstract meaning and form are not independent from one another, I will structure this overview by the semantic types of the last section. My choice of morphosyntactic classification was originally based on previous research (see Bolinger 1957; Kayne 1972; Behnstedt 1973; Ashby 1977; Kayne & Pollock 1978; Gadet 1989; Rizzi & Roberts 1989; Quillard 2000; Coveney 2002; Myers 2007; Druetta 2009; Elsig 2009; Boucher 2010; Coveney 2011; Guryev 2017), but it can also be supported by the results of my four empirical studies (see chapters 4 to 7).

#### Yes/no-questions

The French language uses three broad morphosyntactic types to express a question which means ‘Is Peter/he there?’ (cf. Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 82f.; see also Hansen 2001):

(17a.i) Est-il là ? (Vs)

(17a.ii) Pierre est-il là ? (SVs)

(17b) Est-ce qu{e/'} Pierre/il est là ? (E{s/S}V)

(17c) Pierre/Il est là ? ({s/S}V)

In the first broad type (i.e. (a)), the usual order of the subject and the verb are inverted, such that word order marks this structure as an interrogative. In the second type (i.e. (b)), it is not word order but a morpholexical marker (i.e. the question particle *EST-CE QUE*) which indicates that the structure is an interrogative. In yes/no-interrogatives, syntactical and morphosyntactic marking cannot be combined (cf. *\*Est-ce qu'est là Pierre ?*), such that there can only be one formal marker. While (17a.i), (17a.ii) and (17b) are formally marked, (17c) is, morphosyntactically speaking, a declarative construction. As a

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<sup>52</sup> Unlike yes/no-interrogatives, disjunctive ones cannot focus a certain part of the proposition. This can be explained by the fact that the information gap is focussed itself, and in this case, it is not a simple truth value but a sentence constituent. Therefore, the focus position is already taken by the set of alternatives, there is simply no space for another focussed constituent. As for orientation, disjunctive questions can very well be biased towards one or more alternatives, but such an orientation seems to be generally rare and language-dependent. Since French does not dispose of a particle like German *etwa* (as in German *Willst du Kaffee, Tee oder etwa gar nichts?* ‘Do you want coffee, tea or possibly even nothing at all?’), it is questionable whether French actually has the means for formulating oriented disjunctive interrogative constructions.

result, (17c) is usually marked by intonation whereas prosody is not distinctive in (17a.i), (17a.ii) and (17b).

An **INVERTED INTERROGATIVE (INV)** is a structure encoding an information gap in which the verb precedes the (structurally incorporated) subject.  
A **PERIPHRASTIC INTERROGATIVE (ESK)** is a structure encoding an information gap which is marked by the question particle *EST-CE QUE*.  
A **DECLARATIVE INTERROGATIVE (DEC)** is a structure encoding an information gap which is morphosyntactically unmarked.<sup>53</sup>

While the subject type does not play a role in periphrastic (see (17b)) and declarative (see (17c)) structures, inverted structures (see (17a.i) vs. (17a.ii)) depend on the presence or absence of a non-clitic subject. In yes/no-interrogatives, non-clitic subjects are always placed preverbally, unless they are realised as a right dislocation (cf. *Est-il là, Pierre ?*). They thus cannot appear in postverbal position without subject doubling (i.e. *\*Est Pierre là ? / \*Est là Pierre ?*).

Hence, there are four morphosyntactic variants typically assigned to yes/no-questions: **YES/NO-INTERROGATIVES WITH SIMPLE CLITIC INVERSION (YNQ\_INV; see (17a.i))**, **YES/NO-INTERROGATIVES WITH COMPLEX CLITIC INVERSION (YNQ\_INC; see (17a.ii))**, **PERIPHRASTIC YES/NO-INTERROGATIVES (YNQ\_ESK; see (17b))**, and **INTONATION/DECLARATIVE INTERROGATIVES (YNQ\_DEC; see (17c)).**<sup>54</sup> In yes/no-interrogatives, the only subdivision of the main morphosyntactic types concerns thus inversion: Inverted yes/no-interrogatives contain either simple or complex clitic inversion (for a definition of the latter, see p.30).

### Wh-questions<sup>55</sup>

In French, there are at least four morphosyntactic variants of ‘Where do you go’ [or ‘Where are you going?’] (Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 88f.). As I will show in the following chapters, there is though good reason for a more detailed classification. The variants of ‘Where is Mary/she going?’ presented hereafter are based on the presence or absence of subject-verb inversion, the insertion of a variant of the morpholexical marker *EST-CE QUE*, the realisation of the question word (wh-preverbal, wh-

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<sup>53</sup> When this term is used for an interrogative with a question word, this is to say that there is no additional morphosyntactic marking (i.e. neither subject-verb inversion nor *EST-CE QUE* are used).

<sup>54</sup> These general types can be subclassified according to their orientation towards an answer as well as the focus on a constituent (cf. 2.2.1; see appendix, pp.398f.), but for this thesis, only the broad semantico-syntactic categories will be important.

<sup>55</sup> Although the term *wh-question* may suggest this, such an information gap does not have to be encoded by a(n explicit) question word. There is also the possibility of simply leaving out the question word, as in *Ce qui veut dire ... ?*. As far as I am concerned, the assumption of zero-element may be helpful to capture the structural difference between a declarative or elliptical yes/no-interrogative and a declarative or elliptical wh-interrogative without question word.

postverbal or wh-omitted), and in the case of inversion also on the subject type within the interrogative construction (clitic vs. non-clitic vs. both).<sup>56</sup>

- (18a.i) Où va-t-elle ? (QVs)  
 (18a.ii) Où Marie va-t-elle ? (QSVs)  
 (18a.iii) Où va Marie ? (QVS)  
 (18b.i) ?Où est-ce que va Marie ?<sup>57</sup> (QEVs)  
 (18b.ii) ???Où qu{e/} va Marie ?<sup>58</sup> (QkVS)  
 (18b.iii) Où est-ce qu{e/} Marie/elle va ? (QE{s/S}V)  
 (18b.iv) Où qu{e/} Marie/elle va ? (Qk{s/S}V)  
 (18c.i) Où Marie/elle va ? (Q{s/S}V)  
 (18c.ii) Marie/Elle va où ? ({s/S}VQ)  
 (18c.iii) Marie/Elle va... ? ({s/S}V∅)

In the first variants (i.e. (18a.i)-(18a.iii)), the subject is postverbal, so these variants can be referred to as **INVERTED WH-QUESTIONS** knowing that usual word order is the other way around. For a more detailed classification, they can be divided by their subject realisations: As in type (18a.i), there is a clitic subject only, this type will be referred to as **WH-INTERROGATIVES WITH SIMPLE CLITIC INVERSION** (WHQ\_INV). If there is a non-clitic subject, new possibilities arise. First, the subject can be doubled by a clitic (see (18a.ii)). This phenomenon will be captured by the term of **COMPLEX CLITIC INVERSION** (WHQ\_INC, see also yes/no-interrogatives). Secondly, the non-clitic subject can be placed postverbally (see (18a.iii)).<sup>59</sup> This type will be called **STYLISTIC INVERSION** (WHQ\_INS; for a detailed theoretical account of stylistic inversion, see Kayne & Pollock (1978)). Hence, in contrast to the non-inverted<sup>60</sup> variants (i.e. (18b.iii)-(18c.iii)), the subject type plays a role for the morphosyntactic classification of inverted variants.

<sup>56</sup> In an even more fine-grained classification of inverted (*Où est-ce // que Marie va ?*), periphrastic (*Où est-ce que c'est que Marie va ?*), wh-fronted (*Où c'est que Marie va ?*) and wh-in-situ structures (*C'est où que Marie va ?*), the presence or absence of a presentative (i.e. *c'est ... qu{e/}/i...*) can also be taken into account. For this thesis, such sub-subtype distinctions have though been left apart.

<sup>57</sup> The grammatical status of this interrogative may be controversial, but it seems to be occasionally used. On the world wide web, you find sentences like *OÙ EST-CE QUE VA S'ARRÊTER L'OURAGAN TRUMP ?* ([https://newradio.fr/premiere-chronique-de-regis-hounkpe-jusquou-va-sarreter-louragan-trump/\[02/06/2018\]](https://newradio.fr/premiere-chronique-de-regis-hounkpe-jusquou-va-sarreter-louragan-trump/[02/06/2018])) or *Mais où est ce que va s'exercer le niveau de sélection [ ? ]* ([https://www.podcastscience.fm/dossiers/2014/01/12/levolution-est-elle-une-science/\[02/06/2018\]](https://www.podcastscience.fm/dossiers/2014/01/12/levolution-est-elle-une-science/[02/06/2018])). Besides, this form has been mentioned in the literature (Coveney 2002: 96).

<sup>58</sup> I did not find any occurrence of such a structure in my corpora, but *qu{e/}* being a reduced form of *EST-CE QUE*, one might expect such structures to be grammatical as well.

<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, it is not always placed in the same position as a clitic (cf. *Où est-elle allée ?* vs. *Où est allée Marie ?*).

<sup>60</sup> The inversion contained in the question particle *est-ce que* (cf. 18b) is no longer analysable cf. Druetta (2003: 24).

The morphosyntactic type of inversion can thus be subdivided into the following three categories:

An **INTERROGATIVE WITH SIMPLE CLITIC INVERSION (INV)** is a structure encoding an information gap in which the verb precedes the clitic subject which is not a duplication of a non-clitic subject.  
An **INTERROGATIVE WITH COMPLEX CLITIC INVERSION (INC)** is a structure encoding an information gap in which the verb precedes the clitic subject which is a duplication of a non-clitic subject.  
An **INTERROGATIVE WITH STYLISTIC INVERSION (INS)** is a structure encoding an information gap in which the verb precedes the (structurally incorporated) non-clitic subject.

In the second class of variants (see (18b.i)-(18b.iv)), the question particle *EST-CE QUE* is inserted between the wh-phrase and the rest of the sentence, regardless of whether the subject is a clitic or a full noun phrase. To refer to this type, I will interchangeably use the terms **PERIPHRASTIC** and **EST-CE QUE WH-QUESTION (WHQ\_ESK)**. In this thesis, these two expressions are thus used as synonyms which describe constructions such as (18b.i), (18b.ii), (18b.iii) or (18b.iv). Although the former term may intuitively also be used for questions with a presentative (see footnote 56), I will use it for these structures only. Interestingly, in periphrastic wh-structures the possibility of inversion may arise (see (18b.i)+(18b.ii)). These variants, which are certainly rather specific cases, will be commented as **PERIPHRASTIC WITH INVERSION** (as opposed to **USUAL PERIPHRASTIC STRUCTURES**). Strictly speaking, they are a combination of the morphosyntactic marking of stylistic inversion and the question particle.

What is more, the question particle may appear in a reduced form. One of the most common reductions is [kEs] instead of [kEskə] (Dekhissi & Coveney 2018), but as it has been suggested that *que* is a reduced form of *est-ce que* (Druetta 2002: 67), I also classify Qk{s/S}V-questions as periphrastic structures. This is particularly common for *qu'est-ce que*, but it is not impossible for other structures either. the first part of the question particle may be dropped in wh-interrogatives:

(19) *Comment que ça marche, ça ?*<sup>61</sup> (QksV)

(20) *Alors, pourquoi qu'tu m'as pas baisée comme n'importe quelle nana ?*<sup>62</sup> (QksV)

To give them a non-misleading name, I will call them **WH-K-INTERROGATIVES (WHI\_QUE; see (19) and (20))**. As *QUE*-interrogatives may be associated with 'what'-questions, I did not want to use that term. Although *qu{e/'}* is usually a complementizer, I consider these structures as morphosyntactically marked apart from the question word because *qu{e/'}* is a reduced form of the question particle *EST-CE QUE* (for a justification, see p.284). Hence, questions with [wh-word + *QUE*] are also classified as periphrastic structures. As the question particle cannot be reduced in yes/no-interrogatives, this periphrastic subtype does not occur in non-constituent questions (cf. the difference in meaning between *Que Marie va à Paris ?* 'That Mary is going to Paris?' and *Est-ce que Marie va à Paris ?* 'Is Mary

<sup>61</sup> English translation: 'How does this work?' (corpus of Reality TV shows, BVCN\_1\_00\_54\_54)

<sup>62</sup> English translation: 'So why didn't you fuck me like any other chick?' (corpus of contemporary detective novels, TOKE\_352)

going to Paris?'). Likewise, in yes/no-interrogatives stylistic inversion is ungrammatical with or without the question particle (cf. \**Est-ce que va Marie à Paris ?*). Additionally, only wh-interrogatives ask for constituents such as the subject. Therefore, **PERIPHRASTIC SUBJECT INTERROGATIVES** (WHI\_ESB, see (21) and (22)) are also restricted to constituent questions.

- (21) Qui est-ce qui a gagné ?<sup>63</sup> (Q={s/S}eV)  
 (22) Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ?<sup>64</sup> (Q={s/S}eV)

Only in wh-interrogatives, periphrastic structures can thus be subdivided into usual periphrastic structures, *est-ce qu{e/'}* structures with stylistic inversion, structures with a reduced form of *EST-CE QUE*,<sup>65</sup> and periphrastic subject questions.

A **USUAL PERIPHRASTIC INTERROGATIVE (ESK)** is a structure encoding an information gap which is marked by the question particle *EST-CE QUE* and in which the subject precedes the verb.  
 An **INVERTED PERIPHRASTIC INTERROGATIVE (ESK)** is a structure encoding an information gap which is marked by the question particle *EST-CE QUE* and in which the verb precedes the subject.  
 A **WH-K-INTERROGATIVE (QUE)** is a structure encoding a constituent information gap which is expressed by a fronted wh-expression followed by *que*.  
 A **PERIPHRASTIC WH-SUBJECT INTERROGATIVE (ESB)** is an *EST-CE QUE* structure encoding an information gap which is the grammatical subject of the sentence.

In the third class of variants (see (18c.i)-(18c.iii)), the only morphosyntactic marking of the interrogative may consist in the question word. Hence, they are declarative structures with a wh-phrase.<sup>66</sup>

There are interrogatives which consist of an initial wh-phrase directly followed by a declarative structure. This type will be called **WH-FRONTED / WH-INITIAL / WH-EX-SITU QUESTION [WITH STRAIGHT WORD ORDER AND WITHOUT QUESTION PARTICLE]** (WHQ\_FRO). Strictly speaking, inverted and periphrastic structures are also wh-fronted, but in order to avoid lengthy terminology, I will drop the part in square brackets, using those terms as an abbreviation of 'wh-initial declarative question without *EST-CE QUE*'.

Stressing the only difference between types (18c.i) and (18c.ii), namely the pre- vs. postverbal position of the wh-word, the third subtype of wh-interrogatives without inversion or question particle is generally called **WH-IN-SITU QUESTION** (WHQ\_SIT, see). In this type, the question phrase seems to stay in the usual (i.e. declarative) place of the constituent asked for. In other words, in this type the information gap is realised in the constituent's original place.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup> English translation: 'Who won?'

<sup>64</sup> English translation: 'What happened?' e.g. (corpus of contemporary detective novels, JUST\_6480)

<sup>65</sup> Sometimes, the question particle can also be reduced by leaving out *qu{e/'i}* (e.g. *Qu'est-ce tu fais ?*).

<sup>66</sup> The wh-phrase can be explicitly expressed or, in the case of complementary questions, also implicitly indicated by prosody or contextually inferred.

<sup>67</sup> In multiple-wh questions, all but one question words are also place in situ. Correspondingly, the phrasing of a wh-question with several information gaps does not allow variation with regard to morphosyntax: The only version available is a combination of wh-in-situ with the obligatory fronting of one interrogative pronoun. (e.g.

Also, there is a very particular type which could theoretically be subsumed under wh-in-situ structures: **COMPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS** (WHI\_COM, see Bolinger 1957). In this case (see (18c.iii)), wh-questions are (at least superficially) morphosyntactically unmarked. As my corpus data suggest, those questions are regularly marked prosodically, such that the non-realisation of the wh-word influences the final intonation contour. One reason for the necessity of intonational cueing will be that these questions are, as far as the phone sequence is concerned, identical to declaratives (and thus originally coded as WHQ\_DEC).<sup>68</sup> This is precisely why I will classify these questions as a type different from wh-in-situ structures.

Likewise, there is a type which could theoretically be subsumed under either wh-in-situ or wh-fronted structures: **NON-PERIPHRASTIC WH-SUBJECT QUESTIONS** (WHI\_SUB). Strictly speaking, they fulfill the criteria for both structures. On the one hand the wh-expression is left in its usual position, and on the other hand it is placed sentence-initially. However, this type is not formally identical to usual wh-in-situ or wh-fronted structures as the wh-expression is not followed by a (clitic or full) noun phrase (cf. (20c) on p.33). For this reason, they will be distinguished from other declarative wh-interrogatives.

In contrast to the single category of morphosyntactically unmarked yes/no-interrogatives, there are thus four subtypes for wh-interrogatives without *EST-CE QUE* and inversion (i.e. DECLARATIVE WH-QUESTIONS):

A **WH-FRONTED INTERROGATIVE [WITHOUT ANY ADDITIONAL MORPHOSYNTACTIC MARKING] (FRO)** is a structure encoding a constituent information gap which is expressed by a fronted wh-expression.  
A **WH-IN-SITU INTERROGATIVE (SIT)** is a structure encoding a constituent information gap which is expressed by a wh-expression left in its usual position.  
A **COMPLEMENTARY INTERROGATIVE (COM)** is a structure encoding a constituent information gap which is expressed by the omission of the constituent.  
A **WH-SUBJECT INTERROGATIVE (SUB)** is a structure encoding an information gap which is the grammatical subject of the sentence.

In the case of wh-interrogatives, there is another detail in the morphosyntactic form of a question that can be taken into account: the wh-word. Constituent questions may thus not only be distinguished by the form (and number) of information gaps, but also by the morpholexical markers representing them.<sup>69</sup> The French language disposes of the following **question words**, which belong to three separate

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*Qui a fait quoi où comment et pourquoi ?* English translation: 'Who did what where when and why?'; taken from a writing method for journalists (<http://www.ecrirepourleweb.com/qui-quoi-quand-ou-pourquoi-comment/>) [12/08/2015])

<sup>68</sup> In some cases, the corresponding declaratives may even be complete (e.g. *Elle écrit.* 'She is writing.') (cf. *Elle écrit...? 'She's writing [what]?'*).

<sup>69</sup> I prefer the term *morpholexical* to the term *lexical* because it allows a distinction between the lexeme *où*, which can be used for both interrogatives and relative clauses, and the lexical entry of *OÙ*<sub>question word</sub>, which can be used in questions only.

word categories (Dethloff & Wagner 2014: 558–559, Xenaonan 1988: 11, Grevisse & Goosse 2016: 533):<sup>70</sup>

- ⇒ The interrogative pronouns : *QUI*<sub>subject</sub>, *QUI*<sub>object</sub>, *QUOI*<sub>subject</sub>, *QUOI*<sub>object</sub> (including *pour quoi*), *LEQUEL*
- ⇒ The interrogative adverbs : *OÙ*, *QUAND*, *COMMENT*, *POURQUOI*, *COMBIEN*
- ⇒ The interrogative determiners : *COMBIEN DE*, *QUEL*

There are good reasons for distinguishing constructions by their question words: The first and foremost one is certainly the correlation between the interrogative element and the frequency of a certain interrogative form (see following chapters, e.g. figure 24 on p.159). Putting it differently, the morphological marker can have an impact on the choice (or avoidance) of a particular morphosyntactic structure.

To exemplify this, I will briefly outline a few restrictions mentioned in the literature. The best-known restrictions are probably the ones of *QUI* and *QUE* functioning as the subject. Although this is by no means surprising, from an analytical point of view it is noteworthy that inversion is not possible unless there is a second constituent referring to the subject (see (24) and (25)). In other words, when *qui* functions as the grammatical subject (see (23)), it only allows  $Q=\{s/S\}V$  and  $\{QE\}=\{s/S\}V$  structures, while it also allows other structures when it functions as the subject attribute (see (24)) or as the object (see (25)).

- (23a) \*A gagné qui ? (\*VQ= $\{s/S\}$ )
- (23b) Qui est-ce qui a gagné ?<sup>71</sup> ( $\{QE\}=\{s/S\}V$ )
- (23c) Qui a gagné ?<sup>72</sup> (Q= $\{s/S\}V$ )
- (24a) Qui est-ce ? (QVs)
- (24b) Qui est-ce que c'est ? (QEsV)
- (24c.i) Qui c'est ? (QsV)
- (24c.ii) C'est qui ?<sup>73</sup> (sVQ)
- (24c.iii) C'est... ? (sV)
- (25a) Qui as-tu vu ? (QVs)
- (25b) Qui est-ce que tu as vu ? (QEsV)
- (25c.i) Qui tu as vu ? (QsV)
- (25c.ii) Tu as vu qui ?<sup>74</sup> (sVQ)

By contrast, in the case of *QUE* in the function of the grammatical subject, only the periphrastic variant is used (see example (26); see also Coveney 2002: 185). In contrast, *QUE*<sub>complement</sub>, i.e. *QUE* functioning as a subject attribute (see example (27) or an object (see example (28)), also allows inverted and wh-in-situ structures.

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<sup>70</sup> Whenever an expression is printed in capital italics, it refers to the sum of its grammatical forms. For example, *QUE* stands for *que*, *qu'* and *quoi* and *qu'EST-CE QUE* for *qu'est-ce que*, *qu'est-ce qu'*, *qu'est-ce*, and *qu'est-ce qui*.

<sup>71</sup> Example repeated from (19).

<sup>72</sup> English translation: 'Who (has) won?'

<sup>73</sup> English translation: 'Who is it?'

<sup>74</sup> English translation: 'Whom did you see? / Whom have you seen?'

- (26a) \*S'est passé quoi ?<sup>75</sup> (\*V *QUE*=*{s/S}*)  
 (26b) Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ? (*{QUE e}*=*{s/S}*V)  
 (26c) \*Que s'est passé ? (\**QUE*=*{s/S}*V)  
 (27a) Que s'est-il passé ?<sup>76</sup> (*QUE* Vs)  
 (27b) Qu'est-ce qu'il s'est passé ?<sup>77</sup> (*QUE* EsV)  
 (27c.i) \*Qu'il s'est passé ? (\**QUE* sV)  
 (27c.ii) Il s'est passé quoi ? (sV *QUE*)  
 (28a) Que fais-tu ?<sup>78</sup> (*QUE* Vs)  
 (28b) Qu'est-ce que tu fais ? (*QUE* EsV)  
 (28c.i) \*Que tu fais ? (\**QUE* sV)  
 (28c.ii) Tu fais quoi ? (sV *QUE*)

What may come as more of a surprise is that *QUE* is also not possible with complex inversion (see (29a.ii); see also Kleineidam 1990; Salins 1996; Coveney 2002: 193; Prévost 2009: 327; Guryev 2017: 65), and that *POURQUOI* (see example (30)) is not possible with stylistic inversion (see (30a.iii); see also Kayne 1972: 113; Dubois & Lagane 1973: 157; Korzen 1985, 1990; Kleineidam 1990; Quillard 2000: 294; Coveney 2002: 195, 2011: 129) and is only rarely if ever placed in-situ (see (30c.ii); see Mathieu 2004: 1119; Druetta 2009: 63–69; Coveney 2011: 130).

- (29a.i) Que fait-elle ? (*QUE* Vs)  
 (29a.ii) \*Que Marie fait-elle ? (\**QUE* SVs)  
 (29a.iii) Que fait Marie ? (*QUE* VS)  
 (29b.i) Qu'est-ce que fait Marie ? (*QUE* eVS)  
 (29b.ii) \*Que que fait Marie ? (\**QUE* kVS)  
 (29b.iii) Qu'est-ce que Marie fait ? (*QUE* E*{s/S}*V)  
 (29b.iv) \*Que qu{'/e} elle/Marie fait ? (\**QUE* k*{s/S}*V)  
 (29c.i) \*Qu{'/e}/quoi elle/Marie fait ? (\**QUE* s/SV)  
 (29c.ii) Marie fait quoi ? (s/SV *QUE*)  
 (29c.iii) Marie fait... ? (s/SV∅)  
 (30a.i) Pourquoi fait-elle ses devoirs ? (*POURQUOI* Vs)  
 (30a.ii) Pourquoi Marie fait-elle ses devoirs ? (*POURQUOI* SVs)  
 (30a.iii) \*Pourquoi fait Marie ses devoirs ? (\**POURQUOI* VS)  
 (30b.i) \*Pourquoi est-ce que fait elle/Marie ses devoirs ? (\**POURQUOI* eVS)  
 (30b.ii) \*Pourquoi que fait Marie ses devoirs ? (\**POURQUOI* kVS)  
 (30b.iii) Pourquoi est-ce que elle/Marie fait ses devoirs ? (*POURQUOI* E*{s/S}*V)  
 (30b.iv) Pourquoi qu{'/e} elle/Marie fait ses devoirs ? (*POURQUOI* k*{s/S}*V)  
 (30c.i) Pourquoi Marie fait ses devoirs ? (*POURQUOI* *{s/S}*V)  
 (30c.ii) ??? Marie fait ses devoirs pourquoi ? (*{s/S}*V *POURQUOI*)  
 (30c.iii) Marie fait ses devoirs (parce que)... ? (s/SV∅)

Question words are thus capable of restricting the choice of the phono-morphosyntactic question type. Although question words are linked to certain semantic features (e.g. *où* implies that the missing constituent will most likely refer to a place), but more importantly they are already a formal means. Interestingly, there are some interrogative constructions which have the same semantic meaning although they are realised by different question words (see (30) and (30')) for two implementations of

<sup>75</sup> English translation: 'What (has) happened?'

<sup>76</sup> English translation: 'What (has) happened?'

<sup>77</sup> Examples repeated from (20).

<sup>78</sup> English translation: 'What do you do? / What are you doing?'



'What's the difference?'). In that case, the question word may have an influence on its own: Whereas (31a) and (31'b) are grammatical, the structures become ungrammatical when the question words are exchanged (see (31b) and (31'a)).

- (31a) C'est quoi, la différence ? (sV *QUE* +S)
- (31b) \*Que/Quoi est la différence ? (\**QUE* VS)
- (31'a) \*C'est quelle, la différence ? (\*sV *QUEL* +S)
- (31'b) Quelle est la différence ? (*QUEL* VS)

This phenomenon is related to the special status of *QUEL*, which can function as *attribut du sujet* by semantically copying the antecedent (=> *Quelle [différence] est la différence [en question] ?*; cf. Dubois & Lagane 1973: 68: "L'interrogatif *quel* peut s'employer aussi comme attribut : en ce cas il ne joue un rôle de déterminant que par rapport à un nom qui n'est pas exprimé : *QUELLES sont ses intentions?* (= *quelles intentions sont ses intentions?*)"). Consequently, *QUEL* is used with subject-verb inversion whenever it is used as subject attribute (Druetta 2009: 127; Coveney 2011: 131), but *QUE* can only be used with a structure with right subject dislocation.

Hence, a subdivision of wh-questions according to their question word is imperative, and the question word will also be taken into account in my four empirical studies (see chapters 4 to 7).

To conclude, in wh-interrogatives there too are three broad morphosyntactic variants (i.e. 'structures with subject-verb inversion', 'structures with question particle' and 'structures with neither of the two'). In contrast to yes/no-interrogatives, all of them can be subdivided. There are three types of inversion, (three or) four types of periphrastic structures and four wh-interrogatives with neither subject-verb inversion nor the question particle. Hence, there are (ten or) eleven more specific morphosyntactic subtypes. Also, the morphosyntactic types can be classified according to the question word which they are based on. Remarkably, not all theoretically possible forms are used in the French language system. The availability of a morphosyntactic variant depends (amongst other things) on the choice of question word (see also chapter 3).

### Alternative questions

As we have seen in the last subsection, alternative questions are semantically between yes/no- and wh-questions. One might expect this fact to be reflected in their forms as well. Yet, in most cases French alternative questions are formally closer to total than to partial questions. As for (American) English, Bolinger (1957: 116) observed that "[t]he matrix may consist of any yes/no Q except stereotyped ['oriented/biased']." According to the author, this is due to the fact that every disjunctive question could be reformulated as several yes/no-questions. Although I do not agree in the explanation (as we have seen, there is a semantic difference between yes/no and disjunctive questions), I would like to stress that the quoted observation is true for French as well: Disjunctive

questions use the same morphosyntactic variants as yes/no-questions. The constitutive parts of alternative questions are thus two yes/no-questions which are usually (but not necessarily) of the same morphosyntactic type and linked by *or*.<sup>79</sup>

- (32a.i) N’as-tu pas eu envie de le faire ou as-tu simplement manqué de temps ?<sup>80</sup> (Vs ou Vs)
- (32a.ii) Marie n’a-t-elle pas eu envie de le faire ou a-t-elle simplement manqué de temps ? (SVs ou Vs)
- (32b) Est-ce que tu n’as pas eu envie de le faire ou est-ce que tu as simplement manqué de temps ? (EsV ou EsV)
- (32c) Tu n’as pas eu envie de le faire ou tu as simplement manqué de temps ? (sV ou sV)

However, there is also a type of disjunctive which shows the semantic proximity of alternative and wh-questions: Structures encoding a choice of subjects as information gap (see (33) and (34)).

- (33) À ton avis, qui de Marianne Delvaux ou de l’étudiant d’Assas rencontré à la conférence aurait incité Eva Keller à modifier le thème de son mémoire ?<sup>81</sup> (QUI de S<sub>1</sub> ou de S<sub>2</sub> V)
- (34) Qui de Barel ou de Louis en voulait à Maître Ravault et à Juliette Bisot ?<sup>82</sup> (QUI de S<sub>1</sub> ou de S<sub>2</sub> V)

In these structures, the wh-pronoun *qui* suggests that these structures are wh-interrogatives. On closer inspection, the information gap is though not an unspecified missing constituent but an explicit choice of two alternatives. Hence, such structures are alternative questions although they comprise a wh-phrase.

#### Interrogative constructions with and without sentence status

So far, we have seen more about two dozen question forms, not counting the different question word types. Technically speaking, there are, however, even more variants. Since interrogativity is not limited to utterances with sentence-status, also structures without a finite verb or other syntactically incomplete<sup>83</sup> utterances can be classed as an interrogative. In the classification of Bolinger (1957), there are several terms (such as *elliptical*, *vicarious* and *fragmentary*) that are used for non-sentence questions. For this thesis, such a fine-grained distinction is not necessary, so I will use the term **ELLIPTICAL INTERROGATIVE** (ELL<sup>84</sup>) to denote any question form that is not a full sentence (see examples (35) to (38)).

<sup>79</sup> The only exception to this seems to be the possibility to use a wh-interrogative as the final part of the question (e.g. *Do you want to go shopping, do you want to stay home or what do you want to do?*).

<sup>80</sup> English translation: ‘Did you not feel like doing this or did you just lack time?’; this example has been taken from Dethloff & Wagner (2014) and adapted to the other morphosyntactic types. In the case of (32a.ii), the subject has been changed to Mary in order to enable complex inversion.

<sup>81</sup> English translation: ‘In your opinion, who will have encouraged Eva Keller to modify the subject of her thesis – Marianne Delvaux or the student Assas met at the conference?’ (corpus of contemporary detective novels, CNPJ\_5989)

<sup>82</sup> English translation: ‘Who was sore at Maître Revault and Juliette Bisot – Barel or Louis?’ (corpus of contemporary detective novels, CNPJ\_6278)

<sup>83</sup> Syntactic incompleteness can be described as ‘not being linked to a full proposition itself’.

<sup>84</sup> The coding ELL will only be used for elliptical questions that are neither infinitive nor tag questions.

- (35) Léo ou Théo ?<sup>85</sup> (S/X ou S/X)
- (36) Son visage ?<sup>86</sup> (S/X)
- (37) Quoi ?<sup>87</sup> (Q)
- (38) Comment ça, rien ?<sup>88</sup> (Q X)

However, there are two subtypes of this category which will be treated separately. For one thing, there are the so-called infinitive interrogatives, which are no full sentences because their verb is not conjugated (see (39)). As opposed to Bolinger's 'potential questions', they are though a recurrent way of formulating French wh-questions. For instance, example (39) was used to introduce a video tutorial for a hair style. For another, there are tag questions (see Bolinger 1957: 17-21 for English tag questions), which should be looked at separately because they are full declaratives with a final elliptical element expressing confirmation-seekingness such as *non* or *n'est-ce pas* (see (40) and (41)).<sup>89</sup>

- (39) Comment faire un carré déstructuré sur des cheveux bouclés ?<sup>90</sup> (QV<sub>nc</sub>)
- (40) Il y a un petit peu d'expérience, n'est-ce pas ?<sup>91</sup> ({s/S}Vt)
- (41) Elle est espagnole, non ?<sup>92</sup> ({s/S}Vt)

An **ELLIPTICAL INTERROGATIVE (ELL)** is a syntactically incomplete interrogative.  
 An **ELLIPTICAL SI-INTERROGATIVE (ELS)**  
 An **INFINITIVE INTERROGATIVE (INF)** is an elliptical interrogative with an infinitive as its only verb form.  
 A **TAG INTERROGATIVE (TAG)** is an elliptical interrogative which consists of a statement followed by a morpholexical marker for a confirmation-seeking request.<sup>93</sup>

#### Overview of morphosyntactic question forms

Finally, an overview of the different morphosyntactic types shall be given. Also, there shall be included the structural codes which will be used throughout this thesis. These codes are composed by the following symbols (an adaptation of Coveney 2002):

<sup>85</sup> English translation: 'Léo or Théo?' (corpus of textbooks, À plus 1, p.16)

<sup>86</sup> English translation: 'His face?' (corpus of contemporary detective novels, SCAR\_2895)

<sup>87</sup> English translation: 'What?' (e.g. corpus of contemporary detective novels, ESCV\_1961)

<sup>88</sup> English translation: 'How that, *nothing*? / What do you mean by *nothing*?' (corpus of contemporary detective novels, ALEX\_1770)

<sup>89</sup> Tag questions are thus yes/no-interrogatives. However, *hein* can also appear after a wh-question. For a brief excursion on this phenomenon, see appendix, p.406.

<sup>90</sup> English translation: 'How can you do a *carré déstructuré* ('destructured bob') with curly hair?' (corpus of Reality TV shows, SHOP1\_01\_05\_53)

<sup>91</sup> English translation: 'You do have a little bit of experience, don't you?' (corpus of Reality TV shows, CSQD\_4\_00\_26\_10)

<sup>92</sup> English translation: 'She's Spanish, isn't she?' (corpus of textbooks, Écho 1, p.112)

<sup>93</sup> This definition excludes tags from wh-interrogatives. In my opinion, any tag after an wh-interrogative should be interpreted as an elliptical prompting question (e.g. *Ça changera quoi, hein ?*).

Table 2: Legend of structural codes<sup>94</sup>

s	clitic subject
S	non-clitic subject
V	(conjugated) verb
V <sub>inf</sub>	infinitive verb form
e	<i>est-ce qu{e''/i}</i>
Q	question word
c	<i>c'est</i> (left part of presentative <sup>95</sup> )
k	<i>que/qui</i> (as reduced <i>EST-CE QUE</i> or right part of presentative)
t	tag (e.g. <i>non</i> or <i>n'est-ce pas</i> )
X	any other linguistic form (only indicated if no subject or verb is used)

Table 3: Overview of morphosyntactic forms of yes/no-questions

	inverted	non-inverted	
	* <i>EST-CE QUE</i>	with <i>EST-CE QUE</i>	without <i>EST-CE QUE</i>
full	<i>Va-t-il à la fête ?</i> (Vs) [INV]	<i>Est-ce qu'il va à la fête ?</i> (EsV) [ESK]	<i>Il va à la fête ?</i> (sV) [DEC]
	<i>Pierre va-t-il à la fête ?</i> (VS) [INC] <sup>96</sup>	<i>Est-ce que Pierre va à la fête ?</i> (ESV) [ESK]	<i>Pierre va à la fête ?</i> (SV) [DEC]
elliptical	-		<i>À la fête ?</i> (X) [ELL]
	-		<i>Il va à la fête, non ?</i> (X) [TAG]

<sup>94</sup> In general, minuscules denominate entities with little or no lexical content, whereas majuscules stand for entities with a lexical meaning. There are though some exceptions to this: Proper nouns are indicated with a majuscule although they rather have referential meaning, and for the sake of simplicity copula verbs are indicated as V just as other verbs.

<sup>95</sup> This symbol is not of importance for the classification of structures. It may though be useful for the discussion of examples.

<sup>96</sup> The difference between INV and INC is not made in the automatised analysis of the whole ten detective novels (see chapter 6).

Table 4: Overview of morphosyntactic forms of (non-subject) *wh*-questions

	inverted			non-inverted				
	with <i>EST-CE QUE</i>		without <i>EST-CE QUE</i>	with <i>EST-CE QUE</i>		without <i>EST-CE QUE</i>		
	<i>est-ce qu{e/'}</i>	<i>qu{e/'}</i>	-	<i>est-ce qu{e/'}</i>	<i>qu{e/'}</i>	-		
	wh-ex-situ						wh-in situ	wh- omitted
full	-	-	<i>Où vas- tu ?</i> (QVs) [INV]	<i>Où est- ce que tu vas ?</i> (QEsV) [ESK]	<i>Où que tu vas ?</i> (QksV) [QUE]	<i>Où tu vas ?</i> (QsV) [FRO]	<i>Tu vas où ?</i> (sVQ) [SIT]	-
	<i>?Où est- ce que va Marie ?</i> (QEVs) [ESK]	<i>?Où que va Marie ?</i> (QkVs) [QUE]	<i>Où va Marie ?</i> (QVs) [INS]	<i>Où est- ce que Marie va ?</i> (QESV) [ESK]	<i>Où que Marie va ?</i> (QkSV) [QUE]	<i>?Où Marie va ?</i> (QSV) [FRO]	<i>?Marie va où ?</i> (SVQ) [SIT]	
elliptical	_97						<i>Où (ça) ?</i> (Q) [ELL]	<i>Tu vas... ?</i> (sV) [DEC] <i>Marie va... ?</i> (SV) [DEC] <sup>98</sup>
infinitive	-					<i>Où aller ?</i> (QV) [INF]		

<sup>97</sup> There was one occurrence of *qu'est-ce que* as an elliptical question in a detective novel (see p.268)

<sup>98</sup> These interrogatives are semantically *wh*-questions, but morphosyntactically they are ambiguous between a yes/no- and a *wh*-interrogative. Therefore, they are classed as yes/no-questions in the automatised analysis of the whole ten detective novels (see chapter 6).

Table 5: Overview of morphosyntactic forms of alternative questions<sup>99</sup>

	inverted	Non-inverted	
	*EST-CE QUE	With EST-CE QUE	Without EST-CE QUE
<b>full</b>	<i>(Pierre) prend-il du café ou prend-il du thé ?</i> ((S)Vs ou Vs) [IN(C)/V]	<i>Est-ce que tu prends du café ou est-ce que tu prends du thé ?</i> (EsV ou EsV) [ESK]	<i>Tu prends du café ou tu prends du thé ?</i> (sV ou {s/S}V) [DEC]
<b>(partly) elliptical</b>	<i>(Pierre) prend-il du café ou du thé ?</i> ((S)Vs ou X) [IN(C)/V]	<i>Est-ce que tu prends du café ou du thé ?</i> (EsV ou X) [ESK]	<i>Tu prends du café ou du thé ?</i> (sV ou X) [DEC] <i>Du café ou du thé ?</i> (X ou X) [ELL]

### 2.2.2.3 Intonational question types

In this section, I will give an overview of the different intonation patterns that questions may exhibit. After defining the term of *intonation*, I will outline the classic notions of tonal movement, including ‘intonemes’, ‘final intonation contours’ and ‘nuclear configurations’. For this thesis, I will only use the latter two concepts, but the concept of intonemes is essential for understanding the state of the art and the discussion of my data.

#### [A definition of intonation at the borderline of phonetics and phonology](#)

In theoretical linguistics, there is a wide as well as a narrow definition of intonation. In its wide definition, intonation denotes the linguistic interplay of all suprasegmental features, i.e. it is used as a synonym for *prosody* (cf. Bußmann 2008: 306). Therefore, intonation can relate to various phonologically relevant notions, such as rhythm (i.e. the perception of relative duration and pauses), stress (i.e. the perceived prominence of a syllable or constituent), or pitch (i.e. the perception of tonal movement) (cf. Hammerström 1998: 103f.; Dubois 2007: s.v. "prosodie"; Bußmann 2008: 306; Portes et al. 2014: 16). These perception-related notions can, in turn, be related to three or four “acoustic parameters of speech: fundamental frequency (f0), loudness, length of syllables and voice quality.”<sup>100</sup> (Portes et al. 2014: 16) However, intonation is more than acoustic measurements. It is usually connected to phonology, and hence meaning-related. For example, it can be used to distinguish sentence types, such as interrogatives from assertives (see also Grevisse & Goosse 2016: 47). Also, it

<sup>99</sup> This overview is supposed to exemplify the different morphosyntactic variants. However, it is not exhaustive: For example, the disjunctive connector *ou* does not always have to be realised. Also, to keep this overview neat and simple, I did not include all possible forms with a non-clitic subject.

<sup>100</sup> The term *loudness* is the only one used for perceptive acoustics. Since the other terms are production- and measurement-oriented, the terms *intensity* or *sound pressure* would be more adequate. Also, *length* could be replaced by *duration*, which is a term more commonly used for instrumental measurements. As for the number of acoustic properties, *voice quality* is often left aside (see int. al. O’Grady & Archibald 2016: 40).

can express focus or more specific pragmatic meaning (e.g. counter-expectedness). To put it in the terms of Ladd (2008: 6):

“Intonation [...] refers to the use of suprasegmental phonetic features to convey ‘postlexical’ or sentence-level pragmatic meanings in a linguistically structured way.”<sup>101</sup>

In its narrow definition, which is the one I will use, intonation only refers to the parameter of F0. Like in grammars or textbooks (see int. al. Klein & Kleineidam 1994: 181; *À plus! 1 Grammatikheft*, p. 53), intonation is thus defined as the melody of a sentence (see int. al. Pustka 2016: 139; Crystal 2006: 241). More precisely, [i]ntonation is the distinctive use of pitch over units larger than a single word.” (Reetz & Jongman 2009: 221) Accordingly, intonation is assumed to be tonal movement that is supralexical-meaning-related, and Gussenhoven (2004: 12) treats it as “[...] the use of phonological tone for non-lexical purposes, or – to put it positively - for the expression of phrasal structure and discourse meaning.” For this thesis, distinctiveness (in the sense of meaning-relatedness) can, however, not be used as a criterion. This is because, in the case of questions, it is highly controversial which intonation patterns actually carry meaning. As a consequence, a definition appropriate for research on question intonation has to be phonetic in nature. A possible phrasing of such a definition would be the one of O’Grady & Archibald (2016: 42):

Pitch movement in spoken utterances that is not related to differences in word meaning is called intonation.

As French is an intonation-only language (i.e. not a tone language, see Gussenhoven 2004: 12), pitch is never related to word meaning, so the relative clause can also be left out. Likewise, it goes without saying that acoustic properties such as pitch are only relevant for spoken speech. This leaves us with the following short definition:

**INTONATION is pitch movement.**

Nevertheless, (at least for this thesis) it would also be aimless to describe intonation contours without any classifications. *Intonational question types* shall be defined, so that questions can be classified according to their pitch patterns. By this classification, I hope to be able to detect correlations with semantic, morphosyntactic, and/or pragmatic types. In other words, it shall be investigated on which linguistic and extralinguistic factors the choice of a pitch pattern depends. It is even conceivable that intonational types are complementarily distributed with regard to their meaning. Hence, they are *prone to be distinctive* – but they are not distinctive per se.

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<sup>101</sup> The last addition is to say that intonation is composed of categorically distinct entities, e.g. a low tone, and relations, e.g. stronger than, excluding paralinguistic features Ladd (2008: 6–8).

To distinguish different intonational question types, criteria for the classification of pitch contours into melodic patterns must be chosen. In the following, the three most influential classification systems and the corresponding criteria will be presented.

### Intonemes

According to the *Dictionnaire de linguistique* (Dubois 2007), *intonemes* are distinctive intonation units on sentence level. They are thus pitch patterns that are meaning-related and may be seen as intonational morphemes. Those intonational morphemes can be subdivided into the global pitch patterns of a phrase (minor contour) and the global pitch patterns of a sentence (major contour) (Portes & Beyssade 2015: 11).

An **INTONEME** is a distinctive pitch pattern of a phrase or a sentence.

This notion is strongly related to an article published by Delattre (1966), in which the author classifies *les dix intonations de base du français* ('the ten basic intonations of French') into seven *intonèmes*. In that article, interrogatives are described as exhibiting either *question* intonation (*intonème C*), which is a rising pitch pattern for yes/no-interrogatives, or *interrogation* intonation (*intonème F*), which is a falling pitch pattern for wh-interrogatives. Moreover, interrogatives may exhibit *écho* or *parenthèse* intonation (*intonème G*) if there is an additional incision or supplement such as a vocative (e.g. *C'est bien toi, ma jolie ?* 'Is this really you, my dear?').

In contradiction to this traditional description of the intonation of questions, it has been shown that yes/no-interrogatives are not always rising and wh-interrogatives are not always falling (see int. al. Zwanenburg 1965; Fónagy & Bérard 1973; Grundstrom 1973; Wunderli 1984; Portes et al. 2014; Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015; Delais-Roussarie & Herment 2018, see also chapters 5 to 7). What is more, it is unclear how these intonemes may be measured (Delattre uses a system of 4 relative pitch levels), and how measurements relate to perception. The utility of such a classification system is thus put into question and intonemes will not be used in this thesis. What can, however, be retained from this idea is the description of rises and falls.

### Final intonation contours as perceived tonal movement

While traditional descriptions of intonation comprised the whole utterance, more recent research mainly focussed on the final part of the intonation curve. One reason for this is that there had been found evidence for that it is not overall pitch movement which is distinctive, but rather the pitch movement in the very last syllables of a sentence (Zwanenburg 1965; see int. al. Faure 1973: 11; Di Cristo 1998: 202). For example, Grundstrom (1973: 21) showed that the most important acoustic parameter for the perception of a declarative structure as a question was the F0-curve on the last



syllable. Indeed, today it seems to be an accepted fact that the distinction between sentence types is mostly due to *final* intonation contours (Dubois 2007: s.v. "contour"). As a result, the intonational question types of this thesis will also concern final intonation contours.

Let us consider the following examples taken from my audio book corpus:

- (42) T'es au **salon** ?<sup>102</sup> ↑
- (43) Ils vivent où, **exactement** ?<sup>103</sup> ↑
- (44) Où est parti ton Natale **Angeli** ?<sup>104</sup> →
- (45) C'est où, ce **restaurant** ?<sup>105</sup> ↓
- (46) Tu m'as emmené dans une **clinique** ?<sup>106</sup> ↓

While (42) and (43) are clearly rising in the end, (45) and (46) are clearly falling in the end. In the case of (44), final pitch is not perceptibly changing at all. Hence, there are three different movements to be classified:

An interrogative with a **RISING** final intonation contour is a question form whose last syllable is perceived as having a higher pitch than the one preceding it.  
An interrogative with a **FALLING** final intonation contour is a question form whose last syllable is perceived as having a lower pitch than the one preceding it.  
An interrogative with a **FLAT** final intonation contour is a question form whose last syllable is perceived as having the same pitch as the one preceding it.

These definitions can be operationalised by classifying questions according to the fundamental frequency (F0) of their last syllables. For example, (42) is clearly 'rising' because its last syllable is about 4 semitones higher than the penultimate, and (45) is clearly 'falling' because the last syllable is about 4 semitones lower than the penultimate. In contrast, differences of less than a semitone, such as in (44), are hardly perceptible and may thus be subsumed under the category of a 'flat' contour.

#### Final intonation contours in F\_ToBI: nuclear configurations

In recent and current research on intonation, annotations are often done by means of TONES, i.e. pitch targets, instead of movement (see int. al. Jun & Fougeron 2000; Hirschberg 2004; Michelas et al. 2016; Prieto & Frota 2015; Michalsky 2017). This trend is due to a shift in the theoretical framework of intonational phonology, namely the turn to autosegmental phonology (for an introduction to this framework, see Goldsmith 1995), which paved the way for the System of Tones and Breaks Indices (Beckman & Hirschberg 1994). As the name already suggests, this annotation system uses tones and

<sup>102</sup> English translation: '{Are you / you are} in the living room?' (corpus of contemporary detective novels, MMAT\_4196)

<sup>103</sup> English translation: 'Where exactly do they live?' (corpus of contemporary detective novels, JUST\_6805)

<sup>104</sup> English translation: 'Where did you Natale Angeli go?' (corpus of contemporary detective novels, LTEA\_5130)

<sup>105</sup> English translation: 'Where is that restaurant?' (corpus of contemporary detective novels, TOKE\_330)

<sup>106</sup> English translation: 'You took me to a clinic?' (corpus of contemporary detective novels, ESCV\_2023); the final schwa is pronounced.

breaks instead of curves to describe pitch movement. Originally, it was introduced for Standard American English, but later it was adapted to many other varieties and languages (see e.g. the internet sources of Gussenhoven et al. 1999 for Dutch, Jun 2000 for Korean, and Grice et al. for German). Most recently, Delais-Roussarie et al. (2015) also adapted the standard ToBI conventions to the French language.

In the French ToBI system (F\_ToBI), there are three hierarchically organised types of prosodic phrases: accentual phrases, intermediate phrases and intonational phrases:

An **ACCENTUAL PHRASE (AP)** is the smallest prosodic phrase, which is one phonological group.

An **INTERMEDIATE PHRASE (IP)** is a prosodic phrase that is larger than an AP, but smaller than an IP.

An **INTONATIONAL PHRASE (IP)** is the largest prosodic phrase, which is one intonation unit.

At certain locations in these phrases, tones and breaks can be set. For the description of question intonation, mostly tones are relevant. There are two types of tones: pitch accents and boundary tones (see int. al. Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg 1990; Gussenhoven 2004: 22; Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 70ff.; Glück & Rödel 2016: 716). While pitch accents are associated with prominent (i.e. stressed) syllables, which in French occur at the end of an accentual phrase, boundary tones are associated with edges of prosodic phrases, which in French occur either at the beginning of an accentual phrase or at the end of an intermediate or intonational phrase. For the intonational description of questions, mainly the largest prosodic phrase is of importance as this is the phrase usually corresponding to sentences and sentence-equivalent utterances. Hence, for the annotation of questions, mainly the last tones are relevant. Therefore, I will specify the definitions of the terms *pitch accent* and *boundary tone* with regard to their intonation-phrase final status.

A final **PITCH ACCENT (T\*)** is the tone associated with the last prominent syllable of an intonation phrase.

It is specified as **HIGH (H\*)** if the aligned syllable is (perceived as) rather high-pitched, and as **LOW (L\*)** if the aligned syllable is (perceived as) rather low-pitched.

A final **BOUNDARY TONE (T%)** is the tone that determines the pitch movement from the final pitch accent till the ending of the intonation phrase.

It is specified as **HIGH (H%)** if the pitch after the accent is (perceived as) rising or staying high, and as **LOW (L%)** if the pitch after the accent is (perceived as) falling or staying low.

In F\_ToBI, a final intonation contour is composed of one final pitch accent and one final boundary tone. These combinations are called **NUCLEAR CONFIGURATIONS**, and they are the intonational types that will be used to capture relevant pitch movements in this thesis. There are four possible nuclear configurations:

An interrogative with a **SIMPLE RISE (H\*H%)**\* is a question form whose last stressed syllable (+following schwa-syllable)'s pitch is perceived as rising or staying high.

An interrogative with a **RISE-FALL (H\*L%)** is a question form whose last stressed syllable (+following schwa-syllable)'s pitch is perceived as first rising or staying high and then falling.

An interrogative with a **FALL-RISE (L\*H%)** is a question form whose last stressed syllable (+following schwa-syllable)'s pitch is perceived as first falling or staying low and then rising.

An interrogative with a **SIMPLE FALL (L\*L%)** is a question form whose last stressed syllable (+following schwa-syllable)'s pitch is perceived as falling or staying low.

'Simple rises' and 'fall-rises' can be subsumed as RISES, and 'simple falls' and 'rise-falls' can be subsumed as FALLS. In other words, it is the boundary tone which determines whether a structure is classified as 'rising' or as 'falling'. Since 'flat' contours do not exist in this classification system, they have to be subsumed under 'rising' or 'falling', depending on whether they are perceived as staying 'high' or staying 'low'.

To exemplify this, let us go back to the examples from the last subsection. While (42) can be classified as a ‘simple rise’ (see figure 2), (43) is actually a ‘fall-rise’ (see figure 3), and while (45) can be classified as a ‘simple fall’ (see figure 5), (46) is actually a ‘rise-fall’ (see figure 6). The categories ‘rising’ and ‘falling’ are thus further specified. As opposed to this, the flat contour is no longer treated as a special case. Now, (44) is assigned the same category as (42) and (43) (see figure 4) because its final pitch is perceived as staying high. Although the visualisation of F0 may suggest a slightly falling intonation, I would thus attribute the slight fall to declination (i.e. high tones are realised on a progressively lower pitch throughout an intonational phrase) and classify this interrogative as ‘rising’ rather than ‘falling’. As F0-measurements do not always match perception, operationalisations using F0-measurements lead away from the original idea of nuclear configurations. Nonetheless, F0-measurements may be a good way of capturing final intonation movement in a less subjective way. What is more, those measurements provide continuous instead of categorical data and may be helpful when determining the effect size of factors influencing intonation. Hence, I will also use F0-measurements in the most detailed study on factorial influence on intonational outcome (see 6.3.2).

Figure 2: Praat picture of interrogative MMAT\_4196

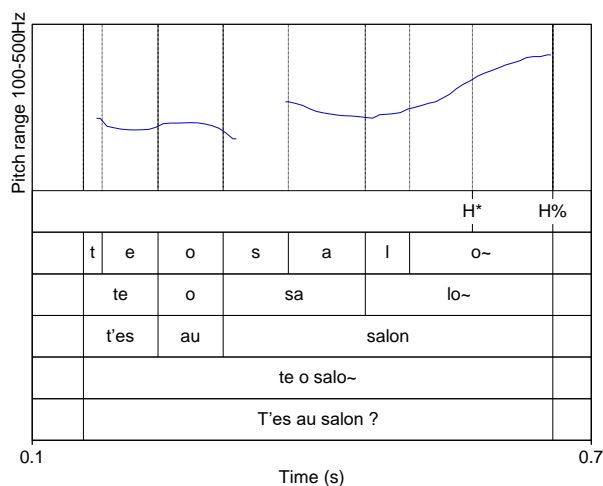


Figure 3: Praat picture of interrogative JUST\_6805

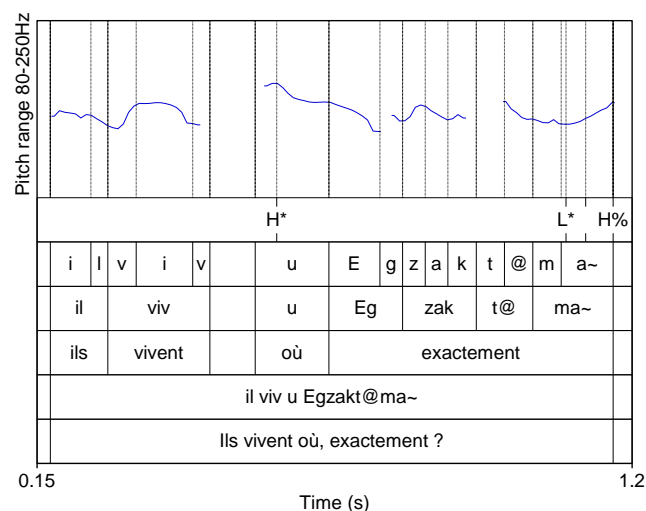


Figure 4: Praat picture of interrogative LTEA\_5130<sup>107</sup>

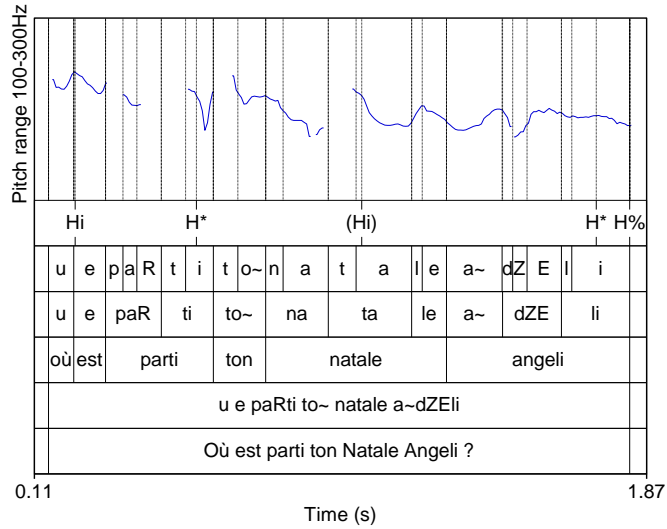


Figure 5: Praat picture of interrogative TOKE\_330<sup>108</sup>

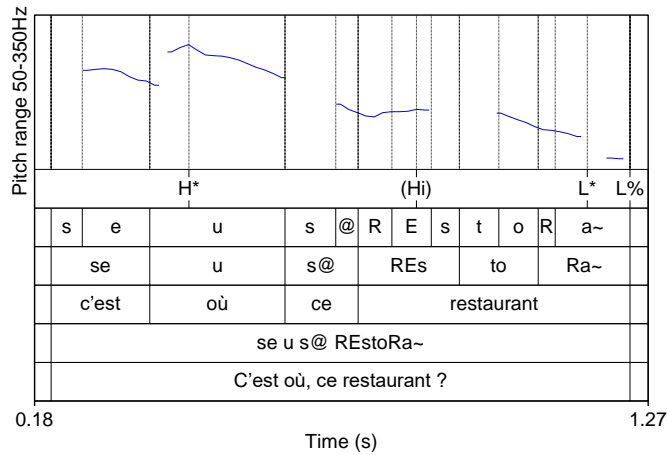
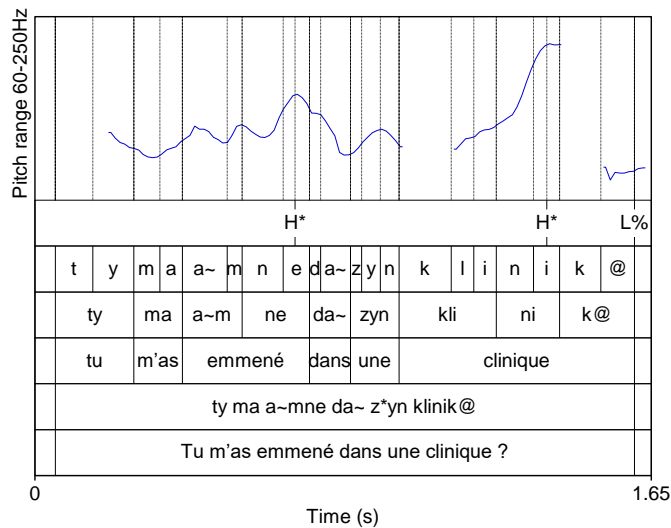


Figure 6: Praat picture of interrogative ESCV\_2023



<sup>107</sup> The name is intonated in a rather unusual way. This may be due to the imitation of an Italian accent.

<sup>108</sup> Since there is a rise on [REs], a secondary stress (Hi) may be annotated.

#### 2.2.2.4 Pragmatic question types

The last question typology to be introduced concerns the use of questions and is thus not necessarily specific to French. Linguists have tried to categorise interrogatives pragmatically (see int. al. Wilson & Sperber 1988; Freed 1994; Escandell-Vidal 1998; Escandell Vidal 1999; Quillard 2000; Hansen 2001; Coveney 2002; Boucher 2010; Coveney 2011; Wyler), but there does not seem to be a generally accepted classification system (as is the case for yes/no- vs. wh-questions). On the one hand, this will be due to the suppleness of pragmatic uses. As we will see, concrete uses of interrogatives are rarely unambiguous. On the other hand, there are certainly manifold possibilities to choose criteria and to delimit categories. Pragmatic types are thus hard to pin down and it will not be possible to analyse them as systematically as the broad semantic and morphosyntactic types. Nonetheless, it is necessary to define them in order to make clear what is meant when using a certain term.<sup>109</sup>

##### Questions with a classic distribution of knowledge

First, I would like to define the most classic kind of question, which is based on its prototypical pragmatic function. This function is a request for information. The idea that a question expresses a desire for some information implies a certain communicative situation linked to a certain distribution of knowledge (see also Xenaonan 1988: 5, Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991: 15-18):

- a) the speaker does not know something (S)
- b) and wants to know S,
- c) while the hearer is a potential source of information about S.

**A QUESTION WITH A CLASSIC DISTRIBUTION OF KNOWLEDGE** is a structure encoding an information gap that is unknown to the speaker and potentially known to the hearer.

A prototypical question is thus an addressee-oriented information request which is expressed by means of an interrogative construction without any bias towards a certain answer. This is what I will call a genuine question.

**A GENUINE (OR TRULY INFORMATION-SEEKING) QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which is unknown to the speaker and can presumably be closed by the hearer.

A variant of this type is a question in which (b) and (c) of the prototypical communicative situation are true, but (a) is adapted. If the speaker thinks to already know the answer, (s)he only wants the hearer to confirm or deny his/her assumption.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> For an attempt to structure the hereafter mentioned pragmatic question types in a tabular overview, see appendix (p.400).

<sup>110</sup> Interestingly, there seem to be two different kinds of confirmation-seekingness: In the first case, which is the case typically referred to, the speaker is quite sure about the answer, but he wants to eliminate any doubt by

A **CONFIRMATION-SEEKING QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which is not entirely but partly believed to be known to the speaker and can presumably be closed by the hearer.

Strictly speaking, this type is already less interrogative (and more assertive) than a genuine question. Nonetheless, confirmation-seeking questions are used in an interrogative way because the information gap encoded in the structure is sought to be closed. More precisely, these questions even show a classic distribution of knowledge, i.e. the speaker does not know something (at least not for sure), and the hearer is a potential source of information (which is used for confirming or refuting the speaker's hypothesis).

In the precedings types the goal of the question is to obtain information. However, there are also interrogative types in which the distribution of knowledge is rather unconventional: In some questions, the speaker knows the answer, and/or the hearer is not supposed to be a source of information. This is the case in exam situations, for example. The examiner (i.e. the speaker) is demanding a piece of information just as in a genuine question, but his/her intent of this demand is to check the student's (i.e. the hearer's) knowledge instead of gaining knowledge. Such a question type may also be used in assignments in teaching materials or teacher's speech (see chapter 7, in which textbooks for learners of L2-French are analysed). Similarly, the posing of questions in quizzes (see SMS quiz questions in chapter 5) cannot be put down to the presenter's (i.e. the speaker's) wish to obtain a piece of information but to the situation of examination.

A **QUIZ (OR EXAM) QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap that the speaker could close himself/herself; i.e. the hearer(s) shall tell the answer for the sake of showing his/her knowledge.

### Assertive and imperative questions

Up to now, all questions were demanding a piece of information. As we saw in 2.2.1 it is not the case that all questions are interrogative (in the sense of 'information-seeking'): There are also assertive and imperative questions. Hence, besides the distribution of knowledge, a question's speech act can be used as a criterion for its pragmatic classification. Let us consider this criterion for determining other pragmatic types. Before I elaborate on these specific non-genuine question types, the broad categories related to the three speech types shall be defined:<sup>111</sup>

An **INTERROGATIVE QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which is used for obtaining a certain piece of information.

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making it explicit. In the second case, the speaker was originally sure about the answer, but (s)he has been given reason to doubt it in the meantime. For research on confirmation-seeking questions, it may thus be helpful to distinguish these two cases. In this thesis, such a detailed account can, however, not be given.

<sup>111</sup> For more information on the three speech types, see p.11f.

An **ASSERTIVE QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which is used for transmitting a certain piece of information.

An **IMPERATIVE QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which is used for bringing about a certain action.

Since interrogative questions are thus information-seeking (i.e. they seek to elicit a certain piece of information), they usually aim at obtaining an answer. Consequently, their answer is essential for the on-going conversation. In my corpora, I could though also determine some cases in which the answer itself was of no pragmatic importance. Hence, these cases had to be non-interrogative questions, which were posed as a stylistic means to indirectly express some assertive or imperative meaning.

In the case of a rhetorical question (for more details on this pragmatic type, see Escandell-Vidal 1984; Meibauer; Han 2002; Ilie 2010; Chen 2011; Biezma & Rawlins 2017), the posing of the question does not provoke a reaction from the hearer. As Levinson (1979: 391) puts it, “rhetorical questions are ‘really’ statements”. Hence, a rhetorical question can be used to mask or disguise an assertion which is to be taken in without any dissent although it is phrased as something left open to discussion (cf. Salins 1996). However, defined as such, all assertive questions would be rhetorical ones. Even though such a wide definition is sometimes used, I will restrict the term to a more narrow meaning: In its narrow definition, rhetorical questions express the negation of their propositional content (Bußmann 2008: 592). They are thus interrogatives which are supposed to imply their own answer. As Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1991b: 103) puts it, a rhetorical question is the most extreme form of a biased question. To illustrate, some prototypical examples follow (see (47) to (50)).

(47) Les cochons peuvent-ils voler ?<sup>112</sup>

(48) Ne vous avais-je pas averti ?<sup>113</sup>

(49) Qui ne veut pas gagner des millions ?<sup>114</sup>

(50) Pourquoi faire plus que ce pour quoi ils sont payés ?<sup>115</sup>

In these cases, the lexical content clearly favours a rhetorical interpretation such that one does not even need the context to understand their message: Of course, the speaker of (47) points to the fact that pigs cannot fly, the speaker of (48) points to the fact that (s)he has actually warned the hearer(s), the speaker of (49) points to the fact that everyone would like to be a millionaire, and the speaker of (50) points to the fact that there is no reason for doing more than for what one is paid. Therefore, the speakers will take it for granted that the answer to the question is the presumably well-known fact of

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<sup>112</sup> English translation: ‘Can pigs fly?’; <http://gcarton.com/fr/publications/pensees-du-jour/mentir-a-quel-age-le-fait-on-le-plus-facilement>

<sup>113</sup> English translation: ‘Didn’t I warn you?’; [http://bdl.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/bdl/gabarit\\_bdl.asp?id=4101](http://bdl.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/bdl/gabarit_bdl.asp?id=4101)

<sup>114</sup> English translation: ‘Who does not want to be a millionaire?’; <http://www.antikor.org/2018/01/30/alstom-qui-ne-veut-pas-gagner-des-millions/>

<sup>115</sup> English translation: ‘Why should they do more than what they are paid for?’; <http://www.sortirdutravail.org/critiques/la-morale-du-travail>



the negated proposition. However, there are also numerous cases in which a question cannot be interpreted without its context. Two such cases are given as examples (51) and (52):

(51) C'est vraiment nécessaire ?<sup>116</sup>

(52) Où pourrait-on aller ?<sup>117</sup>

In (51), the question is clearly biased towards a negative answer, but it is not necessarily meant to be a rhetorical question. In other words, the phrasing makes clear that the speaker has some doubt about the proposition, but it remains open to contextual interpretation whether (s)he judges the answer to be implied in the question or not. For instance, an annoyed father who enters the room of his teenage son while the volume of the music is turned full up obviously wants to express that the loud music is not necessary.<sup>118</sup> On the other hand, the question could also be uttered in a context of an exchange of information. For example, this question could be posed by a woman who wants to check whether, as she has been told, swim caps must be worn in the pool. Similarly, the speaker of (52) could ask for options where they could go, but (s)he could also indicate that there is no option for them at all.<sup>119</sup> Accordingly, it is really the context which determines how the information gap is to be interpreted; a rhetorical question does thus not necessarily have to be recognisable as such without knowing the context. Conversely, if the context is clear, speakers can usually rely on the correct interpretation of rhetorical questions.<sup>120</sup>

**A RHETORICAL QUESTION is a structure encoding an information gap which is (supposed to be) presented as known or inferable; its message is the negated content of its proposition.**

There are also other assertive question types, which could be subsumed under the broad definition of a rhetorical question, but which do not express the negation of the propositional content. In fact, these other types are not entirely assertive, but their interrogative meaning component is minimal. One of them concerns the expression of reprimands and reproaches. Levinson (1979: 391) mentions the following example:

(53) Comment t'as pu me faire ça ?<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> English translation: 'Is this really necessary?'

<sup>117</sup> English translation: 'Where could we/one go?'

<sup>118</sup> In fact, in such a context this rhetorical question even gets an imperative secondary meaning ('turn down the volume').

<sup>119</sup> In the latter case, the speaker may cue his/her message by a specific intonation pattern (see Neitsch in preparation for a detailed study on the specific intonation of German rhetorical questions).

<sup>120</sup> As mentioned in the previous footnote, intonational cueing may also contribute to the correct interpretation of an interrogative. It remains though an open question how the lexical content of a sentence, intonation and the context interact.

<sup>121</sup> Own translation from 'How could you do that to me?'

Although (53) may seem similar to the truly rhetorical question presented in (54), it differs significantly from it. While (54) implies its own answer ('There is no way!'), (53) merely expresses a certain lack of understanding and disdain of the proposition ('I do not understand how you could do that to me!').

(54) Comment j'aurais pu faire ça si je n'étais même pas à la maison ?<sup>122</sup>

It is the latter kind of "rhetorical" question (i.e. example (53)) which Dekhissi & Coveney (2018)<sup>123</sup> encountered in their corpus of *banlieue* movies. As they say, they found questions that were rather used to criticize or reproach something instead of expressing an emphatic assertion. As far as I am concerned, linguistic research will profit from a clearer separation of these pragmatic types. Consequently, I will not term this question type rhetorical, but reproach question.

**A REPROACH QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which may but does not have to be known by the speaker or the hearer; its message is the speaker's disdain of its proposition.

Likewise, I will not count assertive questions which are supposed to remind the hearer(s) of something as rhetorical ones. The following examples (see (55) and (56)) illustrate such a pragmatic use (for more examples of this type, see Blakemore 1992: 174f.; Wilson & Sperber 1988: 92; Escandell-Vidal 1998: 178–197).

(55) Tu as quel âge ?<sup>124</sup>

(56) Qu'est-ce que tu m'as dit hier ?<sup>125</sup>

Without any context, one may be inclined to interpret these questions as usual information-seeking ones. Yet, this reading can easily be changed: If (55) is uttered as a reaction to a childish suggestion, it is immediately read as a call to order, in which the speaker is reminding the hearer of his advanced age. Similarly, (56) can be interpreted as a reminder of what the hearer said the day before if the quotation referred to is *Je vais arrêter la cigarette demain*. ('I'll quit smoking tomorrow.') and the present utterance is a reaction to seeing the hearer with another lit cigarette. Although these questions would be very unlikely to be answered, they are not rhetorical in the narrow sense of the word.

**A REMINDING QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which is known by the speaker as well as the hearer(s); its purpose is to remind the hearer of the evoked fact.

<sup>122</sup> English translation: 'How could I have done this if I wasn't even at home?'; own constructed example

<sup>123</sup> "« Questions Rhétoriques » [...] impliquent la réponse à la question posée et [...] permettent au locuteur d'exprimer une assertion de manière plus emphatique que par la déclarative de polarité opposée. Mais à la différence des questions rhétoriques « traditionnelles » (par ex., Qui ne fait pas d'erreurs ?, qui implique Tout le monde fait des erreurs !), toutes les questions rhétoriques dans notre corpus servent à accomplir une critique ou un reproche, plutôt qu'une simple assertion emphatique."

<sup>124</sup> English translation: 'How old are you?' e.g. (teaching materials, À plus 1, p.59)

<sup>125</sup> English translation: 'What did you tell me yesterday?'

The last assertive question type relevant for this thesis are surprise questions (mentioned in Wilson & Sperber 1988: 97; Obenauer 2005; Bayer & Obenauer 2011). This pragmatic type is contextually embedded because the speaker expresses his/her astonishment about something that has been mentioned or could be inferred. In other words, some proposition that is considered to be part of the common ground is rediscussed. As a consequence, many surprise questions are echoic (i.e. they repeat what has been said, see also p. 56). Although this question type is certainly assertive in meaning ('I am surprised about this.'),<sup>126</sup> there too are an interrogative and an exclamative meaning component: The openness of the interrogative expresses a certain disbelief or doubt, and this lack of belief is uttered emphatically such that surprise questions approach exclamations.

(57) Ah bon ?(!)<sup>127</sup>

(58) T'as une voiture ?(!)

(59) Tiens, il se souvient de mon prénom, ce salaud ?<sup>128</sup>

A **SURPRISE QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which has been closed; by this structure the speaker expresses his/her counterexpectation of the information.

Let us now turn to imperative questions. The foremost imperative question type is certainly a polite demand, which I will call a request question. As we saw in 2.2.1 these questions can comprise modals; however, the use of a modal verb is not necessary either (cf. (60)).<sup>129</sup>

(60) La dernière personne ferme la porte ?<sup>130</sup>

Since the use of a question form implies some information gap, the utterance is presented as being open although the speaker can be sure about what he is saying: in (60), depending on the context, the speaker may be almost positive that the last person will close the door. In this sense, the speaker generally does not want a real response; if any verbal reaction is expected, the speaker wants an affirmation (e.g. *ouais, d'accord, ok*) of the hearer.

A **REQUEST QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which leaves something open that is linked to the speaker's wish for an action performed by the hearer; its message is a polite demand.

Besides these clearly imperative questions, there is another type which can be classified as imperative. Consider examples (61) and (62).

<sup>126</sup> See also Abry et al. (2009: 40), a textbook in which the perceptive difference in the intonation of real questioning and the expression of surprise is trained.

<sup>127</sup> English translation: 'Oh really?' (int. al. detective novels, MMAT\_7131)

<sup>128</sup> English translation: 'Well well, this jerk remembers my first name?!' (detective novels, TEEL\_2249)

<sup>129</sup> Interestingly, this question could also be somewhat of a reminder if this is a rule that has been established beforehand.

<sup>130</sup> English translation: 'The last person closes the door?'

- (61) Tu vois la maison là-bas ? (C'est là que j'ai passé toutes mes vacances quand j'étais petite.)<sup>131</sup>  
 (62) Tu te souviens de M. Thibault ? (Je viens de le croiser.)<sup>132</sup>

Although these questions do not straightforwardly demand an action, they can be said to be imperative because the speaker instructs the hearer to look at the object of interest ('Look at the house over there!') or to try to remember the person of interest ('Try to remember Mr. Thibault!'). There is a prototypical distribution of knowledge (i.e. the speaker as the knowledge demander and the hearer as a potential source of information), but the answer is more relevant to the hearer than to the speaker: As the speaker takes a positive answer for granted, the hearer has to intervene if (s)he does not see or remember the entity of interest. Of course, such questions could be answered literally, but an answer given by the hearer would not advance the conversation. Rather, these questions prepare the way for their ensuing utterances: Some detail on one of the question's constituents is subsequently added by the speaker. Therefore, it is used to guide the thoughts of the hearer and not to obtain a piece of information. Such questions are neither truly interrogative nor truly imperative, but for the on-going discourse the action triggered by the question (looking at the house) is more relevant than a literal answer, so I will count them as an imperative question type.<sup>133</sup>

**A THOUGHT-GUIDING QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which is used as a means to draw the hearer's attention to the entity of interest.

#### Interrogatives with a non-classic distribution of knowledge

Having mentioned all relevant non-interrogative question types, I will now return to interrogative questions. There is one interrogative question type that is very close to thought-guiding questions: introductory ones (see examples (63) to(65); for more information on this question type, see also Quillard 2000; Hansen 2001; Coveney 2002; Boucher 2010; Dekhissi & Coveney 2018).

- (63) Marie est restée combien de minutes ? Vingt ?<sup>134</sup>  
 (64) Abattre, ça veut dire quoi ? Ça veut dire que quelqu'un dit « je me présente à une élection ».<sup>135</sup>  
 (65) Et qu'est-ce qu'il a dit, le mec ? « Occupe-toi de tes oignons. » Incroyable!<sup>136</sup>

<sup>131</sup> English translation: 'You see the house over there? (That's where I spent all my holidays when I was little.)'

<sup>132</sup> English translation: 'You remember Mr. Thibault? (I've just met him.)'

<sup>133</sup> In the overview of pragmatic types, I thus decided to classify them as imperative. There are two further reasons for this: *Imperative* alphabetically comes before *interrogative*, and imperative questions are generally rarer than interrogative ones (hence the mere tendency towards an imperative meaning is more special than the interrogative meaning component).

<sup>134</sup> Translated from the English example *Mary stayed WHAT, twenty minutes ?* (Boucher 2010: 101)

<sup>135</sup> English translation: 'And what does *abattre* mean? / And *abattre* means what? (It means that somebody says "I'm standing for election.")'; example taken from Quillard (2000: 75), the transcription (orthography and punctuation) was slightly adapted.

<sup>136</sup> English translation: 'And what did that guy say? ("Mind your own business." Unbelievable!)

Like thought-guiding questions, these questions make the hearer(s) think about potential answers ('Think about how many minutes Mary (will have) stayed!' / 'Consider the meaning of abattre!' / 'Figure what that guy said!'). However, as opposed to the latter, the speaker himself/herself gives the answer. By uttering the question, the speaker simply guides the hearer in following his/her train of thought. In short, such questions are used to introduce assertives which are presented as the answer to the preceding interrogative.

Similar to this way of proceeding, questions can also be posed to simply point out what one is deliberating on (see (66)) or what one wants a third party to take into account (see (67)).

(66) Mais où est-ce que j'ai mis ma mallette ?<sup>137</sup>

(67) Qui gagnera son ticket pour la finale de vendredi ?<sup>138</sup>

In both cases, the hearer is not supposed to be a source of information. Instead, the speaker rather shares his concerns (see (66)) or points out something that will keep the hearer in suspense (67). While the former is not even addressee-oriented (in fact, such a question can also be uttered by a person talking to himself/herself), the latter is directed to some passive audience. These question types will be of particular importance for interviews and voice-overs in reality TV shows (see chapter 5) as well as narration in contemporary novels (see chapitre 6). As the speaker shares his/her thoughts, I will subsume the three last pragmatic types under the term of thought-explication question.

A **(THOUGHT-)EXPLICATION QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which is posed for the sake of pointing out some thoughts or wonders.

An **INTRODUCTORY QUESTION** is an explication question which is posed as a precursor for the subsequently self-given answer.

A **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTION** is an explication question which is primarily directed at oneself.

A **COMMENT QUESTION** is an explication question which is directed at an audience.

Hence, thought-explication questions either prepare some transmission of knowledge (=> introductory questions) or the only transmission of knowledge initiated by them consists in pointing out an open proposition (=> self-directed and comment questions). In other words, they usually evoke new discussion topics. In contrast to that, there are also several question types that reconsider some information previously evoked. This is precisely what context-embeddedness is about: The crucial point is whether a question takes up a preceding utterance or not.<sup>139</sup> Since a question can take up the

<sup>137</sup> English translation: 'Where (on earth) did I put my case?'; <https://vivre-de-son-site-internet.com/perdre-1000-euros/>

<sup>138</sup> English translation: 'Who will win the ticket for the final on Friday?' (reality TV shows, MBOU\_2\_00\_02\_32)

<sup>139</sup> Of course, introductory questions could also be called contextually embedded because they are related to what is prepared to be said. Nevertheless, I decided to exclude this kind of contextual link from the meaning of *context-embeddedness* to keep definitions as simple as possible.

whole utterance, only a small part of it, just the broad situation or nothing at all (=>out-of-the-blue), it is rather a continuum than a dichotomy. Nonetheless, the term of *context-embeddedness* can be defined on a criterial basis.

A **CONTEXTUALLY EMBEDDED QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which takes up something previously said, done or perceived.<sup>140</sup>

The presumably best-known pragmatic type linked to context-embeddedness are echo questions (for more details on this pragmatic type see int. al. Blakemore 1994; Noh 1995; Escandell-Vidal 2002; Iwata 2003; Reis 2013, 2016). This question type is what one could term a contextually-embedded question *par excellence* because it does not only take up but even repeat (“echo”) what has been said. The term *echo question* is though not always used in the same way. The narrowest definition of an echo question is a reactive question (i.e. a spontaneous reaction in the form of an interrogative) which cites the antecedent utterance, but also a non-literal repetition or an indirect reference is usually accepted as an echo question (Reis 2013: 106). While some authors insist on the use of the same words as in the preceding utterance (Escandell Vidal 1999: 3979f.; Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 85f.), others make reformulation even part of its definition (Bußmann 2008: 154). Interestingly, quiz or exam questions too are sometimes counted as echo questions (Lohnstein 2013: 62; Reis 2013: 107). It goes without saying that echo questions behave differently than out-of-the-blue questions, but as far as I am concerned, one should not rely on syntactic behaviour for defining a pragmatic question type (cf. the *echo effect* mentioned in Reis 2013: 106–108). Consequently, I will term *echo question* only questions with some repetitive status: either literally citing (see (68)), reformulating (see (69)) or interpreting (see (70)) previous utterances.<sup>141</sup>

(68) Pierre s’est marié hier. – Pierre s’est marié hier ?<sup>142</sup>

(69) Tu trouves ça juste ? – Si je trouve ça juste ?<sup>143</sup>

(70) Tu n’étais pas à la maison quand je t’ai appelée il y a une heure ? – Tu m’as téléphonée ?<sup>144</sup>

An **ECHO QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap thought to have been closed, i.e. the answer is considered to already be part of the common ground.

<sup>140</sup> Such a definition may be reminiscent of d(iscourse)-linking (Pesetsky 1987), but while the latter term is restricted to *wh*-expressions (such as *which*), *context-embeddedness* shall be used as a more general term to describe contextual linking.

<sup>141</sup> Some interpretive questions do not even take up any speech material at all: In this case, the question is uttered as a reaction to non-verbal input (e.g. Tu sens cette odeur de gaz, toi aussi ? ‘You can smell the gas as well?’ as a reaction to the hearer wrinkling his/her nose). For such a question, one might want to assume a different question type. In my tabular overview, I call these questions **EXPLICITING QUESTIONS**. For this thesis, they are though of minor interest.

<sup>142</sup> English translation: ‘Peter got married yesterday. – Peter got married yesterday?’

<sup>143</sup> English translation: ‘Do you find that fair? – If I find that fair?’

<sup>144</sup> English translation: ‘Weren’t you at home when I called you an hour ago? – You phoned me?’

Such “questions are used in specific discourse contexts, when the speaker is not sure of what has been said or asked by the interlocutor.” (Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 85f.) In other words, the hearer has some doubt about the immediately previous information. As Ashby (1977: 38) puts it, “echo questions serve to confirm that the speaker has understood correctly, or to register surprise, indignation, etc., at what has just been said.” Although this may be true for many cases, one should not let oneself be misled to think that echo questions cannot be information-seeking: If a constituent is covered by noise, the hearer does not have any bias towards an answer, but (s)he knows that the information gap has been closed previously. Hence, there are information-seeking, confirmation-seeking, and surprise echo questions. Indeed, echo questions can even be used for clarification (for the definition of a clarification question, see p. 59):

(71) Tu l’as fait? – Si j’ai fait quoi ?<sup>145</sup>

An echo question is thus any question that implies that the speaker has taken the turn for the rediscussion of a piece of information previously given by the hearer. As opposed to this, in some questions the speaker does not take up a turn of the hearer because (s)he repeats his/her own question a (see ‘ditto question’ in Bolinger 1957: 8f.). In other words, there is an information gap that has been encoded previously, but it has not been closed and it is repeated. This can be done for several reasons, but the most likely one is that the hearer did not answer and thus the speaker has not yet succeeded in getting across his/her message (see (72)). Another possibility is that the speaker is dissatisfied with the hearer’s answer (see (73) and (74)).

(72) Tu veux du gâteau ? ... Est-ce que tu veux du gâteau ?<sup>146</sup>

(73) Ça va ? – <only low> Oui. – Est-ce que ça va ? – <more people and almost shouting> Oui !<sup>147</sup>

(74) Tu fais ça quand ? – Bon, je le fais assez souvent... – Quais , mais c’est quand que tu fais ça ?<sup>148</sup>

**A SELF-REPEATED QUESTION** is a question which is repeated (putting it literally the same or reformulating it) by the speaker himself.

### More specific question types

Let us now turn to questions that take up only parts of previous utterances. These questions are thus contextually embedded, but they are less repetitive than echo or self-repeated questions.

<sup>145</sup> English translation: ‘(Did you do it? –) Did I do what?’

<sup>146</sup> English translation: ‘Would you like some cake?’

<sup>147</sup> English translation: ‘Are you doing well? / Are you enjoying yourselves?’; heard in Tours 2016 in one of the bars at the riverside of the Loire: One of the entertainers asked the public these questions.

<sup>148</sup> English translation: ‘When do you do that? – Well, I do that quite often... - Yes, but WHEN do you do that?’

In the first of these context-related question types, the speaker takes up the previous utterance to demand a specification of the given information. Such a specification can be either for clarification (see (75) and (76)) or a follow-up for more aspects related to the given information (see (77) and (78)).

- (75) T'aimes bien ? – À quoi tu te réfères ?<sup>149</sup>  
(76) Elle [la solution] est dans un « pacte ». – C'est quoi un « pacte » ?<sup>150</sup>  
(77) Elle [la solution] est dans un « pacte ». [...] – Il dit quoi ce pacte ?<sup>151</sup>  
(78) Mes parents sont partis en vacances. – Et ta sœur ?<sup>152</sup>

In all cases, the question is demanding a piece of information that is connected to the previously said. These questions are thus genuine questions, but they are strongly related to the on-going discourse. They can be interpreted as an interrogative means to express 'tell me more about [something evoked]'.

Such an invitation to give more information on a contextually related topic may also hand over the turn to the hearer by changing the focus of interest: In (79), the speaker prompts a continuation of the hearer's turn by signaling his/her attention, in (80) and (81) the preceding utterance itself is focussed by prompting an elaboration on it, in (82) the subject of interest is switched to the hearer, and in (83) the speaker shifts the focus back to a previously mentioned issue.

- (79) Oui ?<sup>153</sup>  
(80) C'est-à-dire ?<sup>154</sup>  
(81) Et... ?<sup>155</sup>  
(82) Et toi ?<sup>156</sup>  
(83) Alors, tu me disais (que) t'as des restaurateurs chez toi ?<sup>157</sup>

The common point of these questions is that they offer room for the hearer to take the turn and elaborate on some related topic. In other words, these interrogatives provide room for some additional information. In these cases, I will also speak of *prompting questions*. The latter can be clarification questions (see (80)) as well as follow-up questions (see (82) and (83)), but they clearly call the hearer to take over the turn for some precisions.

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<sup>149</sup> English translation: '(You like it? / Do you like it? –) What are you referring to?'

<sup>150</sup> English translation: '(It [the solution] is in a *pact*. –) What's a *pact*?'; example taken from a contemporary play (Dubost 2010, scene 24).

<sup>151</sup> English translation: '(It [the solution] is in a *pact*. [...] –) What does that *pact* say?'; example taken from a contemporary play (Dubost 2010, scene 24).

<sup>152</sup> English translation: '(My parents went on holiday. –) And your sister?'

<sup>153</sup> English translation: 'Yes?' (detective novels, JUST\_8730)

<sup>154</sup> English translation: 'Which is to say?' (reality TV shows, BVAH\_1\_01\_05\_03)

<sup>155</sup> English translation: 'And.../So...?' (detective novels, TRAV\_1330)

<sup>156</sup> English translation: 'And you?' (int. al. reality TV shows, CSQD\_3\_00\_22\_18)

<sup>157</sup> English translation: 'So you said you had some restaurateurs at yours?' (reality TV shows ADDI\_3\_00\_25\_27)



A **SPECIFICATION QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap that is demanding more information on a topic connected to what was previously mentioned.

A **CLARIFICATION QUESTION** is a specification question which functions as a query; its purpose is the spelling out of a certain detail.

A **FOLLOW-UP QUESTION** is a specification question that changes the focus of the conversation topic; its purpose is to gain knowledge on a connected issue.

A **PROMPTING QUESTION** is a specification question that invites the hearer to take the turn and elaborate on a detail connected to previous talk.

There is one last pragmatic type which shall be illustrated. This type, which too takes up the previous utterance, are *answer-offering questions*. By this term, I understand the tentative check of one or more possible options for completing the previous utterance.

An **ANSWER-OFFERING QUESTION** is a structure encoding an information gap which is supposed to offer the hearer one or more completion alternatives.

To exemplify this, see the following utterances ((84) to (87)).

(84) Pourquoi ? Tu redoutais ?<sup>158</sup> ↑

(85) Quel type de restaurant trouve-t-on dans le camping de Véronique et Franck ? Une baraque à frites ? ↑ Une pizzeria ?<sup>159</sup> ↑

(86) On sait pas pourquoi. – Peut-être qu'on déprime ?<sup>160</sup>

(87) Les pralines lyonnaises, c'est un peu comme les... les... – Comme les *gebrannte Mandeln* en Allemagne ?<sup>161</sup> ↑

In all four examples, the questions complete the open part of the previous proposition. While this open part is the information gap of an interrogative in (84) and (85), it is an attempt to explain the inexplicable in (86) and a potential ending of the unfinished sentence in (87). Interestingly, this sentence type is clearly interrogative because it is formally marked by a final rise, but pragmatically speaking it is hybrid:<sup>162</sup> On the one hand, it is assertive because it points out a possible completion of the previous utterance ('The missing information is...'). On the other hand, it is interrogative because it is a request for confirmation ('Am I right about this?'). Although this use of interrogatives is quite specific, it was of regular occurrence in my corpora of reality TV shows (see chapter 5).

<sup>158</sup> English translation: '(Why?) Did you have any doubts?' (reality TV shows BVAC\_1\_00\_34\_27)

<sup>159</sup> English translation: '(What kind of restaurant do you find at the camping site of Véronique and Franck?) A chippy? A pizzeria?' (reality TV shows BVAC\_1\_00\_39\_52)

<sup>160</sup> English translation: '(We don't know why. –) Maybe we are depressed?' Dubost (2010: scene 10).

<sup>161</sup> English translation: 'The praline from Lyon are a bit like the... the...) – The *gebrannte Mandeln* [sugared, roasted almonds] from Germany?'

<sup>162</sup> This is also the reason why I do not subsume answer-offering questions under 'confirmation-seeking questions'

### Categorisation problems

Having mentioned all relevant pragmatic types for this thesis, I will now come back to the difficulties encountered. As mentioned at the beginning of this subsection, the classification of questions into pragmatic types often poses problems. As soon as authentic examples are consulted, secondary meanings complicate things, and pragmatic categories get fuzzy boundaries. On top of that, the pragmatic types described above are of different levels of specificity: For instance, while a *genuine question* denotes any truly information-seeking question, an *answer-offering question* is much more restricted with regard to co(n)text. Also, the situations in which the interrogatives occur do not always disambiguate the use of the question, such that one would have to ask the speaker if one wanted to be sure about his/her speech intention. Most importantly, though, questions are very often pragmatically vague or blends of several categories.

For example, the distinction between ‘truly information-seeking’ and ‘confirmation-seeking’ is by no means straight-forward. For one thing, one cannot know for sure whether a speaker is biased or not. Even if a certain issue has not been addressed in the current discourse, the speaker might have some preconceptions about it (due to world knowledge, previous conversations or completely unfounded prejudice). For another, there are cases such as (88), in which the speaker requests an approbation. Such an approbation may suggest that (s)he is presuming a positive answer, but strictly speaking there is nothing in the co(n)text that justifies such an assumption.

(88) Ça te va ?<sup>163</sup>

Another example for category fuzziness is given by Dekhissi & Coveney (2018: 131). According to the authors, the example (see (89)) seems to be ambiguous between an ordinary and a conflictual rhetorical question (which I would term a reproach question):

(89) Qu’est-ce tu fous là, toi ?/?!<sup>164</sup>

Indeed, the use of this question is not entirely clear: While the question is certainly intended to elicit an answer (‘Tell me what you are doing here.’), it is also plainly reprimanding (‘You shouldn’t be here.’). Similarly, the quasi-lexicalised interrogative phrase *et alors* (‘so what’) can be used to not only express one’s dissent on the previous utterance but also to offer the interlocutor a chance to explain himself/herself. Interestingly, such a question can also be classified as a *prompt question* because it hands over the speech turn to the hearer, offering space for some elaboration on (something connected to) the previously said.

Likewise, many questions occur in situations that share some but not all characteristics of a pragmatic type. For example, there are numerous situations which are similar but not identical to quizzes, such

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<sup>163</sup> English translation: ‘Does that suit you? / Is that okay with you?’ (int. al. reality TV shows ADDI\_1\_00\_43\_01)

<sup>164</sup> English translation: ‘What (the hell) are you doing (there)?’

as joke telling (see (90)) or official testimonies (see (91)). Just like in quiz questions, the speaker does not ask for gaining knowledge.

(90) Quelles sont les trois lettres qui débarquent souvent sans prévenir ? – FBI !<sup>165</sup>

(91) Et est-ce que vous avez travaillé au cours de vos études et depuis vos études, où avez-vous travaillé ?<sup>166</sup>

However, the purpose of answer elicitation is very different from a quiz or an exam: In these cases, the speaker is by no means checking the hearer's knowledge. In (90) the speaker wants the hearer to guess in order to subsequently surprise him/her by a play on words, and in (91) the speaker uses the question to structure the testimony. In both cases, the speaker believes to know the actual answer, but while in (90) the hearer's answer is expected to be deviant from the actual one, in (91) it will most certainly be identical to the speaker's prediction. To put it in a nutshell, these questions share some pragmatic characteristics, but they differ in others. As a result, the question arises whether such questions should be subsumed under the same pragmatic type or not.<sup>167</sup> Hence, there seems to exist a paradox in data-based approaches: Corpus studies rely on classification, but such classifications cannot be based on the data itself. There will always be some more or less arbitrary decision when it comes to the definition of categories. In the case of pragmatics, this decision seems to be even harder than for the classification of structures. As a consequence, one of the major problems when trying to classify interrogatives into pragmatic types is the decision where to draw the line between categories.

To conclude, questions can be pragmatically classified according to three criteria: their intended speech act, their interlocutor's distribution of knowledge, and their context-embeddedness. The pragmatic types can, however, not always be clearly distinguished, and many interrogative utterances blend several uses. What is more, the criteria are not all-or-none categories, but they may be seen as scalable features. Consequently, it remains an open question how much variation should be accepted within a category. This is one of the reasons why I will stand back from taking into account the mentioned pragmatic types into statistical analyses.

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<sup>165</sup> English translation: '(Which three letters often turn up without warning? (– FBI!))' (a *carambar* joke)

<sup>166</sup> English translation: 'And did you work while you were a student, and where did you work since you finished your degree?' (Larose & Bergeron 2014: 7).

<sup>167</sup> The same doubt arises when considering questions in teacher's speech (i.e. questions posed during class). Those questions are certainly different from questions in oral exams, but they still share many characteristics, such as the distribution of knowledge.

### 3. Previous studies: *Que dit-on dans la littérature scientifique ?*<sup>168</sup>

In this section, I will outline the present state of investigation to make it usable as a starting point for my own research. At first, I will indicate if and to what proportions the different questions forms occurred in previous corpus studies (see 3.1). In a second step, I will gather prior findings on form<sub>morphosyntactic</sub>-form<sub>prosodic</sub> and form-meaning correlations (see 3.2).

#### 3.1 Distribution of question forms

In the first subsection (3.1.1), I will outline the results of previous corpus studies on the distribution of morphosyntactic forms and the linguistic factors that have been mentioned in this context. In the second one (3.1.2), I will do likewise for the intonational forms.

##### 3.1.1 Morphosyntactic forms

In the contemporary French variety spoken in France, there exist at least 8 different morphosyntactic forms: 3 total ones and 5 partial ones (see 2.2.2.2; see also Dewaele 1999, 2000; Coveney 2011; see Gadet 1997: 7f. for more marginal/marked wh-forms). The following table gives an account of those different types and the socio-stylistic values attributed to them by Coveney (2011).

Table 6: Overview of morphosyntactic forms

Semantic type	Coveney's codification	My codification	Name of type	Socio-stylistic value	Example sentence
Total Question (YNQ)	SV-Cl	SVs	complex clitic inversion	formal	<i>Mon père va-t-il à Paris ?</i>
	V-Cl	Vs	simple clitic inversion	formal	<i>Vas-tu à Paris ?</i>
	ESV	E{s/S}V	periphrastic	neutral	<i>Est-ce que tu vas à Paris ?</i>
	SV	{s/S}V	declarative	informal	<i>Tu vas à Paris ?</i>
Partial Question (WHQ)	QV-Cl	QSVs	complex clitic inversion	formal	<i>Mon père où va-t-il ?</i>
	QV-Cl	QVs	simple clitic inversion	formal	<i>Où vas-tu ?</i>
	QV NP	QVS	stylistic inversion	formal(?)	<i>Où va ton père ?</i>
	QESV	QE{s/S}V	periphrastic	neutral	<i>Où est-ce que tu vas ?</i>
	SVQ	{s/S}VQ	wh-in-situ (declarative)	informal but accepted	<i>Tu vas où ?</i>
	QSV	Q{s/S}V	wh-fronted declarative	informal and "incorrect"	<i>Où tu vas ?</i>

<sup>168</sup> English translation: 'What is said in the literature?'

There is quite a tradition in corpus research on the grammatical variation in French direct interrogation. I will present the most relevant studies in chronological order and give an overview at the end of this subsection (see table 10).<sup>169</sup>

The oldest corpus study on French interrogatives (which is still being cited) seems to be **Fromaigeat (1938)**.<sup>170</sup> In his study, he examined almost 1000 interrogatives from literature that he believed to reflect the spoken language of the *bonne société* (i.e. Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* and some early 20<sup>th</sup> century comedies). Although any study that was conducted almost a century ago will not be useful to show how morphosyntactic forms are distributed nowadays, this study proves to be very interesting because Fromaigeat made some distributional observations which may serve as a starting point for contemporary research. As the author revealed, the most common morphosyntactic form for yes/no-interrogatives was the one with neither the question particle nor inversion. As for yes/no-questions with the interrogative particle, they seemed to be linked to a certain degree of affectivity, and inverted structures seemed to be either politer and less questioning (e.g. rhetorical). In contrast, wh-questions most frequently occurred as inverted forms. According to Fromaigeat, declarative wh-questions were much less common than declarative yes/no-interrogatives, and they were more clearly marked as colloquial. While wh-in-situ questions were described as mere confirmation requests, wh-ex-situ questions were thought to be gaining ground. A further asymmetry in the distribution of morphosyntactic forms across semantic types concerned the use of the question particle: While *EST-CE QUE* was not uncommon in yes/no-interrogatives, it was as good as restricted to 'what' (and some 'who')-questions in wh-interrogatives. As a consequence, almost 9 out of 10 *QUE*-questions were realised as periphrastic structures whereas this was the case for less than 1 out of 10 interrogatives with another question word. In this sense, already this very first corpus study showed that the choice of a morphosyntactic variant depended on the question word. Furthermore, the author pointed to the fact that the first-person pronoun *je*, the demonstrative pronoun *cela/ça* and the *QUE*-subject caused a straight preference for periphrastic over inverted wh-structures. In other words, Fromaigeat already showed that also the subject type had an influence on the formulation of a question.

To my knowledge, it took almost 30 years until the next corpus study on interrogatives was published. In that study, the author (**Pohl 1965**) observed his parents (an engineer in his 80s and a woman in her 70s) and took notes over several weeks. Also, he read many letters from them. Not retaining interrogatives without a conjugated verb, he obtained 1000 oral interrogatives (see table 7) and 111

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<sup>169</sup> Additionally to the studies presented in the following, see Söll (1983) for interrogatives in first language acquisition, Dewaele 2000 for interrogatives in second language acquisition, and Elsig (2009) for a recent study on spoken Quebec French.

<sup>170</sup> In fact, there is another article that is still being cited in the context of French interrogatives: Foulet (1921). However, this article is not based on a corpus study. Instead, it sheds light on the diachronic evolution of French interrogatives, which is also very interesting, but not of any particular interest to this thesis.

written ones (see table 8). Since the written interrogatives were all but one (which is positively biased, i.e. lexically confirmation-seeking) inverted (with only one occurrence of complex inversion), he concluded that written French was much more rigid than spoken everyday language.

Table 7: Verb-containing interrogatives in the spoken conversations of Pohl's parents

Semantic Type	Morphosyntactic Type	Mme P.	M. P.	Total
YNQ (including 4 DSQ)	{s/S}V	560	138	698
	E{s/S}V	77 (+2 <sup>171</sup> )	33 (+2 <sup>172</sup> )	110 (+4)
	Vs	4	0	4
WHQ	QS	1	0	1
	QV{s/S}	41	11	52
	QE{s/S}V	89	32	122 <sup>173</sup>
	{s/S}VQ	1	3	4
	Q{s/S}V	2 (+1)	1 (+1)	3 (+2) <sup>174</sup>

Table 8: Verb-containing interrogatives in the written conversations of Pohl's parents

Semantic Type	Morphosyntactic Type	Total
YNQ (including 3 DSQ)	{s/S}V ( <i>donc</i> => confirmation)	1
	Vs or SVs	83
Interrogations partielles	Vs or VS + SVs	26+1

Although the relative use of the different morphosyntactic structures has certainly changed in the last fifty years (cf. the following corpus studies), the divergence between oral and written language may be expected to still exist (cf. Gadet 2006; Koch & Oesterreicher 2011). Another interesting finding of this study was that *EST-CE QUE* was also quite regularly used with interrogative adverbs (11 *OÙ*, 6 *COMMENT*, 4 *COMBIEN*, 3 *POURQUOI*). Hence, it was not only common with wh-subjects as had been observed previously.

Few years later, **Terry (1970)** conducted a further study on contemporary plays (i.e. plays that premiered in the 50s or 60s) which the author judged to imitate spoken language in a rather natural way. As already observed in previous studies, yes/no-interrogatives showed a clear preference for

<sup>171</sup> Pohl subsumed the single occurrences of “n’est-ce pas que” and “hein que” under that category as well.

<sup>172</sup> Pohl subsumed the two occurrences of “T’as-ti tout?” under that category as well.

<sup>173</sup> There is an error in the data published by Pohl 1965: The questions with *qui* (subject) are indicated as “4 (3, 0)”. Since 3+0 is not equal to 4, either the total or one of the individual numbers must be wrong. What is more, the QESV-structure is only prevalent in attributive ‘what’-questions.

<sup>174</sup> Apparently, Pohl counted *Qui* (subject) + verb, i.e. Q={S/S}V, as QSV, although he noticed that the question particle and the subject are the same.

morphosyntactically unmarked forms whereas wh-interrogatives tended to contain either inversion or the question particle.

In the same decade, **Behnstedt (1973)** conducted an extensive study on three different diaphasic-diastratic varieties of spoken French: the language of truck drivers (observations as a co-driver of a lorry), the language of colloquial everyday life (observation of 21 individuals) and radio language (4000 interviews). Unfortunately, his corpus does not seem to have been published. His results are, however, a good starting point for any new study on interrogatives in spoken French. In his sub-corpus of colloquial speech, 90% of the yes/no-questions were declarative forms (*Intonationsfragen* ‘intonation questions’). The particle *ti* was used only marginally (and exclusively in the speech of the truck drivers) and seemed to be extinguishing even in rural areas. Whereas inversion was found in formal situations like school or public debates, it was not found in the language of lorry drivers. One of his main findings was that interrogatives with *EST-CE QUE* could be used in any context, i.e. this structure seemed to be a (diastratically and diaphasically unmarked) “passe-partout”. As for wh-questions, the author observed that the intralinguistic factor of the question word seemed to play a role in the choice of morphosyntactic variant. Whereas inversion was found mostly with *où* and *comment*, periphrastic constructions (*est-ce que / c’est que / qu’est-ce que*) appeared mostly with *où*, *quand* and *qui*.<sup>175</sup> Declarative word order with a fronted interrogative word was very frequent with *pourquoi* and *comment*, and average with *combien*, *quel*, *quoi* and *qui*. It was scarce for *où*, it was as good as absent for *quand*. Wh-in situ was most frequent with *combien*, *quand*, *quel* and *quoi*, average with *qui* and *où*, rare with *comment*, and practically not used with *pourquoi*. Next to that corpus study, Behnstedt also analysed three novels and several recordings of radio plays. As in other studies, an asymmetry between yes/no- and wh-interrogatives was observed: While more than three quarters of the total questions did not contain subject-verb inversion nor the question particle *EST-CE QUE*, this was true for less than a seventh of the partial questions. However, Behnstedt (rather indirectly) revealed an interesting fact that previous studies had not found: *EST-CE QUE* seemed to be rarer in novels (and radio plays) than in real communication.

This observation was substantiated four years later, when **Ashby (1977)** published the first study based on recorded interviews. As the interviews were supposed to represent “natural speech, that is, the conversational style used between the subject and a stranger of equal social standing” (p.36), they can be seen as instances of real communication. Indeed, the proportion of *EST-CE QUE* was higher than in the novels: more than 1 out of 10 yes/no-interrogatives contained the question particle. The previous observation that constituent questions tended to be more often morphosyntactically marked than

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<sup>175</sup> This was later supported by Fontaney (1991: 144), who found that *QUE*- and *OÙ*-questions were mostly realised as *EST-CE QUE* interrogatives.

sentential ones was further strengthened: about 4 out of 10 wh-interrogatives contained *EST-CE QUE* and almost 2 subject-verb inversion. On the other hand, it was also striking that inversion was not as common in constituent questions as previous corpora had suggested.

These results were supported by the study that followed a decade later: **Gadet (1989)** examined 260 interrogatives taken from 90 minutes of telephone conversations. To reduce variables, she excluded any non-clitic subjects in a second step. Also in this corpus, inversion was generally rare, but still more common in constituent questions (5 out of 44) than in sentential ones (2 out of 154). On the whole, the same tendencies as in previous studies were observed.

The probably best-known, though rather small-scale, study is the one of **Coveney (2002)**<sup>176</sup>: During 2 months of fieldwork in 15 holiday centres in France, he recorded informal interviews with 30 French *animateurs*, who thought he was making a documentation about summer camps. The recordings resulted in a corpus of about 18 hours comprising 180 YNQ and 122 WHQ. Whereas the total questions were never realised as inverted structures, 8 of the constituent ones were clitic inversions and 3 stylistic inversions. As for *EST-CE QUE* structures, total questions were only formed in slightly over 20% (37 occurrences) of the cases with the interrogative particle, while the latter was used in almost half (59 occurrences) of the constituent ones. One of the findings that are particularly relevant to this thesis is Coveney's observation that the periphrastic yes/no-interrogatives were "used only rarely when the speaker expected an answer from the addressee. On the few occasions that it was used, it seemed to be motivated by socio-pragmatic considerations, especially politeness." (p.247) With regard to wh-interrogatives, Coveney made another interesting observation: "The choice between [SVQ] and a WH-fronted variant proved to be conditioned by a strong discursal constraint: the less informative the subject and the verb, the higher the probability of [SVQ] being selected" (ibid.). In other words, if the speaker had already been talking about the subject and the verb, a wh-in-situ structures seems to be the most likely to be chosen.

**Quillard (2000)** built and analysed a corpus of 1915 direct (1187 yes/no, 670 wh- and 58<sup>177</sup> disjunctive) interrogatives in spoken French, recorded in seven different types of situations with different degrees of formality. The speakers had different socio-professional backgrounds and were of different education levels as well as of different age groups. She analysed intralinguistic factors as well as extralinguistic ones. For my own research, the author's most important additional findings were:

- a) The question word has a great impact.
- b) Non-clitic subjects increase the probability of inversion, but this seemed to be mainly due to *QUEL*<sub>attributive</sub>-questions.

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<sup>176</sup> The study was first published in 1996 and used recordings from 1982

<sup>177</sup> The latter number was not mentioned but deduced from the three numbers available.



- c) The pronoun *tu* promoted the use of “intonation questions” whereas the pronoun *vous* promoted the use of periphrastic and inverted structures.
- d) QE{s/S}V and QVS were more often used to ask for an argument than for an adjunct. In contrast, Q{s/S}V was rather used to be asked for an adjunct. More precisely, those structures almost exclusively occurred with *pourquoi* and *comment*. {s/S}VQ and QVs seem to be used with both complement types alike.

After this extensive study, several smaller studies were published. **Hansen (2016)** investigated “the correlation between the form and function of yes/no interrogatives in spoken French.” (p.463) For this purpose, she analysed 247 yes/no-interrogatives taken from eight recorded authentic interactions. In this corpus, 7 (2,83%) structures were inverted, 36 (14,57%) contained the question particle, and 204 (82,59%) were morphosyntactically unmarked. The major findings of this study concern the repartition of information among interlocutors: While 93.1% of the morphosyntactically unmarked interrogatives expressed B-events (i.e. situations in which the hearer was believed to be the informer and the speaker the knowledge-seeker), this was only the case for 34.9% of the inverted and periphrastic structures. Apart from that, politeness and emphaticness also seemed to favour the use of *EST-CE QUE*.

Similarly, **Myers' (2007)** tried to map form and meaning. The author investigated the 216 wh-questions that appeared in the first part of the first three sections of the Barnes-Blyth Corpus. Considering the small amounts of each type, it is however questionable whether such a small sample can be used to generalise findings for variation in spoken French. For example, there were only 2 instances of *QUE* and *QUEL*. It is nonetheless interesting that there was a clear prevalence of elliptical, in-situ and fronted interrogatives. Also, Myers' theoretical assumptions and hypotheses may serve as starting points for the discussion of my own data. The distribution of the interrogatives appearing in her corpus is presented in an easily accessible way, which facilitates comparisons. For this thesis, the notions of answerability, expectedness and activation, which were introduced in this study, may be of importance because they appear to be relevant to the choice of wh-in-situ vs. wh-ex-situ declarative structures: the more answerable, expectable and activated a question, the more likely the use of an {s/S}VQ-structure. In general, this is very similar to Coveney's claim (the less informative the subject and the verb are, the more likely the wh-word is placed postverbally), but it may be helpful when examining concrete cases.

The new tradition of mapping form and function did not stop there, but it was interrupted by a purely distributional corpus study. **Druetta (2009)** investigated 800 questions, which were defined pragmatically, i.e. by having been followed by a response. The corpus contained 3 subcorpora: the G.A.R.S. corpora (which are all conversational but of very different situations, e.g. interviews, “conversations à bâtons rompus” and talk shows, see p. 19), a self-recorded radio corpus and “quelques autres énoncés [...] relevés au détour d'une conversation ou dans la rue”. There were 673 questions containing a verb (of which 23 comprised the question word *qui* as subject and were not

counted for the morphosyntactic types) and 127 without, i.e. elliptical ones. As for the semantic types, there were 375 total Qs, 395 partial Qs and 30 alternative Qs. As I would like to add, the proportion of the semantic types is rather unusual, knowing that YNQs normally prevail WHQ. One possible explanation would be that the situations of the recordings favoured constituent questions, for instance the questioning of details during interviews or talk shows.

Table 9: Overview of main morphosyntactic types in Druetta's corpus

	No additional morphosyntactic marker			EST-CE QUE	Inversion
	DEC	FRO	SIT		
YNI	277	-	-	48	6
WHI	several	92	118 <sup>178</sup>	65	52

Another interesting observation Druetta made was that 172 (of which 113 were partial, 58 total and one alternative) of his 800 questions contained a reduplication of the subject (*le double marquage*, p.264). Since this means that almost a third of the wh-questions contained a reduplicated subject, this may be kept in mind for comparisons with my own corpus studies. Next to his distributional analysis of the morphosyntactic form of questions, Druetta's most important contribution was his inclusion of intonational variation. Unfortunately, his observations of intonation patterns were rather limited as he only listened to about 10% of his data and did not even transcribe them. All the same, it will be possible to compare his observations on the intonation in interrogatives along with the ones made in Beysade et al. 2007, Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015 and Déprez 2012 (see next subsection) with my own data.

The next study on interrogatives concerned the mapping of form and meaning of wh-interrogatives. Based on 5 contemporary novels, **Boucher (2010)** tried to show that the four broad morphosyntactic types of partial questions could be linked to specific pragmatic meanings:

{s/S}VQ would be used in strongly presupposed contexts, such as requests for clarification, echo questions, phatic questions, never rhetorical ones.

Q{s/S}V would be used as requests for explanation or information with a challenging tone expressing surprise, disapproval or incredulity, also as rhetorical questions

QVs would be used as "true requests for information[,] but with a strong connotation of social distance; can be used to change topics."<sup>179</sup> (p.116)

<sup>178</sup> For these numbers, Druetta's table on pp.158 and 188 were used as a base. Unfortunately, the author does not give an overall overview.

<sup>179</sup> The author also mentions cases of stylistic inversion, but he obviously does not want to make any statement on the pragmatic meaning of that morphosyntactic variant.

QE{s/S}V would be used for “*unrestricted ‘open’ conversational questions* which optionally may signal a change of topic or call into question the validity of a presupposition linked to the question.” (ibid.)

If it is true that the four variants are linked to different pragmatic meanings, this should be reflected in my own corpus studies as well.

More recently, **Adli (2015)** published a study on mismatches between acceptability and frequency of information questions with *wh*-adjuncts and *wh*-objects. Interestingly, speakers mostly made use of the *wh*-in-situ variant: More than 1 out of 2 interrogatives was a *wh*-in-situ form. The other variants (i.e. QE{s/S}V, Q{s/S}V and QV{s/S}) were also found, but to smaller proportions (all between 10% and 17%). With regard to the complement type, the author found a tendency for *wh*-adjuncts to occur mostly without the question particle and subject-verb inversion whereas *wh*-objects occurred about equally often in *wh*-in-situ and periphrastic structures. As the latter observation can be put down to ‘*what*’-questions, this observation was however not a new one. What was though a real innovation was his comparison between judgment and production data. As Adli showed, formal variants were more acceptable than colloquial ones regardless of whether they were actually used in spontaneous speech. Likewise, the distributional differences in the production across complement types was not reflected in acceptability ratings. More precisely, *EST-CE QUE* was only used with the *wh*-object *QUE*, but *wh*-adjuncts with the question particle were considered equally acceptable. This latter fact will be of great importance for the development of a teaching norm for interrogatives in FLE-didactics (see chapter 7).




















In the same year, **Kaiser & Quaglia (2015)** published an article on the crosslinguistic use of *wh*-in-situ structures in detective novels. As the authors showed, interrogatives with postverbal question words were much more common in colloquial French than in colloquial Italian or Spanish: Out of the 483 finite question forms in the French version of the novels, 142 contained a *wh*-element in situ. In contrast, there were only single instances (3 and 2 respectively) of *wh*-in-situ in the Italian and Spanish translations. *Wh*-in-situ structures may thus be a peculiarity of French. As this thesis is rather geared towards monolingual research, the most important result of the study was the proportion of {s/S}VQ-structures. The value of 29.4% shall thus be retained for a comparison with my own analysis of the interrogatives in ten detective novels (see chapter 6). What is more, this study seems to be in line with Boucher’s distributional findings on contemporary literature imitating spoken language: Both studies obtained a proportion of slightly less than a third for *wh*-in-situ structures.

The latest corpus study on French interrogatives was published by **Guryev (2017)**. In this study, Guryev analysed the 2084 interrogatives contained in the 4618 French text messages of the *Corpus suisse de SMS*. As he showed, structures with straight word order were the most common ones, but as in

previous studies, this prevalence was more pronounced in yes/no- than in wh-interrogatives. Also, he confirmed that clitic subjects/complements and modal verbs favoured {s/S}V-structures. Like in previous studies, *pourquoi* was mostly used in Q{s/S}V-structures and particularly disfavoured in situ, and periphrastic wh-structures seemed to be restricted to monosyllabic question words (*QUE, QUAND, OÙ*). {s/S}VQ was more common than Q{s/S}V, so wh-in-situ may be gaining ground in text messaging as well. With regard to sociolinguistic factors, Gurvey found that clitic inversion was far more common in the SMS of adults (aged 30-69) than in the SMS of youth (aged 12-19): 23.7% vs 4.9% (yes/no-interrogatives) / 31% vs 7.5% (wh-interrogatives). Likewise, men tended to use slightly more clitic inversion than women: 14.8 % vs 9.7 % (yes/no-interrogatives) / 23.3 % vs 17.2 % (wh-interrogatives). All in all, most results of the different studies are consistent: In 21st-century spoken French, interrogatives tend to be formulated without *EST-CE QUE* or inversion. Yes/no-interrogatives show mostly declarative word order with rising intonation, and wh-interrogatives commonly appear with the fronted or in-situ question word as the only morphosyntactic interrogative marker. (see also Antes 2016: 597) There is thus a general prevalence of interrogatives with straight word order, but this prevalence is stronger for yes/no-interrogatives, and there are several intra- and extralinguistic factors which seem to play a role in the choice of a question form. The factors that have been suggested to have an impact on the choice of the morphosyntactic form of a question are:

- semantic type (inversion is more likely in wh-interrogatives than in yes/no-interrogatives)
- question word (lexeme and, as applicable, complement type)
- subject type (clitic vs. non-clitic, *tu* vs. *vous*)
- verb type (e.g. presence of a modal verb)
- contextual embeddedness (e.g. the more contextually embedded the question, the more likely an {s/S}VQ-structure)
- pragmatic meaning (e.g. information-seeking vs. confirmation-seeking)
- age and sex of the interlocutors

Table 10: Overview of distributions of morphosyntactic question forms in previous corpus studies

		FRO 1938 	POH 1965 	POH 1965 	TER 1970 	BEH 1973 	BEH 1973  	ASH 1977 	GAD 1989 	COV 1996 	QUI 2000 	MOS 2001 	MYE 2007 	DRU 2009  	BOU 2010 	ADL 2015 	KAI 2015 	GUR 2017 		
YNI	{s/S}V	DEC/ FRO/ SIT: 39.4% ESK: 15.6% INV: 24.1% ELL: 20.9% (n < 4000)	85.5% (698/ 816)	1.2% (1/84)	85.5% (2580/ 3016)	83.7% (574/ 686)	76.6% (181/ 236)	80.6% (104/ 129)	88.3% (136/ 154)	79.4% (143/ 180)	DEC: 80.8% (1448/ 1793) ESK: 12.0% (215/ 1793) INV: 7.3% (130/ 1793) <sup>180</sup>	82.6% (204/ 247)	-	73.9% (277/ 375) <sup>181</sup>	-	-	-	87.2% (1446/ 1659)		
	E{s/S}V		14.0% (114/ 816)	0.0% (0/84)	3.2% (97/3016)	3.9% (27/686) <sup>182</sup>	7.3% (17/236)	10.1% (13/129)	10.4% (16/154)	20.6% (37/180)		14.6% (36/247)	-	12.8% (48/375)	-	-	-	-	8.3% (138/ 1659)	
	{S}Vs		0.5% (4/816)	98.8% (83/84)	11.2% (339/ 3016)	5.8% (40/686)	16.1% (38/236)	9.3% (12/129)	1.3% (2/154)	0.0% (0/180)		-	2.8% (7/247)	-	1.6% (6/375)	-	-	-	-	4.5% (75/ 1659)
	{s/S}VQ		2.2% (4/184)	0%	9.9% (134/ 1349)	-	18.7% (17/91)	45.9% (39/85)	27.3% (12/44)	15.6% (19/122)		-	-	-	28.7% (62/216)	29.9% (118/ 395)	25% (97/388)	57.7% (968/ 1721)	29.4% (142/ 483)	53.4% (227/ 425)
Q(=){s/S}V	2.7% (5/184)	0%	-	36.4% (16/44)	27.1% (33/122)	-			27.8% (60/216)	23.3% (92/ 395)	14.9% (58/388)	15.6% (262/ 1721)	-	27.8% (60/216)	16.2% (64/395)	45.1% (175/ 388)	16.7% (281/ 1721)	70.6% (341/ 483)	17.6% (75/425)	
QE(=) {s/S}V	66.3% (122/ 184)	0%	38% (512/ 1349)	-	38.8% (33/85)	25.0% (11/44)			48.4% (59/122)	-	27.8% (60/216)	16.2% (64/395)	45.1% (175/ 388)	16.7% (281/ 1721)	70.6% (341/ 483)	5.6% (24/425)				
Q(S)V{s/S}	28.8% (53/184)	100% (n<111) <sup>183</sup>	52.1% (703/ 1349)	-	81.3% (74/91)	15.3% (13/85)			11.4% (5/44)	9.1% (11/122)	-	3.2% (7/216) <sup>184</sup>	13.2% (52/395)	14.9% (58/388)	10.0% (169/ 1721)	23.3% (99/425)				

 = literature imitating spoken language,  = heard conversations,  = written communication,  = recordings of conversations/interviews,   
 = radio plays,  = telephone conversations,  = SMS

<sup>180</sup> The data is taken from table 3 on p. 87. Unfortunately, the overall total does not correspond to the sum of the categories, so I had to adapt the total (1793 instead of 1839). According to the summary, Quillard analysed 1915 interrogatives.

<sup>181</sup> Druetta only points out the cases that are relevant for marking (see pp.261+263), so the numbers had to be collected by several tables. The numbers will not add up to one hundred percent because Druetta also retained elliptical forms.

<sup>182</sup> Behnstedt also observed 45 cases (i.e. 6.6%) of the question particle *ti*.

<sup>183</sup> The author mentions that *qui*<sub>subject</sub> is excluded, but he does not mention how many cases of such interrogatives were contained in his data.

<sup>184</sup> Myers also observed 27 elliptical structures.

### 3.1.1 Intonational forms

As for research on the intonational form(s) of French direct interrogatives, there is also quite a tradition. Nonetheless, the number and scale of corpus studies is much smaller, particularly if one considers only studies on spontaneous speech. What is more, many studies are purely descriptive and do not indicate any countings. Others are highly theory-dependent and/or based on impression only. As a result, many findings are quite abstract, and most results cannot be directly used for comparisons with my own data. In the following, I will present investigations on the intonational realisation of interrogatives in chronological order and give an overview at the end of this subsection (see table 12).

Although a final rise may be crosslinguistically wide-spread in question forms, increasing pitch towards the right edge of a questioning utterance is not a universal (Siemund 2001: 1013). What is nonetheless a generally accepted fact is that falls are associated with finality and closedness whereas rises stand for incompleteness and openness (Cruttenden 1981). As for French, there is though a persistent disagreement with regard to the intonation of interrogatives: Some authors claim that direct interrogatives, as open propositions, generally entail a rise in tonal movement (Dubois 2007: s.v. "interrogation"; Léon 1973: X) while others stress the fact that there is "no such thing as an unambiguous 'question intonation'" (Hansen 2001: 472; see also Delais-Roussarie & Herment 2018: 9). Of course, a part of this disagreement may simply be caused by differences in terminology, but it is still quite commonly believed that (at least yes/no-)questions would always be rising. In this respect, the studies presented hereafter shall be taken as proof that this is a misconception.

In the oldest study, **Zwanenburg (1965)** described the prosody of French based on 7 conversations (recorded in 1959) with 10 native speakers of French (five 25-, three 35-, one 45-, one 65-year olds; 3 men, 7 women). His description was purely perception-based and is thus hard to confirm or refute, especially when it comes to the classification of movements (inferior fall, great fall, inferior rise, superior rise, extended superior rise, static low tone, static middle tone, static high tone, delayed inferior rise). In his orthographic transcription, Zwanenburg marked 61 sentences with a question mark. As he pointed out, several of these structures were pronounced with final falls. Most of the latter were morphosyntactically marked by *EST-CE QUE* or simple clitic inversion, but he also noted some {s/S}V-interrogatives with falling intonation. All in all, Zwanenburg thus found rises as well as falls – and the final tonal movements were sometimes more and sometimes less pronounced.

One year later, **Delattre (1966)** published his *Dix Intonations de base du Français*, which were based on the perceptive and acoustic analysis of an extract of a talk by Simone de Beauvoir, 15 dialogues, and a recording of the play *Huis clos*. With regard to questions, he mentioned two intonational patterns: a rise from the 'base' to the 'very high' level and a fall from the 'very high' to the 'low' level

(for the distinction, see next subsection). In other words, interrogatives were found to be rising as well as falling.

After this, prosodic research on interrogatives started to be in vogue. In **1973**, an **anthology on *Interrogation et Intonation*** was published. Two out of the five contributions were distributional studies about hexagonal French. In the first of them, **Fónagy & Bérard (1973)** investigated the intonation of yes-no questions posed during six rounds of a guessing game. Person A had to think of some person, object or concept, and person B had to find it out by posing total questions without *EST-CE QUE*. The authors counted all sentences which had actually provoked a response by an answer particle (i.e. *oui* or *non*). The ludic production experiment had led to a corpus of 377 morphosyntactically unmarked questions and (against the rules) 49 *EST-CE QUE* questions. For the morphosyntactically marked questions, L\*L% was the most common intonation pattern, but there were also some occurrences of H\*L% and 3 instances of H\*H%. Of the 377 morphosyntactically unmarked questions, only slightly over the half were pronounced with a final rise. Hence, there are two possibilities: Either there is no need to cue an utterance when the conversational context is sufficiently straightforward, or the observed falling pattern differed from the one used in declarative constructions. In the second distributional study, **Grundstrom (1973)** examined the speech of four French students (all men who had spent most of the time of their lives in Paris, three in their 20s, one aged 30; still speaking French at home and with friends) at the University of Michigan. The participants knew that the study was on questions, but (according to the author) they did not know that it was on intonation. The two conversations (task: get to know one another) took about 20 minutes each and delivered 55 questions. Although the author did not explicate this, he only collected yes/no-interrogatives. This can be deduced from the fact that he was interested in minimal pairs. As the term *question* will have been taken from the terminology introduced by Delattre (*question* = yes/no-interrogative vs. *interrogation* = wh-interrogative), the author will have thought his title (i.e. *L'intonation des questions en français standard*) to be sufficiently telling. None of the structures contained subject-verb inversion, and only 12 (22%) were marked by *EST-CE QUE*. 39 of the questions were grammatically complete, 16 were segments [i.e., in my terminology, elliptical]. Apart from the morphosyntactically marked questions, only rising patterns (including 2 rise-falls and 2 high plateaus) were observed. Even though a rising melody was the typical one for questions, all 6 intonation patterns were found (see also table 11).

Table 11: Distribution of final tonal movement in the yes/no-interrogatives of two conversations (Grundstrom 1973)<sup>185</sup>

	Questions	Quasi-questions	Non-questions
H*H% (simple rise+high plateau)	43	11	18
L*H% (not mentioned)			
H*L% (rise-fall+high fall)	5	7	21
L*L% (low fall+low plateau)	7	11	25

Two years later, **Wunderli** started the project “Intonation des Französischen” (‘French intonation’, see Wunderli 1978), a project which led to several publications on the intonation of specific interrogative constructions in the late 70s and early 80s (Wunderli 1977, 1983, 1984). Besides demonstrating that investigations on tonal movement should not be restricted to the ultimate syllable, but at least include the penultimate, he refined the description of intonation in interrogatives: As opposed to Delattre, he explained that “falling” contours in interrogatives were usually rather a falling-rising or even rising-falling-rising pattern which contained a peak on the question word.

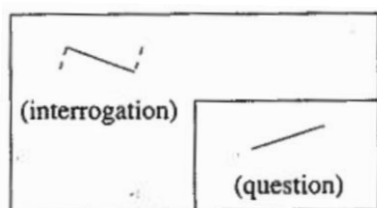


Figure 7: Pitch contours in interrogatives according to Wunderli 1990: 39

About a decade later, **Fontaney (1991)** published a descriptive study on the spontaneously produced questions in four concrete interactions (two informal conversations between students, and two shop interactions at the tobacconist’s and at the metro ticket office). In this study, she examined yes/no- as well as wh-interrogatives on a perceptual base. The author did not indicate numbers, but the examined interrogatives mostly contained either a final rise or a high tone on an interrogative element (i.e. the question particle or a wh-word). Nonetheless, the author also mentioned a few marginal cases of {s/S}V-interrogatives which were pronounced with a final fall.

Another decade later, **Ramsey (2002)** analysed the yes/no- and wh-interrogatives produced in three elicitation tasks by several L1- and L2-speakers of French. Unfortunately, the author did not present quantitative findings on the intonation patterns produced by the native speakers. Rather, she gave insight into the divergences between native speakers of English and native speakers of French. The

<sup>185</sup> ToBI-annotations being developed much later, the author did not use T\*T% to describe the nuclear configurations. Instead, he spoke of rises, fall-rises, high fall, low fall, high plateau, low plateau. As he did not mention fall-rises, it is conceivable that some of his simple rises were actually fall-rises.



stylised curves and rules she indicated suggest, however, that she perceived native speech as described by Delattre.

In a more theory-oriented study, **Beyssade et al. (2007)** found that “less than 10 % of the interrogatives feature a non falling contour.” (p.167) As the authors define nuclear configurations as sequences of three tones (T-T\*T%) and decide to leave aside the boundary tone, the theoretical framework is though rather different from the one adopted in this thesis. What can still be retained is that they found that rising (L-H\*), rising-falling (L-HL\*) and falling (H-L\*) contours occurred. When the contour was falling, the wh-expression got the phrasal H-, which means that there was a high tone on the question word.

Such a high tone on the wh-word was also mentioned by **Druetta (2009)**, who incorporated some comments on intonational realisation in his mostly morphosyntactic distributional analysis. As his comments are not an extensive study, but rather some impressionist descriptions, there are no countings to compare my studies to. What can though be retained is that the author found several instances of *intonation interrogative* (i.e. rising intonation, e.g. in complementary questions) as well as *l'intonation de fin d'énoncé* (i.e. falling intonation, e.g. in 'when'-questions).

One of the study that can be most easily used for comparison is the one of **Santiago & Delais-Roussarie (2012)**. In that study, the final tonal movement in interrogatives produced by ten native speakers of French was analysed. They classified the final tonal movement as HH% (rise of more than 10st), H% (rise), 0% (plateau), and L% (fall). Overall, most structures were rising, but plateau and falling structures were no exception either. Hence, simple falls and simple rises were attested, but if there were any complex structures, they were not retained as such.

In a production experiment that **Déprez et al. (2013)** conducted with 10 native speakers of hexagonal French and 2 native speakers of Swiss French, the interrogatives produced were mostly perceived and measured as rising: Depending on the question type, the structures were classified as having a final rise in 73.3-100% of the cases. However, as this experiment was a reading task, it remains an open question whether the results of that study can be generalised. For example, the symbol of the question mark might have an influence on pronunciation. Also, the authors did not make any more concrete observations on what the non-rising patterns looked like.

As opposed to this, **Delais-Roussarie et al. (2015)** described and exemplified the curves observed in interrogatives. To develop a ToBI-system for French, they examined several corpora and described them by means of pitch and boundary tones. In the end, they came up with an inventory of four final contours that occurred in different types of interrogatives: H\*H%, H\*L%, L\*H% and L\*L% (for examples see 2.2.2.3). What the author did though not indicate were any countings.

To conclude, there is no such thing as 'interrogative intonation'. Contrary to the claim of some grammarians that all interrogatives are at least intonationally marked (see e.g. Gardes-Tamine 1988:

44), final rises are by no means mandatory – not even when an interrogative is morphosyntactically unmarked.

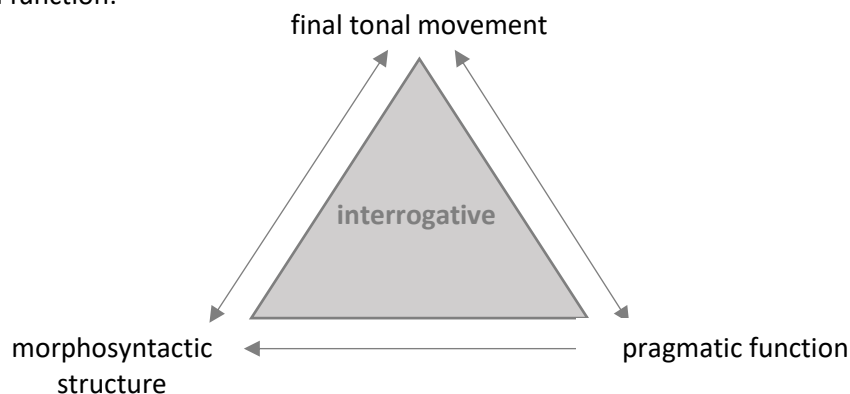
Table 12: Overview of inventories and distributions of intonational question forms in previous studies<sup>186</sup>

	ZWA 1956 🧠	DEL 1966 🧠	FÓN 1973 📊	GRU 1973 📊	WUN 70/80s 📊	FON 1991 🧠	RAM 2002 🧠	BEY 2007 🧠	DRU 2009 🧠	SAN 2012 🧠📊	DÉP 2013 🧠📊	DEL 2015 🧠📊
H*H%	yes	yes	58.6%	96.4%	yes	yes	yes	yes (≤10%)	yes	yes	≥73.3 %	yes
H*L%	?	no	-	3.6%	no	?	?	yes ("HL*")	?	?	?	yes
L*H%	?	no	-	-	yes	?	?	?	?	?	?	yes
L*L%	yes	yes	41.5% (Hi+...)	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	?	yes

🧠 = perception-based, 📊 measurement-based

### 3.2 Correlations

As it is still unclear whether intonational patterns are attributed to pragmatic meaning or to sentence type (see also Altmann 1993; Selting 1995; Péteri 2013), I will consider all kinds of questions/interrogatives (cf. 2.2.1) and try to find correlations within the following triangle of form and function:



In the first subsection (3.2.1), I will outline observed interrelations of the forms, i.e. correlations between intonation and morphosyntax. In the second and third subsections, there will be a compilation of the presumptions about semantic and pragmatic differences between the different forms – morphosyntactic (3.2.2) and intonational (3.2.3) ones respectively.

<sup>186</sup> This table is based on all question forms analysed in the studies. As some of the studies analysed only morphosyntactically unmarked interrogatives (FÓN, GRU, FON, DÉP) and others all different types (ZWA, DEL, WUN, RAM, BEY, DRU, SAN, DEL), the results are however not always comparable.

### 3.2.1 Morphosyntax ↔ Intonation

In theory, the different morphosyntactic forms could be related systematically to intonational patterns. To illustrate, {s/S}V-interrogatives could always be realised with a final rise. In this case, since syntax has been claimed to be prosody-free and set first (Costa 2010), a **specific morpheme or word order could be assumed to trigger a certain nuclear configuration**, but not vice versa.<sup>187</sup> In the case of {s/S}V-interrogatives, one might hence assume an (invisible) interrogative morpheme that triggers rising intonation.

In early work on suprasegmental phonology, the different morphosyntactic types were indeed mapped to different intonation contours: According to Delattre (1966),<sup>188</sup> YNQ and WHQ show movement in opposite directions. YNQ are believed to always involve a rise from the base level to the top of a speaker's pitch range (from levels 2 to 4), whereas WHQ are thought to always show a falling configuration that is phonologically indistinctive from commands and exclamations, namely a fall from the top to the bottom of a speaker's pitch range (from levels 4 to 1). At first sight, such a correlation could be interpreted as a main effect of the semantic type of a question (=> missing truth value vs. missing constituent). However, this correlation could also be put down to the fact that prototypical partial questions contain a question word and are thus morphosyntactically marked. This claim is corroborated by the fact that the intonation contour of partial interrogatives without wh-expressions has commonly been described as rising (Fontaney 1991: 146; Druetta 2009: 138). In addition, it has also been stated that intonation is not necessarily rising when there are other explicit interrogative markers such as interrogative words, inversion or *EST-CE QUE* (Grevisse & Goosse 2016: 537). Consequently, one may be tempted to simply map rising contours to the absence of **morphosyntactic marking**. However, previous studies (see below) have shown that the presence of a morphosyntactic marker does not automatically lead to a falling structure, and there are also a few attested instances of morphosyntactically unmarked interrogatives that are not rising.

Therefore, the dichotomy of yes/no- and wh-interrogatives shall be reconsidered. Let us first have a closer look at **YNQ**. It is quite striking that several studies have reported a general tendency for final rises independent from morphosyntactic marking. According to Druetta (2009: 180), total questions are always cued prosodically, especially at the utterance ending. This observation can be supported by Fontaney (1991: 137), who mentioned that, in the few occurrences of periphrastic yes/no-questions she observed, the highest tone was placed on the question particle, but there was still a final rise. In

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<sup>187</sup> Whenever an interrogative is marked morphosyntactically as well as prosodically, the true marker will thus be considered the morphosyntactic one, whereas prosody will be seen as a supplementary marker which is non-distinctive.

<sup>188</sup> In fact, Delattre was not the first one to describe this dichotomy. It was mentioned even in some teaching materials of the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see e.g. Sten 1956 for quite a detailed account of intonation in yes/no- vs. wh-interrogatives).

contrast, Wunderli (1990) observed that yes/no-interrogatives sometimes obtained the same intonational pattern as wh-interrogatives, and Delais-Roussarie et al. (2015) observed all theoretically possible tone combinations except for simple falls: They reported cases of simple rises (H\*H%), rise-falls (H\*L%) and fall-rises (L\*H%). However, Zwanenburg (1965: 61) and Grundstrom (1973: 30) also reported several instances of falling and low-staying structures (L\*L%), and Fónagy & Bérard (1973) even observed more falling than rising structures in periphrastic as well as declarative yes/no-interrogatives.<sup>189</sup> Hence, at least under special circumstances even morphosyntactically unmarked yes/no-interrogatives may be pronounced with a falling contour.

Let us now turn to **WHQ**. Studies have found that the prototypical nuclear configuration of interrogatives with wh-expressions may indeed be characterized as a simple fall (L\*L%), but that other forms are possible as well (Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 89). According to the authors, the intonation patterns found in French wh-questions comprise any possible combination of pitch and boundary tones: L\*L%, L\*H%, H\*H%, H\*L% (ibid.: 98). What seems to be quite regular, though, is a high tone (Hi or H\*) which is associated either with the wh-word or, as applicable, with one of the syllables of the wh-locution *EST-CE QUE* (Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 89 and Fontaney 1991: 145; see also Wunderli 1990: 40). As Fontaney observed in her data, the rest of the utterance often contained rather little tonal movement. Only when the wh-word was at the right edge of the utterance, there seemed to be a clear tendency to pronounce the question with a final rise. Hence, it is also not very surprising that it has been claimed that the wh-in-situ variant would be linked to a simple rise (see e.g. Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015). This meets the expectations of Cheng & Rooryk (2000), who claimed that wh-in-situ was licensed by an interrogative morpheme that entailed rising intonation. Besides, it would support Krifka (2011: 1747)<sup>190</sup>, who stated that “[i]n situ questions express the illocutionary force by non-syntactic, purely prosodic means, for example by rising tone on the interrogative pro-forms”. As opposed to this, wh-in-situ clefts have been described as non-rising (Fontaney 1991: 145f.) and there are even some authors who claim that wh-in-situ structures are regularly falling (see Di Cristo 1998: 206 and Laenzlinger 2003). As far as I am concerned, this may be due to different types of wh-in-situ structures: Only the ones with a question word in final position may be expected to be rising. Therefore, one may assume that only the absolute position of the question word will play a role in the choice of the nuclear configuration.

Finally, the results of two recent studies shall be presented and processed so that the data can be used for direct comparison with my own studies. The first one was conducted by **Santiago & Delais-**

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<sup>189</sup> For the study of Fónagy & Bérard (1973), it has to be mentioned that the analysed interrogatives were produced in a guessing game situation, so the questioning meaning was not only deducible from the context, it was even a premise.

<sup>190</sup> This claim was made about wh-in-situ question in general, i.e. the claim was not only about French.

**Roussarie (2012)**. On the whole, the observed tendencies are in line with the before-mentioned studies, but *wh*-interrogatives did not show a clear default pattern (see figures 8 and 9).

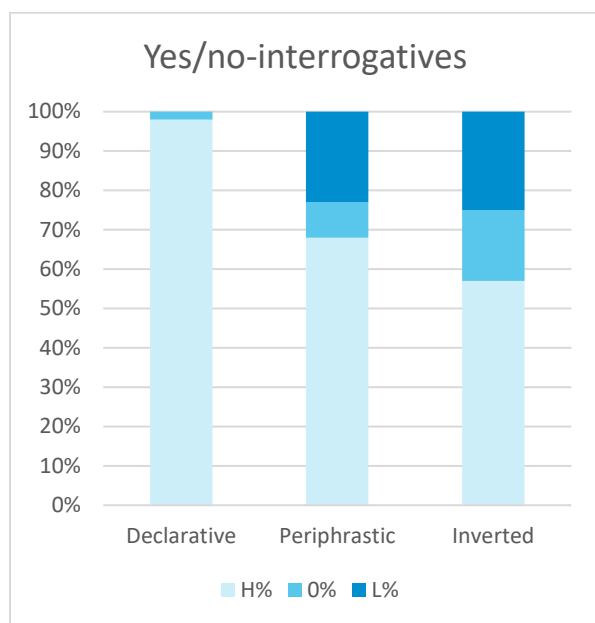


Figure 8: Total interrogatives in Santiago & Delais-Roussarie 2012

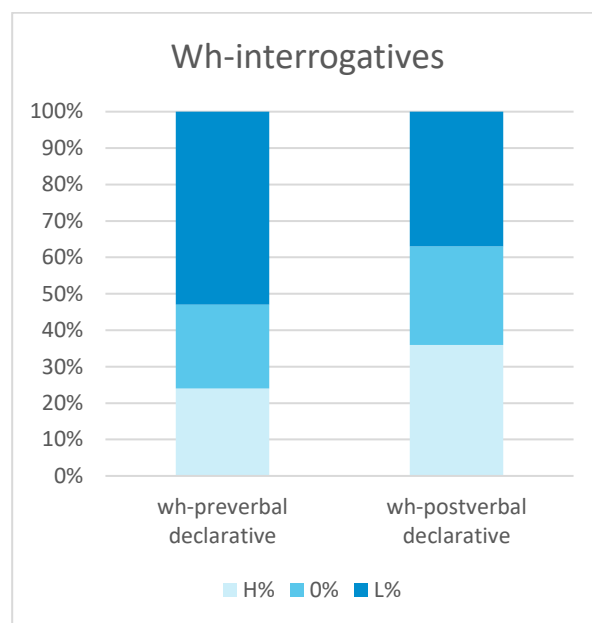


Figure 9: Partial interrogatives in Santiago & Delais-Roussarie 2012

Interrogatives with a morphosyntactic marker were thus more often falling than interrogatives without a morphosyntactic marker. Interestingly, the proportion of rises also depended on the type of morphosyntactic marker: preverbal question words led to less rises than postverbal question words, question words in general led to less rises than inversion in yes/no-interrogatives, and the latter led to less rises than *EST-CE QUE* in yes/no-interrogatives with. Based on this study, one can thus establish an order in the likelihood of non-rising structures:

Wh-preverbal > wh-postverbal > inverted non-wh > periphrastic non-wh > declarative non-wh

The second study, which was conducted by **Déprez et al. (2012, 2013)**, examined a similar selection of interrogative structures: declarative yes/no-questions, periphrastic yes/no-questions, *wh*-in-situ questions, periphrastic *wh*-questions and inverted *wh*-questions. Unfortunately, the authors did not report any countings for *wh*-ex-situ structures, but their findings are still very interesting for this thesis: Periphrastic yes/no-interrogatives were always realised with a final rise and *wh*-in-situ structures were realised as rising as well as falling structures, but all in all more often with an H% (see figure 10).

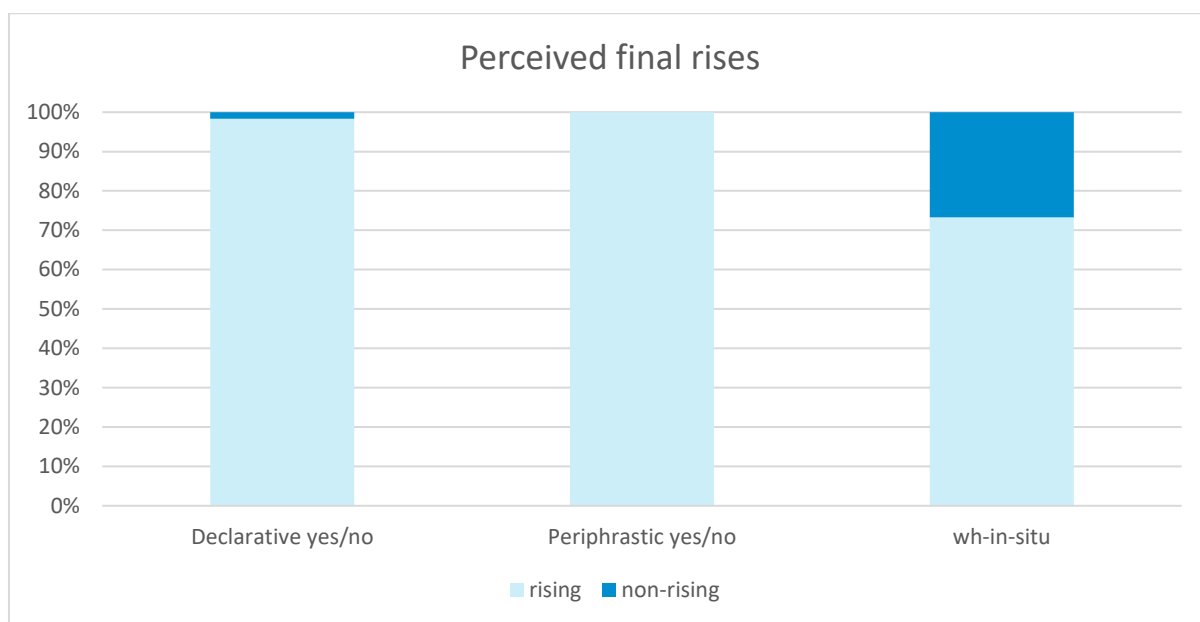


Figure 10: Perceived final movement in interrogatives in Déprez et al. 2013

This observation is important for two reasons: First, it goes against the negative correlation between morphosyntactic marking and final rises. As periphrastic yes/no-interrogatives contain the question particle, they would have been expected to be more often falling than declarative yes/no-interrogatives. Second, as the question word in the wh-in-situ structures was not in final position, the interrogatives could have been expected to be realised with final falls. Apparently, wh-in-situ structures are thus not only prone to be rising when their wh-words are in sentence-final position, but also when they are followed by a complement or an adjunct.

What is more, this study showed that the rise in wh-in-situ questions was smaller than the one in total questions. This clearly contradicts Cheng & Rooryk (2000), who believed that the rise observed in wh-in-situ structures would be triggered by the same morpheme as the rise in declarative yes/no-interrogatives. Besides, there could be found a negative correlation between a pitch rise on the in-situ question word and a sentence-final rise: Wh-in-situ structures that did not contain a final rise generally had a particularly high tone on the question word.

The higher the pitch increase on the in-situ wh-word, the lower the final tonal movement.

To conclude, previous studies have shown that both, morphosyntactic marking and the semantic type, may have an influence on final intonational movement, but there does not seem to be a categorical link between morphosyntactic form and final tonal movement. In this thesis, it will hence be particularly interesting to investigate the effect of these two factors as well as, whenever applicable, the (absolute and relative) position of the wh-expression.

### 3.2.2 Morphosyntax ↔ Meaning

There have been observed correlations between form and function, suggesting the existence of interdependencies between morphosyntax and meaning. Interestingly, questions on the truth value of a sentence seem to show a different morphosyntactic distribution than questions on the identification of a missing constituent (cf. 3.1.1). Likewise, discourse factors have been claimed to account for (some of) the observed variation in morphosyntax.

For **YNQ**, Pohl (1965: 509)<sup>191</sup> noticed in a corpus of letters that the written {s/S}V-interrogative is generally less overtly questioning as it often expresses some doubt or an indirect demand. In other words, these sentences are **less interrogative** in meaning than their inverted counterparts would be because they are presented as being oriented towards an affirmation or injunction. This observation was substantiated by several later studies. For instance, Prüssmann-Zemper (1986) found that **{s/S}V-interrogatives** were used only for utterances with a double function – an assertion inferred from the preceding speech besides the real question. As she explains, all of the declarative yes/no-questions in her corpus seemed to be either confirmation-seeking or echo questions. A similar but less categorical observation was made by Quillard (2000: 294), who found that biased yes/no-interrogatives (e.g. confirmation requests) generally favoured declarative structures. To put it in a nutshell, the less neutral a YNQ is, the more likely it is realised as a declarative structure. However, this does not mean that {s/S}V-structures are not information-seeking. Rather, the utterer of such an interrogative may already be oriented towards an answer and enquires about his assumptions' validity. The hearer of morphosyntactically unmarked questions is thus prototypically regarded as the knowledge-giver. According to Hansen (2001), this classic distribution of knowledge is even more common in {s/S}V-structures than in periphrastic or inverted structures: In her corpus study, most {s/S}V-interrogatives expressed B-events (i.e. the speaker does not know the answer and the hearer is a potential source of information),<sup>192</sup> while most of the morphosyntactically marked interrogatives expressed non-B-events. Hence, **E{s/S}V- and Vs-interrogatives** were particularly used when the hearer was not considered to be a source of information for the speaker. This may also be interpreted as a confirmation of Coveney's (1996: 247) observation that in YNQ the E{s/S}V-structure "was used only rarely when the speaker expected an answer from the addressee". Next to the factor of event type, there have been mentioned three further contextual conditions to have an influence on the choice of morphosyntactic marking: reinforcement or emphaticness, participation structure and sociostylistic courtesy. The three factors have been shown to correlate with morphosyntactic marking in the following way: The more emphatic

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<sup>191</sup> "L'interrogation écrite du type SV a généralement un caractère interrogatif atténué ; elle exprime souvent le doute (*Mais là je n'ai peut-être pas assez ouvert l'œil? On voit qu'il serait difficile d'employer ici un autre tour*) ou bien une demande atténuée (*Vous m'informerez de ce qui vous concerne ?*)."

<sup>192</sup> In other words, those interrogatives were questions with a classic distribution of knowledge (cf. p.49)

(i) / the more complex the participation structure (ii) / the more polite (iii) a situation is, the more likely is the use of *EST-CE QUE* or inversion (cf. int. al. Hansen 2001). Therefore, questions that are supposed to be reinforced (i), self-addressed or rhetorical (ii) or uttered in formal contexts (iii), are expected to be produced as inverted or periphrastic forms. While the last factor corresponds to the dichotomy written/spoken (cf. e.g. Gadet 2006: 1788), the remaining ones refer to pragmatic nuances that were not part of traditional descriptions. If previous studies are right, these factors are however at least equally important as the degree of formality: As Hansen (2001: 514) observed, “informational accessibility [=event type] seems to be particularly important. Thus, 93,13% of the SV interrogatives express B-events, while 65,11% of the V-Cl and ESV interrogatives put together express non-B-events. Participation structure seems to be the second-most important factor, followed by politeness and the particular emphatic quality of ESV.” As for the importance of morphosyntactic marking as a means of reinforcement, there had also been previously found evidence: Behnstedt (1973: 209)<sup>193</sup> observed in his corpus that inversion and *EST-CE QUE* were used strategically to mark the utterances’ questionness, and Rémi-Giraud (1991: 52)<sup>194</sup> described the question particle as an interrogative marker which reinforces the questioning character usually transported by rising intonation. As opposed to these findings, Quillard (2000: 294f.) found that the use of inversion was mostly sociostylistically explicable (e.g. imitating a formal style for marking irony) while the use of *EST-CE QUE* was mostly pragmatically conditioned (introduction of a new topic). Since Dewaele (2000: 74) attributed the introduction of new topics rather to inversion (as he observed that in his corpus that 95% of the inverted interrogatives of his corpus introduced a new topic), the factor of topic change remains however a controversial issue.

Let us now turn to **WHQ**. The previous observations seem to be valid for these structures as well: Boucher (2010), who tried to map the morphosyntactic structures of wh-interrogatives with different pragmatic meanings, classified *EST-CE QUE* interrogatives as “‘unrestricted ‘open’ conversational questions’ which optionally may signal a change of topic or call into question the validity of a presupposition linked to the question” (ibid.: 116) and structures with clitic inversion as “true requests for information but with a strong connotation of social distance; can be used to change topics.” (ibid.) What is more, the question particle has been described as a the “présentatif *c’est ... qui / que* portant sur le constituant interrogatif.” (presentative ‘c’est... qui/que’ which refers to the question word, Rémi-Giraud 1991: 52), which means that there is an explicit focus on the question word. As far as I am concerned, such a focus marker may be expected to lead to a certain degree of emphaticness and can

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<sup>193</sup> “Wir haben gesehen, daß die Inversions- und est-ce que Fragen gegenüber der Intonationsfrage als markantere Frageformen eingesetzt werden, um der Frage ein gewisses Gewicht zu verleihen und um sie deutlicher zu signalisieren.”

<sup>194</sup> “Avec les phrases en *est-ce que* à intonation montante par contre, il me semble que la particule, non décomposable, n’est qu’un marqueur de modalité interrogative venant renforcer cette intonation montante.”



thus be seen as equivalent to the question particle in yes/no-interrogatives as in both cases the information gap is additionally stressed.<sup>195</sup> On the whole, morphosyntactic marking may therefore lead to more open (i.e. less contextually grounded) as well as more emphatic questions. As for declarative wh-structures, they may thus be assumed to be more likely to be contextually grounded. The **difference between {s/S}VQ and Q{s/S}V** has generally been explained by the salience of the different parts of an interrogative. According to Coveney (1996: 247), the choice between the wh-in-situ and the wh-fronted variant “proved to be conditioned by a strong discursal constraint: the less informative the subject and the verb, the higher the probability of [SVQ] being selected”. This idea has been taken up and specified by several authors. The basic assumption is usually the following:

French fronted questions correlate with one reading while their in-situ variants correlate with another, and that optionality of WH-movement in French is therefore not real.

(Mathieu 2004: 1091)

For instance, Hamlaoui (2010) claimed that, in contrast to wh-ex-situ structures, the non-wh part in wh-in-situ structures had to be discourse-given. As the author explains, this is a result of sentence stress: As stress is assigned to the rightmost constituent in French, a wh-final structure leads to destressing the non-wh part. In other words, if all declarative structures are contextually grounded, the contextual grounding of {s/S}VQ-structures will be related to the subject and verb, whereas the context-relatedness of Q{s/S}V-structures will be of some different kind. One possibility for such a context would be a follow-up question with a complex contrastive focus.<sup>196</sup>

(92) (Marie fait du cheval à la plage, Pierre joue au badminton dans la gym.) Et Sarah, où elle fait son footing ?<sup>197</sup>

At least in most Q{s/S}V-structures, the contextual grounding will though be less obvious than in such constructed cases. Accordingly, it has been suggested that they are either requests for some elaboration on a previously mentioned subject or some expression of the speaker’s attitude. Nonetheless, they also seem to be used as usual requests for information. As Boucher (2010: 116) puts it, Q{s/S}V-structures “generally correspond to a request for explanation; may also express surprise, disapproval or incredulity [...]; may also be used as requests for information or as rhetorical questions.” Consequently, reprimanding or clarification questions can be considered pragmatic prototypes of this structure. This idea could also explain the quasi-grammaticalization of Q{s/S}V-order with *pourquoi*,

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<sup>195</sup> Cf. Rémi-Giraud (1991).

<sup>196</sup> At first sight, this refutes Zubizarreta (2003), who claims that “the French wh-in-situ construction is a case of contrastive focus, while the fronted wh-construction is a case of information focus” (Pires & Taylor 2009). However, the constructed example cited above (i.e. (92)) is a complex case because two constituents are stressed at the same time: the kind of sport and the missing place. Nonetheless, I doubt that French wh-in-situ can be mapped to contrastive focus (at least in its stricter sense).

<sup>197</sup> English translation: ‘(Mary does horse riding at the beach, Peter plays badminton in the sports hall.) And Sarah, where does she go for a run?’

considering the fact that ‘why’ inherently asks for some kind of an explanation or justification. In contrast, wh-in-situ interrogatives are believed to be even more contextually grounded than their wh-fronted counterparts. They have been described as “appropriate in a strongly presupposed context [...]; frequently used as requests for clarification, as echo or as phatic questions” (Boucher 2010: 116). Putting it differently, wh-in-situ questions have been reported to be directly linked to the ongoing discourse. This discourse link has also been (tried to be) decomposed into several concepts. Myer (2007) tried to pin down the observed contextual grounding by the notions of *questionness* (certain contexts require fronting to explicit the status of the utterance as a question), *expectedness* (highly expected question expressions tend to appear in situ) and *answerability* (more answerable questions tend to appear as in-situ forms). At any rate, it has become clear that contextual grounding does play a role in the choice of morphosyntactic structures.

To sum up, the use of the question particle, inverted word order and the postverbal position of the question word has been attributed to the following contextual characteristics:

<p><i>EST-CE QUE</i>: marker of interrogative emphasis or the unexpectation of an answer,  complex participation structure (introduction of new topics?)  Inversion: marker of formality/politeness,  complex participation structure (introduction of new topics?)  Morphosyntactically unmarked: contextually grounded, also for biased Q, typically B-events  Wh-in-situ: defocalised/discourse-given non-wh part</p>
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The choice of a certain morphosyntactic variant has thus not only related to the broad semantic type of a question (YNQ vs. WHQ), but it has also been related to (the degree of) interrogativity, formality and discourse-givenness. Hence, in this thesis semantic as well as pragmatic factors shall be taken into account.

### 3.2.3 Intonation ↔ Meaning

In general, intonational meaning is manifold: prosody can convey linguistic meaning, such as mood or sentence type (Dubois 2007; for question vs. non-question, see e.g. Léon 1973: ix or Faure 1973), but it also offers information about extralinguistic aspects, such as the sex, the emotional state or the origin of an utterance's speaker. This seems to be valid for the narrow sense of the term intonation as 'sentence melody', as well as for the, perceptually more sensible (Léon 1973), wider definition:

Intonation [...] refers to the use of suprasegmental phonetic features [=F0, intensity and duration] to convey 'postlexical' or sentence-level pragmatic meanings [e.g. speech act or focus] in a linguistically structured way [i.e. by the means of categorically distinct entities, e.g. a low tone, and relations, e.g. stronger than, excluding paralinguistic features]. (Ladd 2008: 6[-8])

When we are talking about intonational meaning, we are thus looking for discrete suprasegmental units that can be mapped to utterance meaning components. In the case of questions, high pitch is generally seen as a marker for this sentence type. For YNQ, there have even been attempts to show that an increase in fundamental frequency is a crosslinguistically wide-spread if not universal means:

[A]lthough the final rise certainly represents the dominant strategy crosslinguistically, there are also languages that mark polar interrogatives with a higher pitch towards the beginning of the contour [...]. In fact, what seems relevant typologically is whether a language places the higher pitch on the left edge or on the right edge of the contour. (Siemund 2001: 1013)

However, this high-pitch feature (*trait de hauteur*) could not be proved to be distinctive in French. Although Grundstrom (1973) could show that a final rise or high plateau is used as a marker for interrogativity, he had to admit that this intonational pattern was used to a considerable proportion in non-questions as well. This leaves us with the question why this intonational pattern can be used as a marker, but does not trigger an interrogative interpretation per se. One possible explanation would be that there are ambiguous intonational patterns. In my thesis, I will, however, adopt a different perspective: intonation will be seen as a filter for contextual interpretation only. As already Zwanenburg (1965) observed, the melody of a sentence cannot be interpreted isolated from its verbal content. This notion has been reconsidered in the framework of Relevance Theory:

[I]ntonation patterns constrain the calculation of higher-level explicatures. Escandell-Vidal, e.g., argued that some rising intonation patterns, as well as word-order patterns, negation, and discourse particles in questions, can work together to constrain the calculation of higher-level explicatures in interrogative utterances. Relevance Theory thus claims that procedural elements like prosodic marking serve to facilitate the identification of the speaker's meaning by narrowing the search space for inferential comprehension, thereby reducing the overall effort required. [...] Still, a fiercely debated issue is whether intonational meaning, as an encoder of procedural meaning, is highly conventionalized or more dependent on contextual meaning. (Prieto 2015: 377)

The latter is exactly the point of view I will adopt because this explanation is compatible not only with empirical evidence, but also with the idea that phonology is applied only after morphosyntax. Such a perspective leaves, however, open whether intonational meaning is compositional or not. At least

since the publication of Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg (1990), there has been an ongoing debate about the compositionality of intonational meaning. As the authors tried to show for American English, high pitch tones signal new information which is to be instantiated, whereas low pitch accents are associated to given material. Knowing that the French intonational system uses high tones by default at the end of each accentual phrase (Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015), this is certainly not transferable crosslinguistically. What is however conceivable, is the general notion of decomposing intonational patterns, the kind of meaning tones are prone to convey and the authors' description of boundary tone meaning:

Boundary tones convey information about the directionality of interpretation for the current intonational phrase -whether it is 'forward-looking' [i.e. to be interpreted as being linked to a subsequent utterance] or not. [...] Together, pitch [a]ccents, phrase accents, and boundary tones convey how H [= the hearer] should interpret the current utterance structurally -with respect to previous and subsequent utterances- and with respect to what H believes to be mutually believed in the discourse. (Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg 1990: 308)

Interestingly enough, it has been observed independently that there is a final fall when a thought is represented as terminal, no matter whether it is a statement, an exclamation or a question (Hammerström 1998: 109). The terminal fall could thus be interpreted as non-forward looking, i.e. as independent from subsequent utterances.

Current trends favour a model in which the intonational meaning of the nuclear configuration can be split into the concepts of speaker commitment, attitude attribution and call on addressee (see e.g. Portes et al. 2014; Portes & Beyssade 2015). More precisely, pitch accents are said to convey agreement and boundary tones to mark whether it is the speaker himself or the hearer that is being made responsible for the content of the utterance:

- |  |
|--|
| <p>⇒ Pitch accent: agreement (L* 'agreement', H*+L 'weak disagreement', H+L* 'strong disagreement')</p> <p>⇒ Boundary tones: L % 'commitment of speaker', H% 'attribution of commitment to hearer'</p> |
|--|

Although the decomposition of intonational meaning certainly offers interesting perspectives, it is obvious that this notion will not account for all observed variation. At any rate, nobody has argued for the decomposition of intonation in morphosyntactically marked interrogatives and empirical evidence does certainly not encourage to do so.

What will thus be more interesting for this thesis, is the relation between final tonal movement as a whole and communicative sense. For example, morphosyntactically unmarked yes/no-interrogatives without a final rise have been shown to not be used as canonical information request (e.g. Fontaney 1991). Hence, such utterances encode complex messages rather than simple questions and the few cases of morphosyntactically unmarked questions with final falls occur in situations in which the speaker points out what (s)he believed to know. Similarly, it has been suggested that also

morphosyntactically marked yes/no-interrogatives convey some non-canonical meaning when they are pronounced with a falling or rising-falling sentence melody (see teaching materials published as early as Sten 1956: 94f.). More recently, it has also been attempted to map nuclear configurations in {s/S}V-structures with specific pragmatic functions:

Table 13: Mapping of nuclear configurations with speaker attitudes in morphosyntactically unmarked yes/no-interrogatives

H+!H*H% (H+!H*L%)	Negatively-biased questions (i.e. the speaker believes the proposition to be false)	Michelas et al. 2016 Portes et al. 2014
H+L*H% (H+H*H%)	Incredulity (of the speaker) about the content	Portes & Beyssade 2015 Michelas et al. 2013
L+H*H%	Confirmation request	Portes & Beyssade 2015
H*+LH%	Confirmation request + presupposition a hearer that is reluctant to give the answer	Portes & Beyssade 2015
H*H%	Unbiased (or positively-biased) questions	Michelas et al. 2013, 2016 Portes et al. 2014

Such an attempt has even been made for the totality of French direct interrogatives (Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015, see table 14).

Table 14: Mapping of nuclear configurations with semantico-pragmatic uses based on Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 98<sup>198</sup>

	<b>yes/no</b>	<b>wh</b>	<b>disjunctive</b>
<b>H*H%</b>	info-seeking <u>confirmation-seeking</u> <u>counter-expectational</u>	info-seeking <u>echo</u>	
<b>L*H%</b>	info-seeking imperative	info-seeking	
<b>H*L%</b>	imperative <u>echo</u>	<u>biased</u>	
<b>L*L%</b>		info-seeking <u>imperative</u>	<u>any</u>

As the authors explain, there are however several semantico-pragmatic functions that cannot be attributed to only one nuclear contour. For example, the prototypical nuclear contour of an information-seeking wh-question can be characterized as a simple fall (L\*L%), but other forms are possible and do not necessarily lead to a difference in meaning (ibid.: 89). Hence, intonation is most certainly not directly linked to pragmatics. One may find certain default patterns, but there will still occur some divergences from them (cf. Relevance Theory approach cited above). To illustrate this, a question such as “Tu crois toujours que le Père Noël existe ?” (‘Do you still believe that Santa Clause exists?’) can be pronounced with a final rise and still be interpreted as a rhetorical (and thus assertive) question. In the case of yes/no-interrogatives, for example, Wunderli (1990: 39f.) concluded that usually total questions were rising, but under certain conditions they could also occur with non-rising tonal movement: If the question was realised as a morphosyntactically marked structure (i.e. subject-

<sup>198</sup> While the underlined pragmatic types have been associated with only one nuclear configuration, the non-underlined ones have been observed to show some variation within this category.

verb inversion, *EST-CE QUE* or question word) or the questioning meaning was deducible from the co- or context, intonational cuing was not always used.

In conclusion, one can expect to find correlations between intonation and meaning, but these correlations will rather be tendencies than categorical links. Also, there may be interactions between several factors.

### 3.3 The selection of factors

#### 3.3.1 For research on morphosyntax

In most recent studies, interrogative variation has been analysed in terms of independent variables. In general, it has been shown that the choice of a morphosyntactic variant is subject to specific conditions, such as choice of words, discourse-relatedness and sociostylistics (cf. 3.1.1, 3.2.1 and 3.2.2). In one of the latest studies on YNQ, it has been shown that the use of morphosyntactic marking is much likelier with modal verbs and non-clitic arguments (Guryev 2018): Almost a third of the structures containing either a complex verb form with a modal or a non-clitic subject were realised as a periphrastic or inverted structure. Considering the fact that also former studies on morphosyntactic variation in French interrogatives have found an influence of modals and the subject type (see Chang 1997, Cheng & Rooryk 2000 and Mathieu 2016), these two factors are thus worth taking into account. Hence, in addition to the previously mentioned factors, this thesis shall also consider string-related details such as the verb or the subject type.

• Semantics	○ Type of information gap (YNQ vs. WHQ vs. DSQ)
• Formulation	○ Subject type (e.g. NP vs. clitic) ○ Verb type (e.g. modal + infinitive) ○ ... <sup>199</sup>
• Pragmatics	○ Event type ○ Degree of information-seekingness
• Sociostylistics	○ Degree of formality (/ politeness) ○ Medium (spoken vs. written)

<sup>199</sup> There will be other factors, such as negation, which have proved to be of interest during the exploration of my data.

### 3.3.2 For research on intonation

Most recently, Delais-Roussarie & Herment (2018) have shown that it is very difficult to map intonative forms with certain structures, meanings or functions. As the authors observed, there are certainly tendencies, but there are neither clear dependencies between morphosyntax and intonation nor is there an unambiguous intonational cue to interrogativity. Nonetheless, they believe several factors to be worth to be examined in more detail: They suggest the [semantic] type of a question (i.e. YNQ vs. WHQ), speaker attitudes (i.e. the utterer's commitment and expectation) and the length of a question.<sup>200</sup> Following their suggestions as well as the previous findings of other studies, the most promising factors seem to be:

• Semantics
○ Type of information gap (YNQ vs. WHQ vs. DSQ)
• Formulation
○ Morphosyntactic marking (as a binary factor)
○ Main morphosyntactic types (and their subtypes)
○ Absolute and relative position of the question word
○ Length of interrogative (in syllables)
• Pragmatics
○ Commitment
○ Expectation
○ Event type
○ Degree of information-seekingness
• Sociostylistics
○ Degree of formality (/ politeness)

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<sup>200</sup> With regard to dependent variables, they point to the fact that prenuclear tonal movement may also play a significant role in interrogative encoding. According to their data, especially the melodic beginning of interrogatives is prone to be associated with some questioning meaning because the tonal onset of the questions was generally high or rising. As I decided to focus on final tonal movement, this is however not pursued any further in this thesis.

## 4. Questionnaire :

### *Quelles interrogatives sont acceptées dans quels contextes ?*<sup>201</sup>

In this chapter, I will present the results of my questionnaire on morphosyntactic variants. The questionnaire was conceived as a pilot study for an unbiased exploration of structures in context as well as the review of previous hypotheses.<sup>202</sup> More precisely, the acceptance and assumed probability of certain morphosyntactic forms in concrete situations were assessed, and associations of situations with certain forms were collected. As it turned out, the beliefs on the use of interrogatives are led by more than just linguistic intuition. Especially linguistic nurture influenced the answers given in the questionnaire. Nonetheless, there could also be found evidence for what is prone to influence the choice of a morphosyntactic variant: Linguistic factors (the question word and the linguistic level of lexical entities) as well as extralinguistic factors (pragmatic meaning, sociostylistic level, and age of subject) could be shown to have an impact on questionnaire answers.

#### 4.1 Introduction

Before conducting my own corpus analyses, I wanted to improve my understanding of French interrogative variation. Since I am not a native speaker of French, I cannot rely on my own linguistic intuition. Besides, the collective ideas of a hundred unbiased native speakers are certainly more valid than the beliefs of an individual who will be guided by her own convictions. To find out which interrogatives are accepted in which contexts, it was thus recommendable to undertake a survey. Doing so, I hoped to get a better insight into the numerous factors which have been previously claimed to influence the form of an interrogative (see chapter 2).

One purpose of this questionnaire was thus to investigate whether pragmatic (e.g. Boucher 2010) or sociolinguistic accounts (e.g. Coveney 2002) reflect native speakers' intuitions and beliefs more adequately. In this context, the study also intended to examine the explanatory potential of the speaker/hearer knowledge (i.e. B-events vs. non-B-events, see chapter 3 on p. 67), as observed by Hansen 2001), as well as Myers 2007) notion of answerability. Such a verification of previous hypotheses has even been explicitly demanded in the literature: "A very important next step [...] would be to create a survey with contexts where native speakers would be asked to choose an interrogative

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<sup>201</sup> English translation: 'Which interrogatives do native speakers accept in which context?'

<sup>202</sup> As this study was meant to be explorative, extended statistical analyses were neither the aim nor feasible with a questionnaire of this kind.



form. This type of research would give the factors for choice [...] validity not available in post facto analysis of corpora.”<sup>203</sup> (Myers 2007: 237)

In other words, the main research aim of this study was to explore, based on native speakers’ intuitions and beliefs, which circumstances are likely to play a role for the choice of an interrogative structure. Besides checking for potential linguistic and extralinguistic factors, this study also set out to determine whether people rather follow descriptive or prescriptive standards when reporting on interrogative phrasing (cf. Adli 2015). Against this background, it attempted to identify whether the authentic use of a structure predicts a high acceptance rate<sup>204</sup>. Put more simply, it was also examined whether participants favoured the variant which had actually been used.

To sum up, this study attempts to describe linguistic beliefs on interrogative use (see 4.3), and to assess the explanatory potential of

- a. morpho-lexical content (see 4.4.1),
- b. individual characteristics (considering participants’ sex and age, see 4.4.2),
- c. context (considering variationist and pragmatic accounts, see 4.4.2),
- d. and standardisation (see 4.4.3).

## 4.2 Method

In order to see which question forms native speakers accepted in certain situations and what differences between them they assumed, I created a questionnaire consisting of five tasks (see appendix, pp.402ff.). The questionnaire comprehended closed tasks using acceptance judgements and probability ratings, a half-open task in which alternative variants should be indicated, as well as open tasks in which participants could explicate their reflections on possible contexts and meaning differences. While the closed and half-open tasks could be analysed quantitatively, the open tasks were conceived for purely qualitative analysis. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were thus combined. Doing so, previous hypotheses should be tested and possibly new ones developed. For the items used in the tasks, I selected interrogatives which had been used in four different television programmes, namely an episode of the quiz show *Money drop*, the reality TV show *Bienvenue chez nous* (see also chapter 5), the crime drama TV series *Profilage*, and the movie *La Haine*.<sup>205</sup> In some of

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<sup>203</sup> This demand was intended to be met with the slightly different tasks 1 to 3. Instead of choosing one variant, participants should indicate which variants were possible. Since the tasks (and their evaluation) proved to be complicated, I would rather follow the original demand for future research.

<sup>204</sup> Since the first task consisted of a yes/no-decisions on whether structures were acceptable, I am avoiding the term *acceptability*, which may suggest a gradeability in concept.

<sup>205</sup> The episodes of *Bienvenue chez nous* and *Money Drop* were emitted and recorded on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 from 6 to 7 pm and from 7 to 8 pm respectively. The episode of *Profilage* was the very first one (i.e. episode one from season one) and was taken from the publicly available DVD. In the case of *La Haine*, the Reclam version

the tasks (i.e. tasks 1, 2, and 5), I added logically possible variants. The base of my questionnaire consisted thus of authentically<sup>206</sup> used interrogatives, which were either investigated themselves or compared to lexically equivalent sentence structures. Choosing authentically used question forms guaranteed that at least some of the variants should be acceptable. Also, it provided a baseline for comparison with other variants.

First, I only passed around a paper version, but later I also digitalised the questionnaire via google forms<sup>207</sup>. While some people preferred filling out the paper version, others were grateful to be able to do so on a computer. Also, the online version permitted to contact more people than exclusively personal friends and acquaintances. In the end, I collected the data obtained by both means, and incorporated all into one spreadsheet. Since I was interested in hexagonal French only, I excluded the few speakers of other varieties (i.e. the participants who spoke Belgian, Canadian, or Swiss French). Even so, more than a hundred questionnaires (n = 103) remained to be evaluated. As some participants did not answer all questions or did not follow the instructions correctly, numbers of answers vary though for the different items.<sup>208</sup>

## 4.3 General results

### 4.3.1 Part 1

In the first part of the questionnaire, question forms had to be mapped to the situations indicated. The three tasks included acceptance judgements, probability ratings, as well as indications of possible alternative formulations.

#### Task 1

In the first task, the subjects had to decide which of the interrogatives indicated they would expect in the situation described. There were four interrogatives for each situation, and each of them had to be judged separately. As there were four contexts, a total of sixteen items had to be judged.<sup>209</sup>

The **first** situation was the following:

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of the screenplay was consulted. Here, it should be added that the screenplay and the actual movie slightly diverge in some cases. For reasons of convenience, it was though decided to rather use the screenplay.

<sup>206</sup> Of course, “authentically” does not (always) mean “spontaneously” in these cases. What is meant is that the form was actually used in that particular context.

<sup>207</sup> The questionnaire could be accessed under <https://goo.gl/forms/qggi5p769P2XZygl3>.

<sup>208</sup> The items had not been randomised. Instead, I decided to put the presumably clearest items in the beginning and the presumably most controversial ones at the end. In future research, I would though rather do this to eliminate any influence of the item order.

<sup>209</sup> Unfortunately, some participants only chose one of the variants instead of indicating for each interrogative whether it was acceptable or not. Also, some participants stated that they would partly accept the interrogative (e.g. by crossing ‘yes’ and ‘no’ for the same interrogative). Only answers following the instructions were counted.

1.1 Un couple est en train de mettre la table pour ses invités. Quand la femme dit “Ça va pas.”, l’homme lui demande à quoi elle se réfère.

‘A couple is setting the table for their guests. When the woman says “That is not possible.”, the man asks her what she refers to.’

1.1.1 *C’est quoi qui va pas encore ?*

1.1.2 *Que va pas encore ?*

1.1.3 *Qu’est-ce qui va pas encore ?*

1.1.4 *Quoi va pas encore ?*

‘What isn’t possible? (What are you moaning about now?)’

Two of the interrogative structures indicated were plainly ungrammatical (\**Que va pas encore ?* and \**Quoi va pas encore ?*) and, consequently, refused by virtually all participants.<sup>210</sup> In contrast, the authentically used periphrastic interrogative *Qu’est-ce qui va pas encore ?*<sup>211</sup> was judged appropriate by the vast majority of participants (92 of 101, i.e. 91%<sup>212</sup>). As for the cleft structure *C’est quoi qui va pas encore ?*, more than two thirds of the participants (60 of 84, i.e. 71%) accepted it. To conclude, both structures can be regarded as acceptable although the *qu’est-ce qui* variant seems to be preferred.

The **second** situation was of a similar kind:

1.2 Le couple est en train de préparer le dîner. Quand la femme dit à son mari de découper les fruits pour la salade, il lui demande où ils sont.

‘The couple is preparing dinner. When the woman tells her husband to cut up the fruit for the salad, the latter asks her where the fruit is.’

1.2.1 *Ils sont où, tes fruits ?*

1.2.2 *Où sont tes fruits ?*

1.2.3 *Où sont-ils, tes fruits ?*

1.2.4 *Où ils sont, tes fruits ?*

‘Where is your/the fruit?’

Here, none of the structures was completely refused, but there were differences in the proportions. The two declarative structures got the highest ratings: The authentically used wh-in-situ structure *Ils sont où, tes fruits?* and the wh-ex-situ structure *Où ils sont, tes fruits?* obtained an acceptance rate of 87% (77 of 89) and 69% (56 of 81) respectively. In contrast, the equivalent structure with clitic inversion (*Où sont-ils, tes fruits?*) was judged inadequate by more than half of the participants (accepted only by 37 of 82, i.e. 45%). Nonetheless, the stylistic inversion variant (*Où sont tes fruits?*) obtained an acceptance rate of 62% (55 of 89), so it was less often accepted than the declarative structures, but more often than the clitic inversion.

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<sup>210</sup> There was one old lady who indicated that she would also accept the two ungrammatical structures.

<sup>211</sup> Traditionally, QESV-structures are considered to be sociostylistically neutral (Coveney (2011): 124). Since variants with ‘what’ as subject are however restricted to this morphosyntactic form, sociostylistic classifications are not possible.

<sup>212</sup> It may be surprising that some participants rejected this variant. However, this may be due to norm-orientation since the negation particle *ne* is omitted in this item.

The **third** situation differed from the previous ones with regard to interlocutors as well as the way of speaking:

1.3 Deux amis se disputent parce que l'un des deux a de nouveau insulté la sœur de l'autre. Le premier veut rappeler au deuxième qu'il lui avait déjà dit de la laisser tranquille.

'Two friends argue because one of them has repeatedly insulted the other one's sister. The first one wants to remind the other one that he has already told him to leave her alone.'

1.3.1 Qu'est-ce que je t'ai dit à propos de ma sœur ?

1.3.2 Je t'ai dit quoi à propos de ma sœur ?

1.3.3 Que t'ai-je dit à propos de ma sœur ?

1.3.4 C'est quoi que je t'ai dit à propos de ma sœur ?

Question: 'What did I tell you about my sister?'

Again, the authentically used interrogative *Qu'est-ce que je t'ai dit à propos de ma sœur?* was accepted by the vast majority (89 out of 95, i.e. 94%). The wh-in-situ variant *Je t'ai dit quoi à propos de ma sœur?* was generally accepted as well (66 out of 82, i.e. 80%), but the variant with clitic inversion (*Que t'ai-je dit à propos de ma sœur?*) was rejected by three out of five people (acceptance rate of 35 out of 84, i.e. 42%). The cleft structure *C'est quoi que je t'ai dit à propos de ma sœur?* was even more clearly rejected: Only 12 out of 82 people accept it (acceptance rate of 15%).

The **fourth** situation is yet another constellation of circumstances:

1.4 Une criminologue essaie d'analyser le comportement du meurtrier. Elle réfléchit sur le fait qu'il a déplacé le corps en se posant cette question.

'A criminologist is trying to analyse the behaviour of the murderer. She is wondering why he has displaced the body and voices the question that is on her mind.'

1.4.1 Pourquoi l'a-t-il traînée jusqu'aux poubelles ?

1.4.2 Pourquoi est-ce qu'il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles ?

1.4.3 Pourquoi il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles ?

1.4.4 Il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles pourquoi ?

Question: 'Why did he drag her to the bins?'

In line with expectations, the authentically used periphrastic form: *Pourquoi est-ce qu'il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles ?* was accepted by the majority (58 out of 81, i.e. 71%). Interestingly, this acceptance rate was though even exceeded by the rating of the inverted structure *Pourquoi l'a-t-il traînée jusqu'aux poubelles ?* (84 out of 94, 89%). Given that *pourquoi*-questions show a strong tendency for Q{S/S}V-order in spoken French (see Behnstedt 1973: 208f., Druetta 2009: 63, and Myers 2007: 73; see also chapters 5 and 6), it seems rather unexpected that *Pourquoi il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles?* was accepted by only slightly over half of the participants (48 out of 83, i.e. 58%). What is even more surprising is the fact that also the in-situ form *Il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles pourquoi?* was accepted by a third of the participants (27 out of 83, i.e. 33%). There are two possibilities to interpret this: Either *pourquoi*-in-situ is not ungrammatical as has been said in the literature (Mathieu

2004: 1119),<sup>213</sup> or the participants have read the sentence in a different way than suggested by its orthography. For instance, they could have imagined two independent intonational phrases (i.e. *Il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles... Pourquoi?*). Likewise, it is possible that they considered a purpose-oriented reading of the sentence (i.e. they replaced *pourquoi* by *pour quoi*).<sup>214</sup> This sentence is comparable to item 1.14 because /puRkwa/ could indicate a reason (*pourquoi*) as well as a purpose (*pour quoi*). Hence, such occurrences in authentic language use as well as their acceptance cannot clearly refute the hypothesis that *pourquoi* is excluded from appearing in-situ.

To sum up the results of this task, one can say that...

- (i) only plainly ungrammatical structures are categorically refused,
- (ii) authentically used interrogatives obtained high (but not always the highest) acceptance rates, and
- (iii) *pourquoi* is disfavoured but sometimes accepted in postverbal position. However, it is unclear whether this position is in-situ.

## Task 2

In the second task, the participants had to indicate the probability of the interrogatives in the described situations. The probability ranking was effectuated by means of a 5-point Likert-scale where 5 stood for 'very likely', 4 for 'rather likely', 3 for 'maybe, maybe not', 2 for 'rather unlikely' and 1 for 'very unlikely'. There were presented two situations with a *qu'est-ce que* and a *quoi*-in-situ structure respectively.

Both situations as well as the respective first of the two interrogative variants were extracted from the above-mentioned episode of the quiz show *Money Drop*. The **first** situation was the following:

### 2.1 La présentatrice d'une émission de télé pose des questions afin de présenter le candidat :

'The presenter of a television series asks questions to present the candidate:'

2.1.1 *Qu'est-ce que vous faites dans la vie ?*

2.1.2 *Vous faites quoi dans la vie ?*

'What do you do for a living?'

Both of the interrogatives were judged possible, but the periphrastic version *Qu'est-ce que vous faites dans la vie ?* was judged more likely than the wh-in-situ version *Vous faites quoi dans la vie?* (4.3 vs. 3.6 points, n = 100). Interestingly, this was also the authentically used form.

In contrast, for the **second** situation, no such preference could be observed.

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<sup>213</sup> For studies showing evidence for *pourquoi*-in-situ's marginality in language use, see Behnstedt (1973: 208f.), Druetta (2009: 63), and Myers (2007: 73).

<sup>214</sup> When living in France, I also encountered some apparent /puRkwa/-in-situ interrogatives. One example I wrote down is an introductory question, which was used in a class at the ENS Lyon: *Je vous demande ça /puRkwa/?*. The interrogative was pronounced by the teacher and intonation was falling.

2.2 Deux candidats d'un jeu télévisé réfléchissent s'ils devraient prendre leur joker pour réviser leur choix. L'un demande à l'autre :

'Two candidates of a quiz show think about taking their joker to alternate their choice. The one candidate asks the other:'

2.2.1 *Qu'est-ce qu'on changerait ?*

2.2.2 *On changerait quoi ?*

'What would we change?'

Here, *Qu'est-ce que* and *quoi-in-situ* were rated as equally probable (3.9 vs. 3.8 points, n = 100): Both question forms, *On changerait quoi?* (the authentically used variant) and *Qu'est-ce qu'on changerait?* (the equivalent periphrastic variant), were thus judged to be 'rather likely' on average. Here, there does not seem to exist any generalisable behaviour: twenty-five participants prefer the same variant in both situations (twenty the periphrastic variant, five the *wh-in-situ* variant), and twenty-two participants always consider both variants equally probable. In the end, all possible combinations of preferences were observed at least once and there was no real tendency detectable (see table 15).

Table 15: Counts/percentages of structural preferences in task 2

<i>quoi-in-situ</i> in both	5
<i>Qu'est-ce que</i> in both	20
None in both	22
None in 1.21 and <i>quoi-in-situ</i> in 1.22	6
None in 1.21 and <i>Qu'est-ce que</i> in 1.22	10
<i>quoi-in-situ</i> in 1.21 and none in 1.22	1
<i>Qu'est-ce que</i> in 1.21 and none in 1.22	14
<i>quoi-in-situ</i> in 1.21 and <i>Qu'est-ce que</i> in 1.22	4
<i>Qu'est-ce que</i> in 1.21 and <i>quoi-in-situ</i> in 1.22	18

The great dispersity of structural preferences is certainly a point against a situational dependence. The fact that the largest count of structural preferences was for 'none in both' is not in favour of any factorial explanation either. Yet, some tendencies in preferences were observed: *Qu'est-ce que* was more likely to be accepted in the (potentially) more formal situation (see last six rows) as well as more likely to be accepted in general (see first two rows). Therefore, sociostylistic marking still seems to have played a role in the probability ratings.

Although it is hard to draw any watertight conclusions from this, one can at least record the following:

- (i) The preference of an interrogative form can depend on the situation, but
- (ii) people may also have personal preferences for a morphosyntactic variant.
- (iii) There seem to be different beliefs on when to use *Qu'est-ce que* and when *quoi-in-situ*.

### Task 3

The third task was supposed to elicit alternative question forms for a certain context. The participants were asked to write down other possible interrogatives as the one indicated for the designated situation without changing the vocabulary. For many participants, this task was though not clear. In some cases, they used the same morphosyntactic structure as already given and simply changed words (e.g. *Depuis quand tu parles aux journalistes?* and *Pourquoi tu parles aux journalisteux?* instead of *Depuis quand tu parles aux journalisteux?*), in others they changed both (e.g. *Ça fait longtemps que tu parles aux journalisteux?*). This kind of misunderstanding may be due to the artificiality of such a task. In everyday conversations, one does not use to wonder whether there would have been an alternative to express the question just uttered.<sup>215</sup> Nevertheless, the task worked out in the end: Several participants indicated lexically-equivalent alternatives. Most people indicated just one variant, some two, and in single cases even three. In the following, all recurrent alternatives (consistent with the instructions) are given together with their number of mentions<sup>216</sup>.

The **first** two of the four items had been extracted from *Profilage*.

- 3.1 Un inspecteur a vu qu'une des membres de son équipe a parlé avec une inconnue sur le lieu de crime. Il prend l'inconnue pour une journaliste et il n'aime pas que son équipe parle avec des journalistes. *Depuis quand tu parles aux journalisteux ?*<sup>217</sup>

'An inspector has seen that one of his staff members was talking to an unknown woman at the scene of the crime. He takes the woman for a journalist and he does not like his team to speak to journalists. *Since when do you talk to hacks?*'

The most often mentioned alternative was the structure with clitic inversion (*Depuis quand parles-tu aux journalisteux ?* mentioned 22 times and *Depuis quand parles-tu aux journalistes ?* mentioned 12 times). The second-most often indicated variant was the periphrastic one (*Depuis quand est-ce que tu parles aux journalisteux ?* mentioned 12, and *Depuis quand est-ce que tu parles aux journalistes ?* 3 times), and the least often indicated one the wh-in-situ variant (*Tu parles aux journalisteux depuis quand ?* mentioned 7 times, and 1 time *Tu parles aux journalistes depuis quand ?*).

In contrast, the **second** situation and/or string lead to more mentions of the wh-in-situ variant:

- 3.2 Un inspecteur découvre une inconnue sur le lieu de crime. Il n'est pas de bonne humeur et il veut savoir pourquoi elle est là. *Qu'est-ce que vous foutez sur ma scène de crime, vous ?*

'An inspector discovers an unknown woman at the scene of a crime. He is not in a good mood and he wants to know why she is there. *What the hell are you doing at my scene of crime?*'

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<sup>215</sup> This task was never intended for statistical analysis, but for exploration only. I admit that the meaningfulness of such a task for actual linguistic variation may be reduced, but it still brought some interesting insights.

<sup>216</sup> This is to say I only consider alternatives that were mentioned more than once. Misspellings (e.g. *Que c'est-il passé ici?*) have been ignored, i.e. counted as if they were spelt correctly.

<sup>217</sup> This example is particularly interesting because Coveney (2011) observed that *quand* sV is as good as absent in corpora.

Indeed, the wh-in-situ variant is here the most frequently mentioned structure (13 times *Vous foutez quoi sur ma scène de crime, vous ?* and 5 times *Vous foutez quoi sur ma scène de crime ?*). Inverted structures were nonetheless indicated several times (8 times *Que foutez-vous sur ma scène de crime ?* and 3 times *Vous, que foutez-vous sur ma scène de crime ?*). If one counts structures in which the verb was changed to the sociostylistically neutral synonym *faire* (2 times *Que faites-vous sur ma scène de crime ?*, 1 time *Que faites-vous sur la scène de crime ?*<sup>218</sup>), there were however almost as many mentions of inverted as wh-in-situ structures.

The **third** and fourth items of task 3 had been extracted from *La Haine*.

3.3 Deux amis se parlent. L'un des deux fait la morale à l'autre. Ce dernier se lamente du fait que son ami ne le soutienne pas. *Pourquoi tu prends jamais mon parti ?*

'Two friends are talking to one another. One of the two gives the other one a lecture. The latter one complains that his friend does not support him. *Why do you never take my side?*

The most often (30 times) mentioned variant was *Pourquoi ne prends-tu jamais mon parti ?*. Another recurrently mentioned variant was the periphrastic one (*Pourquoi est-ce que tu ne prends jamais mon parti ?* (10 times) and *Pourquoi est-ce que tu prends jamais mon parti ?* (8 times)).<sup>219</sup> In four cases, a declarative form with the question word separated from the rest of the utterance was indicated: *Tu prends jamais mon parti, pourquoi ?*. This variant may seem similar to a wh-in-situ variant, but in fact it is not: The comma clearly suggests a(n intonational and) morphosyntactic break. Hence, this question is more similar to a tag question (e.g. *Tu es de mon parti, non ?*), which asserts the first part of the sentence and uses only the tag to question what has just been asserted. In the case of *pourquoi*, the "tag" is a short way of asking for the reason of what has just been said ('Why is this so?'). However, not a single sVQ-structure was indicated. This fact strongly supports the hypothesis that *pourquoi* is generally disliked in-situ.

In the **fourth** and last item of the task, wh-in-situ is again indicated as a possibility for the given context.

3.4 Un adolescent voit les vestiges d'un feu. Il est surpris. *Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ici ?*

'An adolescent sees the remains of a fire. He is surprised. *What's happened (here)?*

Inverted and wh-in-situ structures were both indicated quite often (*Que s'est-il passé (ici) ?* (33 times) and *Il s'est passé quoi (ici) ?* (33 times) / *Y s'est passé quoi (ici) ?* (3 times). Interestingly, there was not a single mention of the periphrastic variant *Qu'est-ce qu'il s'est passé ici ?*. It is therefore conceivable that participants thought this form to be identical to *Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ici ?* although the

<sup>218</sup> There were also slightly changed inverted variants : 2 times *Que faites-vous ici ?*, 1 time *Que faites-vous sur le lieu ?*

<sup>219</sup> There were also 8 indications of the original variant with *ne*-insertion (*Pourquoi tu ne prends jamais mon parti ?*)



question word is traditionally seen as performing a different grammatical function (i.e. complement instead of subject).<sup>220</sup>

In conclusion, there are at least three observations that can be recorded:

- (i) *Pourquoi* seems to be disliked in-situ.
- (ii) *Qu'est-ce qui* and *Qu'est-ce qu'il* may be seen as the same morphosyntactic variant.
- (iii) Apart from the item containing *pourquoi*, all main morphosyntactic variants were mentioned, so none of the variants seemed to be completely ruled out by the contexts.

#### 4.3.2 Part 2

In the second part of the questionnaire, the participants had to indicate possible contexts for the appearance of certain interrogatives. In other words, part 2 consisted in mapping forms to their (prototypical) functions and situations. The evaluation of this part was mostly qualitative, i.e. the most recurrent situations were analysed and described with regard to their common points.

#### Task 4

In the penultimate task, the participants had to read interrogatives without any structural alternatives and to write down possible contexts in which they could be uttered. To put it differently, the four indicated question forms had to be mapped to possible application scenarios. In the following, answers are summed up, indicating the main recurrent ideas.

**Item 4.1** (*Qu'est-ce qu'on a ?* 'What do we have?') was associated with four different situations. The most common one, which was mentioned by more than half of the participants, was asking about stocks and supplies. Accordingly, left-over food, available money as well as more general inventories were indicated as conceivable issues. The second-most frequent situation (more than 20 mentions) was the one in which the interrogative had been authentically used in *Profilage*, i.e. the briefing initiation for a police investigation. Another recurrent situational feature was an enquiry about a physical or mental problem. Such an enquiry could take place at the doctor's or between friends. In three cases, it was also associated with an enquiry on which school subject was next.

This non-specificity was in contrast to **item 4.2** (*Qui c'est qui sait conduire ?* 'Who knows how to drive?'). Here, the question topic was well-specified, but the interrogative was clearly attributed to a low sociostylistic level. Accordingly, this interrogative was generally described as being used for determining the driver, but there were different recurrent situational components. In many cases, the interlocutors were explicitly well-known to one another (friends or family). Also, many participants mentioned a young age of the speaker and/or hearer (adolescents in 22 cases, infant or infant-directed

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<sup>220</sup> This hypothesis is substantiated by a participant's assertion to rather use *Qu'est-ce qu'il ne va pas encore ?* than *Qu'est-ce qui va pas encore ?* (see p.38).

speech in 3 cases). What is more, the question was said to mirror a certain unreflectedness, such as the speaker being drunk (10 participants explicitly mentioned an alcoholised speaker). In some cases, participants even judged the speaker based on the choice of this formulation as being not well-educated (e.g. “qqn de peu éduqué”). Indeed, this question had been put into the mouth of a dark-skinned deprived adolescent.<sup>221</sup> The young age as well as the low level of education were thus both found in the authentic as well as the attributed situations.

The circumstances under which **item 4.3** (*Vous êtes où ?* ‘Where are you?’) is usually uttered were almost unanimously described as an informal situation (between family or friends) in which someone is either waiting for people to arrive or searching for them in a crowded place. Nearly all participants indicated that this is a typical question uttered on the phone (calling or texting). Interestingly, the authentic context did not correspond to this prototypical situation. The interrogative had been extracted from *Bienvenue chez nous*, during an activity of the host with his guests. The host utters the question while climbing the stairs of a tower, wanting to motivate his fellows, who are climbing behind him. Here, the question was thus not used in the generally associated situation. This illustrates that interrogative forms are not restricted to the prototypical contexts evoked by them.

**Item 4.4** (*Tu dirais quoi ?* ‘What would you say?’), which had been extracted from the quiz show *Money Drop*, seems to be a question which is typical of making a cooperative decision, asking for advice, and discussing the answer to a question in a classroom exercise, language test or game. The interlocutors were usually described as persons of confidence. Recurrent situations included filling out a questionnaire on intuitions about language use, preparing an important written or oral communication, and simply asking a friend for his/her opinion. As in items 4.1 and 4.2, the original situations in which the question forms had been uttered were hence also part of the context depictions.

Putting the results of this task together, the answers of the participants suggest that...

- (i) prototypical situations do exist for these questions,
- (ii) but the interrogatives are not restricted to these contexts.

### Task 5

In the last task, participants had to read morphosyntactic alternatives with the same lexical content. There were either two (item series 5.2 and 5.5) or three (item series 5.1, 5.3, and 5.4) variants of each question. Participants were supposed to describe the differences between the structures and to exemplify their use by indicating possible contexts. In their answers, there could be observed three

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<sup>221</sup> The question had been extracted from *La Haine*, which is a movie set in Paris’ banlieue area (screenplay p.122). Hubert, one of the protagonists, points this out after stealing a car with his two friends.

dimensions of differences: sociostylistic marking, pragmatic meaning and frequency of use. In the following, I will describe the answers for the five question sets separately.

**Item series 5.1** was the only yes/no-question incorporated into the questionnaire. It was an enquiry on how the interlocutor(s) slept ('Did you sleep well?'). The three variants compared were a periphrastic formulation (item 5.11 : *Est-ce que vous avez bien dormi ?*), an intonation question (item 5.12 : *Vous avez bien dormi ?*), and a variant with simple clitic inversion (item 5.13 : *Avez-vous bien dormi ?*). As for the first dimension of difference, EsV and sV were both judged as colloquial or neutral, whereas Vs was mostly described as either written or a polite variant which is used in professional life or for strangers. Some people also made a difference between the first two variants, stating that the morphosyntactically unmarked variant would be even more colloquial (the first one being *courant*, the second one *familier*). As for the second dimension, the *EST-CE QUE* variant was several times described as more doubtful, reinforcing, or more clearly expecting an answer. Also, it was said that such a question would be typically posed to « quelqu'un qui aurait des problèmes de sommeil par exemple, ou qui aurait l'air fatigué »<sup>222</sup>. Consequently, a prototypical situation for this formulation seems to include a reason to doubt the question's proposition. In *Bienvenue chez nous*, this interrogative occurred during breakfast. It was used by the hostess to enquire about whether the guests had passed a good night at their guest house. However, it is true that some of the guests had voiced concerns because of the guest house's proximity to the motorway. Hence, some doubt or real interest might have been pragmatically intended. In contrast, the sV-equivalent was sometimes said to be used when a positive answer is expected. As for the last dimension, several participants stated that the most usual form would be the intonation question. In a few cases, it was also mentioned that the periphrastic structure would be less used nowadays.

In **item series 5.2**, there were only two variants. The first structure was with *Qu'est-ce que*, and the second one with *quoi-in-situ*. Both structures expressed 'what do/shall we do?' and could, at least theoretically, also be read as impersonal questions ('what does/shall one do?'). Again, many participants claimed a difference in the degree of formality of the two utterances: *Qu'est-ce qu'on fait ?* was described as being more standard and thus less colloquial than *On fait quoi ?*. However, there were also several participants who claimed that both structures would correspond to the same level (i.e. register) of language. Indeed, many participants indicated this time that they do not see any difference between the two interrogative constructions. Concerning differences in meaning, there was however one recurrent difference: the *quoi-in-situ* variant was perceived as more urgent, and was frequently associated with an accident or a problem (e.g. « Le deuxième nécessite une action

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<sup>222</sup> English translation: 'somebody who has sleeping problems, for example, or who looks tired'

immédiate à un problème présent. »<sup>223</sup>). The idea of urgency also matches the original situation: Candidates of the quiz show *Money Drop* had to decide how much money they would put on the answer alternatives and the countdown had already started. Accordingly, it was also described as being connected to a more immediate context (e.g. « *Qu'est-ce qu'on fait* correspond plutôt à un futur plus ou moins proche, *on fait quoi* fait plutôt référence à un contexte immédiat »<sup>224</sup>). Prototypically, the in-situ variant is thus pronounced in cases of urgency where an immediate action is required. As opposed to item 5.1, no differences in frequency were claimed.

This was different in **item series 5.3**, which was a set of 'How do you go/do?'-questions. The wh-fronted (*Comment vous allez ?*) as well as the wh-in-situ (*Vous allez comment ?*) variants were often claimed to be rarely to never used.<sup>225</sup> Indeed, the structure authentically used in *Bienvenue chez nous* was the inverted one (*Comment allez-vous ?*). However, there were also participants who assumed a classic register difference. Accordingly, while the inverted structure would be formal, the two declarative structures would be informal (cf. « la première est plus formelle, je dirais qu'elle implique le 'vous' de politesse, alors que les deux autres seraient plutôt le 'vous' pluriel. »<sup>226</sup>). While the QsV-variant was usually seen as an informal variant of QVs ('How do you do? / How are you?'), sVQ was sometimes interpreted literally, i.e. 'How do you go [there]?' (e.g. « *Vous allez comment ?* serait plus *Comment allez-vous vous rendre à cet endroit ?* »<sup>227</sup> and « *Question 3 inhabituelle. On pourrait répondre : "à pied, merci!"* »<sup>228</sup>). In this case, the *comment*-in-situ variant was thus interpreted as a question with different semantic content.<sup>229</sup> In several other cases, one or both of the declarative variants were claimed to have the same semantic meaning as the inverted structure, but diverge with regard to pragmatics. They would imply a reason for doubting the proposition (cf. item 5.11), such as knowledge of a previous disease. Also, the declarative structures were described as real questions as opposed to the polite but meaningless inverted phrase. Sometimes, there were even reported pragmatic differences between the two declarative constructions, such as a more insisting character of the wh-in-situ variant (e.g. « Le fait de mettre *comment* à la fin insiste sur l'importance accordée à

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<sup>223</sup> English translation: 'The second one requires an immediate action due to a present problem.'

<sup>224</sup> English translation: '*Qu'est-ce qu'on fait* corresponds to a more or less near future, *on fait quoi* rather makes reference to an immediate context.'

<sup>225</sup> Correspondingly, none of the two straight-word-order structures occurred in the corpora presented in the following chapters.

<sup>226</sup> English translation: 'The first one is more formal, I would say it implies that *vous* is the polite form while the two others would rather be *vous* as the [informal] plural form.'

<sup>227</sup> English translation: '*Vous allez comment ?* would rather be *Comment allez-vous vous rendre à cet endroit?*'

<sup>228</sup> English translation: 'Question 3 [is] rather unusual. One could answer : "by foot, thanks!"'

<sup>229</sup> In two cases, the reading of *aller* in its literal meaning (i.e. 'to go/walk') was also attributed to the wh-fronted structure.

la réponse qui va être donnée. »<sup>230</sup>) or an emphasis on the state instead of focussing the person (e.g. « 2e : plus amical, on insiste sur le fait qu'on s'intéresse à la personne. 3e : plus familier, on insiste peut-être plus sur l'état de la personne »<sup>231</sup>). Besides, the wh-ex-situ declarative was also reported to be rather used for addressing older people (in an informal way).

The same structural variants were presented in **item series 5.4** ('Where are you going?'). Here, participants' opinions were less divided although some inconsistencies did exist: Some people reported that the inverted structure *Où vas-tu ?* would be more correct as well as more common; others claimed that this structure would virtually not occur in spoken language.<sup>232</sup> Also, participants agreed on the formality of the inverted structure and the informality of the declarative structures, but they had differing opinions on whether the wh-in-situ (*Tu vas où ?*) or the wh-ex-situ (*Où tu vas ?*) variant was more informal. What could though be observed as a general tendency was that the QsV-structure was seen as more aggressive or authoritarian. For instance, this structure would be more likely to be used in a reproach. A certain reproachfulness could also be presumed in the authentic context: In *La Haine*, the grand-mother of one of the protagonists asks her grandson this question when he wants to leave the room to avoid a discussion about his behaviour (for further details, see screenplay, p.17). In contrast, the sVQ-structure was seen as more insisting on an answer, and be tendentially used for direct reactions. To illustrate, somebody could just have gotten up and be about to leave the room when the *où*-in-situ variant is uttered. Interestingly, several people also indicated that the wh-preverbal declarative would be more typical of old people whereas the wh-postverbal declarative would have become generally widespread. As a consequence, the in-situ variant was often thought to be more commonly used nowadays, which will be largely supported by chapters 5 and 6.

As in the previous cases, the variants of **item series 5.5** ('And what's this?') were frequently claimed to differ in their degree of formality. Accordingly, *Et ça, c'est quoi ?* was generally judged more colloquial than *Et ça, Qu'est-ce que c'est ?*. Also, the sVQ-structure was said to be more aggressive and insisting on an answer, as well as more typical of a child. A recurrent illustration was a context in which the hearer is desperately looking for an object. The speaker shows him the object, uttering this (rhetorical) question. In comparison, the periphrastic variant was sometimes associated with more curiosity or interest in details. The authentic situation does though not fully conform with these depictions. There, the object of interest is a camcorder, about which a group of *banlieue* adolescents discusses in *La*

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<sup>230</sup> English translation: 'Putting *comment* at the end insists on the importance attributed to the answer which shall be given.'

<sup>231</sup> English translation: '2<sup>nd</sup>: rather between friends, one insists on the fact that one is interested in the person. 3<sup>rd</sup>: rather colloquial, one insists maybe more on the state of the person.'

<sup>232</sup> Considering previous studies on spoken French, latter ones seem to be right.

*Haine*. Saïd, one of the protagonists, joins the group and enquires about the camera (for further details see screenplay, p.28).

At first sight, the results of this last task may seem disappointing since they did not show any clear systematicity. However, the participants' comments did widen our understanding of morphosyntactic variation in French interrogatives:

- (i) There is no general consensus on differences between variants.
- (ii) Register classifications are deeply rooted in native speaker conceptions.
- (iii) General frequency in use is essential for the choice of as well as the beliefs on a structure.

#### 4.4 Factorial results and discussion

As this questionnaire was conceived for mere exploration and based on authentically used material, some items or item series vary in more than one factor. For example, the situation as well as the question word and the personal pronoun may vary all at once. This should be kept in mind when doing statistical tests of independence between the morphosyntactically equivalent structures of two items. What can be proved in the first two tasks is **item-dependency**, but one cannot find out whether a certain variant was accepted/refused because of one specific linguistic or extralinguistic factor. To illustrate, comparing the cleft structures from the first and the third item series, item 1.11 (*C'est quoi qui va pas encore ?*) was much more accepted than item 1.34 (*C'est quoi que je t'ai dit à propos de ma sœur ?*). This difference can be shown to be highly significant ( $p = 4.996e-13$ ). However, one cannot know whether it should be attributed to the concrete formulation of the question (e.g. the subject vs. object function of the question phrase) or rather to the given context (e.g. the expectation of an answer). Comparing the third with the fourth item series, the third series' inverted structure was significantly less accepted ( $p = 1.299e-11$ ), and its *wh*-in-situ structure significantly more accepted ( $p = 1.416e-09$ ). Likewise, probability ratings of the two *Qu'est-ce que* structures from task 2 differed significantly from one another ( $p = 0.03837$ ).<sup>233</sup> Hence the concrete item clearly had an influence in the first two tasks, but it is impossible to say whether this influence was caused by the respective string or context, much less by which factor.

Correspondingly, most of the potential factors, which are discussed in the following subsections, cannot be tested statistically. Nonetheless, the collected data can give new insights into which factors seem plausible to have an influence on interrogative form.

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<sup>233</sup> In contrast, the probability ratings of the *quoi*-in-situ structures of task two did not differ significantly ( $p = 0.4044$ ).

#### 4.4.1 The impact of linguistic factors

According to the French Larousse Dictionary of Language Science, linguistic factors are the ones peculiar to the grammar of a language (Dubois 2007). In my opinion, such a definition is though too restrictive unless frequential correlations between certain linguistic features (e.g. a more frequent use of inversion with the auxiliary *avoir*, as it was found by Dewaele (2000)) are considered a grammatical issue. To avoid misunderstandings, I will thus define linguistic factors as any string-related variables (see also chapter 3).

One of the most obvious linguistic factors in interrogatives is certainly the **question word**. Previous research has shown that question words have an influence on the (probability of a) morphosyntactic variant (see e.g. Behnstedt 1973: 208f., Beyssade 2006, Coveney 2002, 2011). The two hypotheses that can be checked by this study's data concern grammatical restrictions of *que/quoi* and *pourquoi*. As we have seen in 4.3, *que/quoi* is confirmed to be excluded from occurring as a QsV-structure (see item 1.1, p.93). As for *pourquoi*, a dislike for wh-in-situ could also be confirmed (see items 1.4 and 3.3, pp.94, 98, 121) although acceptance rates were less straightforward.

The second linguistic factor which could be revealed as having an influence was the **sociostylistic marking of the morpho-lexical content of the string**. As was shown above (see p.98), a choice of vulgar words as well as *ne*-omission are improbable for structures with clitic inversion. While the avoidance of vulgar words is frequent but not categorical,<sup>234</sup> *ne*-retention even seems to be a strict condition, but (periphrastic and) declarative structures do not seem to be strongly correlated with *ne*-omission and colloquial lexis. This may be an indicator for the strong high marking of clitic inversion as opposed to a rather weak low marking of declarative structures.

Following this observation, one could expect the use of the polite form, i.e. the **personal pronoun** *vous* ('you'), to be a predictor for the use of clitic inversion. This is, however, not the case: In task 3 (see pp.97-99), Vs-alternatives were equally indicated with the informal *tu* (e.g. *Depuis quand parles-tu aux journalistes ?*). The use of the polite 'you'-variant seems thus to be on an influential level different from the use of *ne* or non-vulgar lexis. In contrast, it was mentioned that *Comment-allez vous ?* (item 5.3) would imply the *vous de politesse* (see p.102). Hence, the distance or proximity suggested by the personal pronoun will not be a strict condition for the choice of a certain morphosyntactic variant, but there may still be some correlation between the two elements.

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<sup>234</sup> The acceptance of *journaloux* may be an exception because the word seems to be of very low frequency and was unknown to some participants (I was asked several times whether this was a mistake). What is more, a choice of vulgar words may very well be combined with clitic inversion for special stylistic effects in unauthentic language use (e.g. for creating a comic effect). Also, task 3 explicitly required the use of the same words, so a combination of inversion with a verb form like *foutez* may be due to the task instruction.

The last linguistic factor which can be examined by means of this questionnaire is Blanche-Benveniste 1997: 143) claim that *Qu'est-ce que c'est ?* and *c'est quoi ?* would show a difference in **referentiality**. While the periphrastic variant would rather appear with the indefinite article and function as a request for a general definition or clarification, the *quoi*-in-situ variant would rather appear with the definite article and refer to something just mentioned. If this was true, item series 5.5 (*Et ça, c'est quoi ?* and *Et ça, Qu'est-ce que c'est ?*, see p.103) should somehow reflect it. Indeed, there may be seen such a difference in some of the context descriptions: The *quoi*-in-situ structure was associated with the speaker showing the hearer a lost object, and the periphrastic variant was recurrently described as showing the speaker's interest in details. On the other hand, *ça* is deictic in itself, so sVQ would be predicted as the more likely form. Although none of the participants claimed the QESV-variant to be unusual,<sup>235</sup> it should be stressed that the original form was indeed *c'est quoi*. To show that such a claim is not irrefutable, the most detailed explanation for this item series is given hereafter in full length:

« Et ça, c'est quoi ? » J'entends dans la question comme de la méfiance ou même un reproche.. Par exemple, je découvre dans un coin une substance illicite ou quelque chose que l'on m'a caché, et je dis, « Et ça, c'est quoi ? ». Je suis même tentée de préciser « Et ça alors, c'est quoi ? » ; Dans « Et ça, Qu'est-ce que c'est ? » j'entends de l'admiration, de l'étonnement. Par exemple, je visite un observatoire, je vais de découverte en découverte, d'émerveillement en émerveillement... Ou encore je suis dans un musée, je cherche les détails d'un tableau et approfondis de plus en plus...Et plus je vais dans les détails, plus je dis « et ça, Qu'est-ce que c'est ? ». ; Mais finalement, en y réfléchissant, dans le même contexte, je pourrais dire aussi, « Et ça, c'est quoi ? ». ; Donc, tout compte fait, tout dépend du contexte tant objectif que subjectif!<sup>236</sup>

To sum up, the question word and the sociostylistic marking of the string could be shown to have a clear impact on the choice of a morphosyntactic variant while the influence of the personal pronoun and the referentiality in *Qu'est-ce que c'est / c'est quoi* questions seems to be less straightforward but probably existing. These factors will be more closely examined in the following two chapters.

#### 4.4.2 The impact of extralinguistic factors

Extralinguistic factors are those of the subject (i.e. person) and the situation (i.e the context.) (Dubois 2007). Accordingly, correlations of interrogative forms with biological and social characteristics of the

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<sup>235</sup> Two participants did, however, say that the shorter version was the more common one.

<sup>236</sup> English translation: '« Et ça, c'est quoi ? » I perceive in this question something like suspicion or even a reproach. For example, I discover in a corner an illicit substance or something which has been hidden from me, and I say: « Et ça, c'est quoi ? ». I am even tempted to add *alors* : « Et ça alors, c'est quoi ? » ; in « Et ça, qu'est-ce que c'est ? » I hear admiration and amazement. For example, I visit an observatory, I keep discovering new things and one wonder follows the next... Or else, I am at a museum, I am looking for details in a painting and go more and more into its depth... And the more I go into its details, the more I say « et ça, qu'est-ce que c'est ? ». But in the end, if I think about it, in the same context, I could also say « Et ça, c'est quoi ? ». ; so after all, everything depends on the objective as well as subjective context!'



speaker (or hearer) as well as the specific interactional frame or pragmatic meaning components are examined in this subsection.

### Subject-dependent factors

Some of the differences could possibly be systemized by subject-dependent extralinguistic factors, such as sex<sup>237</sup> or age. One possibility would thus be that men and women behaved differently. For example, as Coveney 2002: 248) observed in his corpus, male speakers tended to use more non-standard (i.e. QsV) structures than female speakers (who tended to use more QEsV). In general, it has been found that in stable situations women tend to use less non-standard forms than men do, but that they are usually the innovators in linguistic change (Labov 1990; see also Trudgill 2000 and Peersman et al. 2016). Hence, it is not only possible that women and men differ in their use of interrogative forms, but the **sex** group using more non-standard forms may even be indicative of whether this variational phenomenon is more likely to be static or evolving. To illustrate, if women used more intonation and wh-in-situ questions than men did, there would be reason to presume an ongoing change toward declarative forms. Of course, a questionnaire cannot provide usage data and it is unclear whether differences in use are directly linked to differences in acceptance rates. All the same, it seems sensible to check for correlations.

When comparing the acceptance rates from task 1, sex does not seem to have an influence. There is **no straightforward tendency** for one of the groups. For example, in item 1.1, all four variants were slightly more accepted by women, suggesting that women might be more generous in acceptance. However, in items 1.3 and 1.4, they scored slightly lower for three of the four variants. Moreover, none of the acceptance rates differs greatly; the biggest difference amounts to a 0.2 higher acceptance rate of item 1.3.3 (*Que t'ai-je dit à propopos de ma sœur ?*) for males. As a chi-squared test of independence shows, even this difference is not unlikely to be due to mere chance ( $p = 0.1356$ ). The other tasks did not suggest any particular behaviour according to participants' sex either. If there are differences with regard to sex, this questionnaire did thus not detect them.

Another possibility would be that some differences were age-related. For instance, wh-in-situ structures could be more readily accepted by the younger generation. However, if such **age-related differences** are detectable, they could be indicators for *age-grading* as well as for a *generational change*, i.e. variability might be linked to life-stage changes (and thus variation within generations) as well as a lasting diachronic change (and thus variation between generations) ((Wagner 2012).

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<sup>237</sup> I am aware of the fact that the *sex* factor has sometimes been replaced or completed by *gender* in previous sociolinguistic works (e.g. Peersman et al. (2016)). Since my questionnaire explicitly captures the participants' biological binary classification (*De quel sexe êtes-vous ?*), I keep to the *sex* factor.

**Age-grading** is certainly conceivable because middle-aged adults have been shown to be more conservative in their language use than adolescents or retired people (see Wagner 2012: 375f.). This has been attributed to societal pressure to use standard language, which is greatest during work life.<sup>238</sup> Accordingly, non-prestigious forms may be temporarily avoided, and resurface in the third age when social pressure decreases again. Based on these observations, one may expect to find differences in the use of interrogatives. However, it will be more contentious whether acceptance ratings and notions of when to use certain interrogatives will be subdued to age-graded variation.

Likewise, a **generational change** is plausible. As (Coveney 2011) remarks, up to the end of the 19th century, hardly any proof of SVQ-interrogatives can be found. As a consequence, wh-in-situ structures can be assumed to be a recent innovation, and its spreading may still be an ongoing process. This is supported by studies like (Quillard 2000), which showed that younger people tend to use this structure more often than older ones. Clitic inversion, in contrast, has been claimed to be on the decline (Coveney 2011) or even virtually inexistent in present-day informal spoken language (Koch & Oesterreicher 2011). If it used to be more frequently employed some years ago, there is every reason that the older generation will have experienced more cases of its authentic use. Hence, acceptance rates might reflect such differences in people's experience. Besides, several comments include remarks on the age of a typical speaker or hearer of the given interrogative variant: In task 5, some people claimed that *est-ce que* structures and clitic inversion would be used with the older generation to show one's respect. Also, wh-fronted declaratives were claimed to be typical for the oldest generation (3 cases, e.g. « La 2m est plus rare... les personnes plus âgées le disent, ma mère. » for item 5.4).

To find out whether the answers did indeed differ across ages, participants had to be classified into **age groups**.<sup>239</sup> Ideally, subsamples should be equal in number, meaningful with regard to life stages, and reveal rating differences. Since previous studies attributed age grading to social pressure experienced mainly during one's working life, working age could be taken as the 'middle-aged' group. For determining the cut-off age for the oldest group, the average age of retirement was therefore taken. In 2014, the "average effective exit age from the labour market" in France was 60.8 for men and 60.9 for women (European Commission 2015).<sup>240</sup> Strictly speaking, the cut-off age proposed by the mean age of retirement was rather 61 than 60, but for the sake of round numbers the lower limit was chosen. At any rate, according to those numbers a person aged 60 and over was quite likely to be

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<sup>238</sup> Such pressure depends certainly on the linguistic community, so it cannot be generalised per se. Nonetheless, this observation seems to be worth checking.

<sup>239</sup> There is no doubt that more meaningful information would be obtained if one collected data from distant age ranges (e.g. 15-19, 40-44, 70-74). However, such a survey would require a lot more effort in recruitment, and would certainly go beyond the scope of a mere pilot study.

<sup>240</sup> In Germany, the average was significantly higher (65.1 and 64.2). Since most participants lived in France, I decided to base my classification on the average of France.

retired and thus to belong to the traditional third-age group. As the average “effective entry age” in France was though only 21.4 years in 2013 (Ministère des finances et des comptes publics & Ministère de l'économie, de l'industrie et du numérique 2015), and only three of the participants were younger than twenty-one years, the entry age was not a good option for dividing ‘young’ from ‘middle-aged’ people. Also, the ‘middle-aged’ group would have extended over forty years, which may be too broad a category for detecting age grading. Instead, I considered two different categorisations: one traditional splitting into three groups with the age of thirty as onset for the ‘middle-aged’ group, and one four-group splitting with a young group (aged under 25 years), a younger middle-aged group (aged between 25 and 39), an older middle-aged group (aged between 40 and 59), and an old group (aged 60 and over). Both divisions fulfilled the chi-squared test condition of providing a sample of at least 20 participants<sup>241</sup>, and both groupings led to observable rating differences. In the following, I will report which differences could be shown to be statistically unlikely to be due to chance (i.e.  $p < 0.05$  in Pearson’s chi-squared test of independence).

The most interesting differences were observed in **QVs and sVQ-structures**. The oldest group showed more generous acceptance rates for all presented inverted structures (see figures 11 to 14)<sup>242</sup>, while they were tendentially more reluctant in the case of the two non-clefted wh-in-situ forms with *où* and *quoi* (see figures 15 and 16). In other words, inversion was favoured and wh-in-situ was disfavoured by participants of an advanced age.

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<sup>241</sup> In the three-group division, there were 38 young participants, 35 middle-aged participants, and 29 old participants. In the four-group division, there were 22 young participants, 27 young middle-aged participants, 24 middle-aged participants, and 29 old participants.

<sup>242</sup> NB that this statement also holds for *Où sont tes fruits ?*, but that this structure contains stylistic inversion (QVS), which is ranked sociostylistically lower than clitic inversion. Also, rates were not significantly different across ages.

Figure 11: Acceptance rate of item 1.22  
'Où sont tes fruits ?'

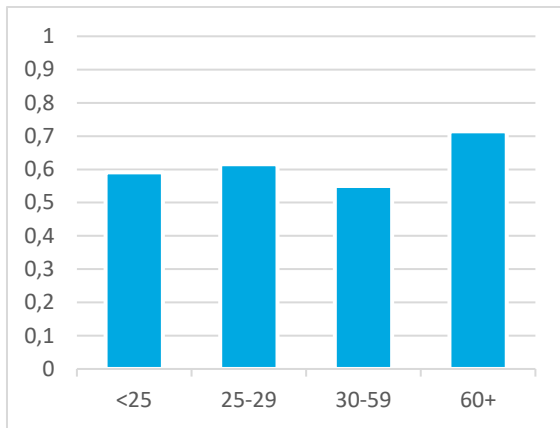


Figure 12: Acceptance rate of item 1.23  
'Où sont-ils, tes fruits ?'

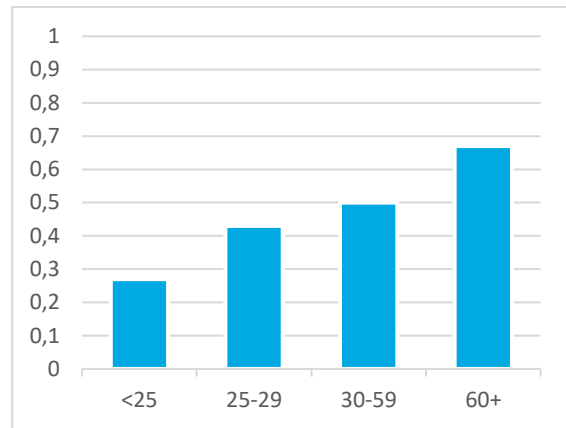


Figure 13: Acceptance rate of item 1.33  
'Que t'ai-je dit à propos de ma sœur ?'

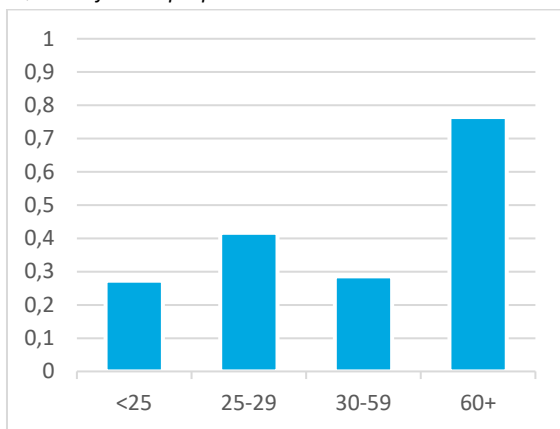


Figure 14: Acceptance rate of item 1.41  
'Pourquoi l'a-t-il traînée jusqu'aux poubelles ?'

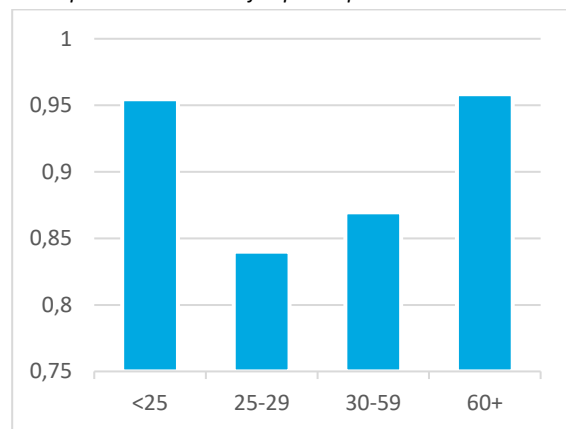


Figure 15: Acceptance rate of item 1.21<sup>243</sup>  
'Ils sont où, tes fruits ?'

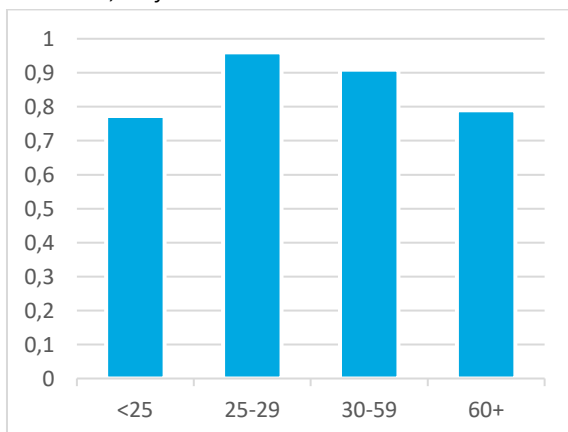
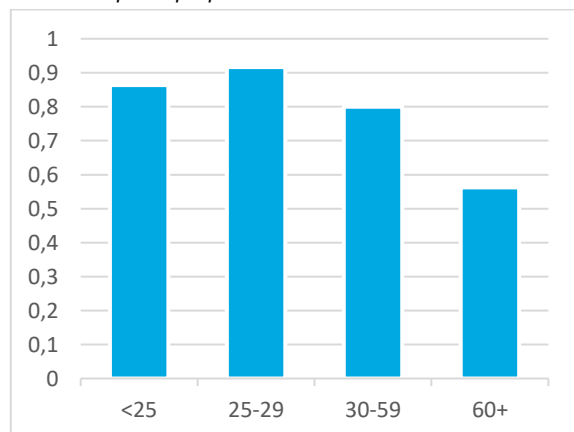


Figure 16: Acceptance rate of item 1.32  
'Je t'ai dit quoi à propos de ma sœur ?'



As for the **favouring of inversion**, the clearest difference was observed in the second and third item series. In the above as hybrid described item 1.23 (*Où sont-ils, tes fruits ?*), there was a linear positive

<sup>243</sup> The distributions of figures 14 and 15 are rather surprising and hard to interpret because there is neither a linear or abrupt change (=>generational change) nor a u-shaped acceptance distribution of a

sociostylistically low variant (=>age-grading). Both shapes could be interpreted as age-grading if they were vice versa.

correlation with age groups. In the three-group splitting, two thirds of the old people accepted this variant, while only slightly more than half of the middle-aged, and even less than a third of the young people did so. This difference is unlikely to be due to chance ( $p = 0.0343$ ). For the four-group splitting, the same tendency can be observed (see figure 12 above), but the chi-squared test does not reveal it as significant ( $p = 0.12$ ). For item 1.41 (*Pourquoi l'a-t-il traînée jusqu'aux poubelles ?*), it is even unclear whether there is any age-related tendency since all age groups vastly accept this item (3 groups:  $p = 0.5777$ , 4 groups:  $p = 0.397$ ). Since item 1.41 is the only self-directed as well as the only potentially more formal variant, this could be due to pragmatics as well as register choice. At any rate, larger samples would be needed if one wanted to test the statistical significance of the age factor in these items' acceptance rates. In the third item series, even the current sample suffices to show that ratings across age groups differ significantly: Older people were significantly more likely to accept item 1.33 (*Que t'ai-je dit à propos de ma sœur ?*, 3 groups:  $p = 0.004792$ , 4 groups:  $p = 0.03875$ , see figure 13). Overall, these results suggest that older speakers of French tend to accept inverted structures more easily than younger ones. It remains, however, open under which conditions this preference surfaces.

As for the **disfavouring of wh-in-situ** variants, there was only one item which showed significant age-related differences: Older participants were more likely to refuse item 1.32 (*Je t'ai dit quoi à propos de ma sœur ?*, see figure 16) than younger ones (3 groups:  $p = 0.02404$ , 4 groups:  $p = 0.03875$ ). For this item, a disfavouring of the wh-in-situ variant is thus statistically related to the oldest group. For item 1.21 (*Ils sont où, tes fruits ?*), this is though not the case (3 groups:  $p = 0.2495$ , 4 groups:  $p = 0.188$ ). Here, differences are much smaller and the youngest group had approximately the same acceptance rate as the oldest (see figure 15). What is more, the dispreference of wh-in-situ variants does not extend to items 1.11 (*C'est quoi qui va pas encore ?*), 1.34 (*C'est quoi que je t'ai dit à propos de ma sœur ?*), and 1.44 (*Il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles pourquoi ?*). These structures are, however, special cases of wh-in-situ.

Items 1.11 and 1.34 are cleft structures, which seem to be pragmatically as well as sociostylistically distinct from usual wh-in-situ constructions. Item 1.11, was less often accepted by the youngest group. Their acceptance rate amounted to 55% in a three-group splitting, and to 57% in a four-group splitting, while the other groups accepted this variant in between 72% and 82% of the cases. However, only the chi-squared test of the three-group splitting reached significance ( $p = 0.04974$ ; for 4 groups:  $p = 0.2078$ ). Hence, bigger samples would be necessary to see whether this apparent tendency is really a statistically significant age-related difference in acceptance rates. In the case of item 1.34, participants of all age groups rated the variant as rather unacceptable in over 80%, so there was not even any visible tendency. Item 1.44 is a *pourquoi*-question, and *pourquoi*-questions have been claimed to be less acceptable with the question word in-situ (cf. Coveney 2002; Mathieu 2004; Druetta

2009). While item 1.44 was accepted by only a third of the young and middle-aged participants, it was accepted by every other old participant.<sup>244</sup> Although this tendency does not prove to be statistically significant (3 groups:  $p = 0.07852$ , 4 groups :  $p = 0.2314$ ), it is remarkable that the less usual in-situ structures (i.e. the cleft structure from 1.11 and 1.34, as well as the *pourquoi*-in-situ structure from 1.44) appeared to be if anything then promoted by an older age, whereas more common in-situ structures (i.e. 1.21 and 1.32) were clearly disfavoured.

In conclusion, while there could not be detected a negative correlation of the oldest age group with special *wh*-in-situ structures (i.e. cleft structure and *pourquoi*-in-situ), there seems to be evidence for a negative correlation of an older age with the acceptance rates of common *wh*-in-situ structures and a positive correlation with the acceptance rates of clitic inversion. Since clitic inversion is a formal and *wh*-in-situ an informal variant (cf. Coveney 2011), these tendencies cannot be linked to age grading but can be seen as an indicator of a generational change. In other words, one can interpret the observed age-related differences as a **generational change** in acceptance, moving **from inversion to *wh*-in-situ**. These results corroborate Coveney 2011) and Koch & Oesterreicher 2011), who suggested that clitic inversion was losing and *wh*-in-situ gaining ground. However, there was also one item that might show typical age grading, namely item 1.42 (*Pourquoi est-ce qu'il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles ?*). Here, middle-aged people accepted this variant more often than the young and old groups: In a three-group splitting, probability ratings amounted to 71% (aged < 30), 84% (aged 30-59), and 43% (aged 60+); in a four-group splitting, they were 59% (aged < 25), 92% (aged 25-39), 80% (aged 40-59), 43% (aged 60+). Chi-squared tests show the significance of these differences for both groupings (3 groups:  $p = 0.01906$ , 4 groups:  $p = 0.005$ ).

In contrast, there could not be found any significant age-related tendency in the probability ratings of task 2. Neither the comparison of the mean (see table 16) or median (see table 17) nor the counting of preference type combinations (see table 18) suggested any age-dependency.

Table 16: mean of probability ratings

	Item 2.11	Item 2.12	Item 2.21	Item 2.22
young	4,5	3,7	3,6	3,5
middle- young	4,2	3,6	4,2	4,0
middle-old	4,1	3,5	3,7	3,7
old	4,4	3,7	3,8	4,2

middle- young	5	4	4	4
middle-old	4	4	4	4
old	5	4	4	4,5

Table 17: median of probability ratings

	Item 2.11	Item 2.12	Item 2.21	Item 2.22
young	4,5	4	4	3,5

<sup>244</sup> In the four-group splitting, *Il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles pourquoi ?* was accepted by 27% of the ones aged under 25, 21% of the ones aged between 25 and 39; 38% of the ones aged between 40 and 59; and 50% of the ones aged 60 and over.

Table 18: Counts of preference types across age groups<sup>245</sup>

1st series 2nd series	lower lower	higher higher	same same	lower same	higher same	same lower	same higher	lower higher	higher lower
young	1	5	2	1	3	4	3	0	3
middle-young	1	3	9	0	5	2	1	1	5
middle-old	2	4	4	0	4	0	3	1	6
old	1	7	7	0	2	0	3	2	4

The observed disfavouring of wh-in-situ forms by the old age group is to some extent reflected in the mean (in-situ 3.7/3.8 vs. *est-ce que* 4.4/4.2) and median (in-situ 4 vs. *est-ce que* 5) as well as a slight prevalence of a general preference for the sociostylistically higher variant in both cases (8 out of 27). However, almost all other preference types exist and a chi-squared test shows that the differences are not unlikely to be due to chance ( $p = 0.4195$ ).

Similarly, the results of task 3 vaguely confirm a third-generation disfavouring of the wh-in-situ forms because there were less mentions of such variants for the oldest group: There was only one person over 60 indicating for all but the item with *pourquoi* an in-situ variant. Apart from those wh-in-situ indications, there were only two mentions of *Il s'est passé quoi (ici) ?*<sup>246</sup>. As for clitic inversion, on the other hand, participants of all ages indicated corresponding variants. This may, however, be due to the artificial character of the task, which reminds of a school task and may thus evoke more norm-oriented forms.

In tasks 4 and 5, where participants had to indicate prototypical contexts for the question forms, no important age-related differences were visible. What might though be interesting is that the youngest group never speaks of 'more or less correct' (as some old participant do, e.g. for item series 5.3 "correct; familier; familier" / "de préférence, la plus correcte : 'comment allez-vous ?'" / "plus ou moins

<sup>245</sup> The preference type combinations result from rating comparisons. For instance, if a participant rated the wh-in-situ structure as more probable in both item series, the preference type attributed is "lower-lower". If a participant rated the wh-in-situ variant as less likely than the periphrastic variant in the first item series and as equally likely in the second one, the preference type attributed is "higher-same".

<sup>246</sup> According to Myers (2007: 181), this variant of 'What happened?' does not even exist. In my opinion, it is very well a possible option, but there are only few situations in which it is adequate because the verbal phrase is presented as given (cf. Hamlaoui 2010). In the described situation, it may be assumed that the sight of ashes presupposes that something has happened. Hence, such a structure would theoretically be available. Nonetheless, the majority of the participants did not indicate it. One reason for this may be the general scarcity of this precise formulation. That general frequency does play a role shows also the fact that two participants mentioned *C'est quoi ce bazar ?* (which was not conform with the instruction to keep to the same lexical content). As I will show in chapter 5, *c'est quoi* is a highly frequent structure.

grammaticalement correct”), but exclusively of the degree of formality (e.g. “1) langage + soutenu. Plus poli. 2) langage plus direct, courant. 3) langage courant.”). This could be an indicator that linguistic nurture has changed: While the oldest generation still was confronted with the concept of ‘correctness’, the youngest one may not (or to a less extent) have been exposed to such an intransigent dogma.

To conclude this subsection, it was shown that sex did not seem to have an influence, but age did. Although there was no categorical systematicity, a generational change in the preference of morphosyntactic variants could be observed: Clitic inversion seems to be favoured, and *wh*-in-situ disfavoured by an older age. Nonetheless, one should add that this tendency was not always very strong, much less statistically significant. In future research, it would be interesting to also include participants’ level of education and regional affiliation. However, a study of these factors would not have been possible by simply passing around a questionnaire in one own’s environment and will hence require a different kind of recruitment. Also, more distant age groups may be preferable for a more elaborated analysis of the age factor (see footnote 239).

#### Situation-dependent factors

Theoretically, any situational aspect could trigger a different linguistic behaviour. To illustrate, the fact that questions are posed in a different way at home than on TV could be related to a divergence in the degree of formality (e.g. relaxed chatting vs. information transmission under surveillance) as well as to differences in pragmatic content (i.e. a different distribution of discourse functions, e.g. different proportions of ‘requests for confirmation’, and meaning components, such as higher/lower ‘answerability’). To complicate matters, sociostylistic and pragmatic appropriateness is sometimes even intertwined: For example, a question which is urging the hearer to an answer may be inappropriate when one wants to keep to politeness codes. Strictly speaking, the study on situation-dependent factors can thus not be divided up into the two branches of linguistics known as *pragmatics* and *sociolinguistics*, but it is always a combination of both of them. As a consequence, I will not structure this subsection by separating the potential differences in the situations’ degree of formality from the potential differences in their pragmatic content, but rather go through the different tasks and items and check which account is best at result prediction/explanation. Before doing so, I will quickly revise the hypotheses from previous work which shall be tested here (for a more detailed depiction, see chapter 3).

In variationist approaches, such as the one of Coveney (2002; Coveney 2011), the use of different morphosyntactic structures is systematised by means of their sociostylistic marking. To illustrate, the respective sociostylistic levels of the structures relevant for the questionnaire are given and exemplified in table 19.



Table 19: Sociostylistic marking of French interrogatives in oral speech

	Yes/no interrogatives	Wh-interrogatives
<b>Formal</b>	(S)Vs: <i>Avez-vous bien dormi ?</i>	Q(S)Vs: <i>Où vas-tu ?</i>
<b>Neutral</b>	E{s/S}V: <i>Est-ce que vous avez bien dormi ?</i>	QE{s/S}V : <i>Qu'est-ce qu'on a ?</i> QVS : <i>Où sont tes fruits ?</i>
<b>Colloquial and non-stigmatised</b>	{s/S}V: <i>Vous avez bien dormi ?</i>	sVQ <sup>247</sup> : <i>Tu vas où ?</i>
<b>Colloquial and slightly stigmatised</b>	-	Q{s/S}V: <i>Où tu vas ?</i> cQk{s/S}V: <i>C'est quoi qui va pas encore ?</i>
<b>Colloquial and stigmatised</b>	-	Qck{s/S}V : <i>Qui c'est qui sait conduire ?</i>

Legend : s = clitic subject, S = non-clitic subject, V = (conjugated) verb, E = question particle (*EST-CE QUE*), Q = question word, k = complementizer or right marker of cleft (*que/qu'/qui*), c = left marker of cleft (*c'est*).

In contrast, generative approaches rather map morphosyntactic forms to distinctive meanings. Accordingly, Boucher (2010) claims that the four basic wh-interrogative forms can be mapped to the following pragmatic functions:

Table 20: Overview on Boucher's (2010: 101) mapping of syntax to pragmatics

<b>sVQ</b>	"appropriate in a strongly presupposed context, which often takes the form of a highly constrained social situation (ordering, shopping, interrogation, etc.), frequently used as requests for clarification, as echo or as phatic questions; cannot be used rhetorically."
<b>Q{s/S}V</b>	"generally correspond[s] to a request for explanation; may also express surprise, disapproval or incredulity, possibly corresponding to a colloquial version of 'What the hell/que diable' questions; may also be used as requests for information or as rhetorical questions."
<b>Q(S)Vs</b>	"true requests for information but with a strong connotation of social distance; can be used to change topics."
<b>QE{s/S}V</b>	"unrestricted 'open' conversational questions" which optionally may signal a change of topic or call into question the validity of a presupposition linked to the question."

Following these descriptions, there are thus at least three situational components which play a role in the choice of a morphosyntactic structure: discourse-linkedness/restriction, lack of understanding/belief, and social distance.

<sup>247</sup> There is a clear tendency to use this structure with clitic subjects (see chapters 5 and 6).

There have, however, also been attempts to systematise morphosyntactic variation in interrogatives by single situational components. For the interpretation of this questionnaire, also Myers' notion of 'answerability' for wh-questions and Mosegaard Hansen's notion of 'event-types' for yes/no-interrogatives shall be taken into account. Myers' (2007) hypothesis is that sVQ-structures are connected to high answerability while QsV-structures rather imply low answerability<sup>248</sup>. In some cases, she even considers answerability to be "tied to the identity of the question expression itself" (p.128), such that *pourquoi* and *comment* would be inherently less answerable than *où* and *quand*, and thus inherently more likely to occur ex-situ. Hansen's (2001: 474) prediction for yes/no-interrogatives is that "questions featuring SV will tend to be questions about B-events, while questions using V-Cl and ESV will tend to be about other types of events." In other words, answers to intonation questions are supposedly known to the hearer and unknown to the speaker while the distribution of knowledge is expected to be different for periphrastic and inverted interrogatives.

As we will see, sociostylistic marking as well as pragmatic meaning both have a certain potential to explain some of the variation observed, but none of the accounts is capable of fully explaining the results of this questionnaire.

### Task 1

In **item series 1.1**, acceptance rates for the two grammatically possible structures differed significantly from one another ( $p = 0.00102$ ). While *Qu'est-ce qui va pas encore?* was accepted in more than 9 out of 10 cases, *C'est quoi qui va pas encore ?* was so only in less than three out of four cases.

This difference could be explained by a variationist as well as a generative (and thus pragmatic, cf. Boucher 2010) account. Since cleft structures are considered as more marked than structures with  $Q=\{s/S\}$  (see Coveney 2002, 2011 and table 19), it seems to be natural that more people refuse this construction. Interestingly, virtually all people who accepted the cleft structure<sup>249</sup> also accepted *Qu'est-ce qui* while the opposite was not the case. As far as I am concerned, this might suggest that there is no pragmatic reason favouring the periphrastic structure over the cleft. If the difference between the structures was pragmatic in nature, an "either or" distinction would be much more likely (cf. Boucher's 2010 distinctive four pragmatic functions). The answers in this item series corroborate thus rather a sociolinguistic account by showing a preference for the sociostylistically less marked

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<sup>248</sup> Myers (2007) defines *answerability* as follows: "Essentially, answerability characterizes the speaker's view on the possibility, ease and conciseness of the reply to a particular question. I claim that more answerable questions have a tendency to use the in situ form. The notion of answerability helps explain both the trends for certain question expressions to consistently appear either in Q proV or proV Q (inherent answerability) and contextual answerability where the environment determines placement of the question expression."

<sup>249</sup> Only the old lady who accepted both ungrammatical structures did so, and one other person did not indicate anything for the *qu'est-ce qui* variant.

form. Nevertheless, it should be added that there might be a pragmatic difference which is underspecified by the given context.

In **item series 1.2**, all four variants were accepted to a considerable proportion. The two structures with the highest acceptance rates were the declarative structures (87% for *Ils sont où, tes fruits?* and 69% for *Où ils sont, tes fruits?*). The stylistic inversion variant (*Où sont tes fruits?*) obtained a slightly lower acceptance rate (62%) while the equivalent structure with clitic inversion (*Où sont-ils, tes fruits?*) was judged inadequate by more than half of the participants (accepted only by 45%).

Purely pragmatic accounts will have to rely on different context interpretations to explain why this situation allows the use of several variants. For example, the speaker could ask a neutral information-seeking question as well as a rather annoyed information-seeking question. However, there would have to be (at least) four different readings of the given situation, which I judge to be rather unlikely. At least Myers' (2007) notion of answerability is only partially helpful: Although the inherent high answerability of *où* predicts correctly that wh-in-situ structures are the most likely choice, 'answerability' cannot predict to what extent wh-ex-situ structures are expected. Similarly, Boucher's (2010) pragmatic functions may correctly predict the preference of a wh-in-situ structure because the context is highly restricted and strongly presupposed, but they cannot account for the acceptance rates of the other structures.

For a variationist approach, these results are, in comparison, very suitable. On the one hand, declarative structures are traditionally associated with informal spoken language, so these results confirm traditional linguistic descriptions (cf. table 19). On the other hand, it is interesting that the wh-in-situ variant is clearly favoured. This can be seen as an indicator that wh-ex-situ declarative structures are indeed more informal or stigmatised than wh-in-situ ones (see Coveney 2002: 98 and 2011: 124, Myers 2007: 83). In contrast, the equivalent inverted structure *Où sont-ils, tes fruits?* was judged inadequate by more than half of the participants (accepted only by 37 of 82, i.e. 45%). This could be taken as evidence for the hypothesis that inversion belongs to a contextually unexpected high register. However, such an inconclusive acceptance rate could also be attributed to the hybrid character of the construction: As the structure contains right dislocation (which is an element of spoken or informal French, see e.g. Cat 2009)<sup>250</sup> as well as clitic inversion (which is associated with written or formal French, see e.g. Grevisse & Goosse 2016: 538 or Koch & Oesterreicher 2011: 175), the linguistic form is contradictory in itself. Hence, the structure might be less acceptable regardless of the context. This could also explain why the stylistic inversion variant *Où sont tes fruits?* obtained a much higher acceptance rate of 62% (55 of 89). Here, the structure is not hybrid, and could thus be perceived as

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<sup>250</sup> For further information on right dislocation in French, see Blanche-Benveniste & Martin (2010): 167-171.

being more natural. However, stylistic inversion may also be expected to be favoured since it is said to be 'neutral' and thus sociostylistically only slightly higher than the declarative forms.

In **item series 1.3**, acceptance rates were ranked as follows: *Qu'est-ce que je t'ai dit à propos de ma sœur?* (94%) > *Je t'ai dit quoi à propos de ma sœur?* (80%) > *Que t'ai-je dit à propos de ma sœur?* (42%) > *C'est quoi que je t'ai dit à propos de ma sœur ?* (15%).

The fact that the periphrastic variant was the authentically chosen variant and that it also got the highest acceptance rate cannot be explained merely by sociostylistic marking. Since the situation is clearly informal, a colloquial structure (i.e. sVQ) would be at least equally expectable as a neutral (i.e. QEsV) one.<sup>251</sup> Furthermore, it would remain unclear why the only slightly stigmatised cQksV-structure should be mostly rejected.

In comparison, the two observances can be explained pragmatically by the function of a reprimand, which is specified by the context. This function may collide with the emphasis on what exactly has been said, which is usually expressed by clefting. As the reproach is simply that there has already been said something about that topic, an emphasis on the direct object seems pragmatically inadequate. Comparing the acceptance rates of the cleft and the inverted structure, it is striking that an inadequately high register had much less impact than pragmatic suitability. On the other hand, also the wh-in-situ structure should be pragmatically disfavoured (cf. (Myers 2007) notion of 'answerability' as well as Boucher 2010 claim), but it was still much more often accepted than the inverted structure, which should be unexpected because of its connotation of social distance.<sup>252</sup> Hence, it is difficult to say whether sociostylistic marking or pragmatic meaning is more important for the acceptance of the respective forms, but they most certainly make both their contribution in explaining acceptance rates.

The situation of **item series 1.4** is the only one which could be interpreted as a more formal one, so sociostylistically higher forms could be expected to be favoured because of the context. However, as we have already seen in the previous item series, the acceptance of a certain question form depends not only on the context's degree of formality but also on the pre-set discourse function. Accordingly, the interrogative form also had to correspond to the specific pragmatic type of a self-directed question. Hence, any interpretation of the observance that the inverted structure was even favoured over the authentically used periphrastic variant (89% vs. 71%) will be no more than speculation. Nonetheless I would like to offer my thoughts. Overall, there are three possible explanations: First, the sociostylistically higher variant could be considered more appropriate for a criminologist. Second, the self-directedness of the question could be even better (i.e. more prototypically) expressed by an

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<sup>251</sup> If *qu'est-ce que* is counted as QsV, the preference of QEsV may be explained by its non-stigmatisation.

<sup>252</sup> The only possibility would be that the connotation of social distance may be purposely used to mark one's disapproval.

inverted structure than by an *est-ce que* one. Third, linguistic reasons like utterance length, euphony or semantic type (see chapter 5 and 6 for the latter) could favour the shorter utterance. As far as I am concerned, all three explanations are plausible, and the likeliest would be a combination of all of them. Similarly, a combination of different accounts may be helpful to explain why *Pourquoi il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles?* was accepted by 58%. One possibility would be that the interrogative's function as a self-directed question makes this structure less likely than the two preferred ones. When pointing out questions for the sake of asserting one's interest in their answer, there actually seems to be a preference for structures which are morphosyntactically marked as interrogatives (additionally to the wh-word) (see chapter 5; cf. the notion of 'questionness' (Myers 2007)). However, also Q{s/S}V-structures have been suggested to be typical of self-questions (see Valdman 2002, cited in Magnan & Walz 2002), and since this structure was accepted in more than half of the cases, it is obviously not completely excluded either. Therefore, it is also supposable that this sociostylistically rather low form was sometimes simply seen as inappropriate for a criminologist on duty.

## Task 2

The *Qu'est-ce que* variant was overall judged as more likely than the *quoi-in-situ* variant in the first situation ( $\text{median}_{\text{Qu'est-ce que}} = 5$  'very likely' vs.  $\text{median}_{\text{quoi-in-situ}} = 4$  'rather likely') whereas it was considered as equally likely in the second situation ('rather likely'). The difference of the periphrastic structure ratings could be shown to be significant whereas the estimated probability of *quoi-in-situ* was not statistically different in the two situations (see p.104).

Unfortunately, Myers' account of answerability does not help here: In both situations, the speaker asks the question as a request for concise information, so answerability should be high in both cases. Instead, Boucher's idea of QEsV being less restricted or discourse-linked may make a contribution in the explanation of this difference:<sup>253</sup> While *Qu'est-ce que vous faites dans la vie ?* may be preferable because the subject of profession has not necessarily been addressed before, *Qu'est-ce qu'on changerait ?* is not automatically favoured because it is uttered within the frame of decision making. Hence, the context would be sufficiently restricted and presupposed for a wh-in-situ structure. The only weak spot in this argumentation is that this would rather predict a clear preference for the (authentically used) *quoi-in-situ* structure.

Another possibility would be a variationist account. As the periphrastic variant has traditionally been described as neutral and the in-situ variant as a rather colloquial form (see Coveney 2002, 2011 and table 19), the difference between item series 2.1 and 2.2 could be due to the different relationship of

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<sup>253</sup> NB that the author does though explicitly exclude *qu'est-ce que* structures for his account.

the interlocutors. While the interlocutors in 2.1 are in a hierarchical relation (the presenter asking a candidate), the interlocutors in 2.2 are on a par with each other (a candidate asking a candidate). Hence, a variant which is sociostylistically higher could be assumed to be more appropriate for interlocutors of different status, whereas the choice of a higher variant would not be as important when interlocutors are considered equal in status.

However, those interpretations only explain differences in median probability rates. They are hardly tenable when considering individual behaviour: As described above (see table 15 on p.96), all theoretically possible preference types were observed at least once. Only in slightly over a third of the cases (38 out of 100) *Qu'est-ce que* was rated as comparatively more likely in the hierarchical relation than in the peer relation.<sup>254</sup> In a quarter of the cases, the same structure was favoured, in 22% of the cases, structures were always considered to be equally likely, and in 15% of the cases, *Qu'est-ce que* was even rated as comparatively less likely in the hierarchical relation than in the peer relation. In the end, all possible combinations of preferences were observed at least once and there was no real tendency detectable. It is doubtful whether any pragmatic or variationist account could explain the individual differences observed.

As far as I am concerned, this allows two different inferences to be drawn: First, linguistic systematicity might reach its limits when it comes to interrogative variation. It is very well conceivable that there are individual strategies to use the range of grammatical variants a language disposes of. Secondly, linguistic awareness of which structures one actually uses might be limited itself (cf. Adli 2015).

### Task 3

As the following overview shows, the number of mentioned structures varied across items (see table 21). For each item, I determined the situation components which were expected to have an influence on the choice of form (Coveney 2002, 2011; Myers 2007; Boucher 2010). This was done to detect potential correlations between situation components and the number of indications of a certain variant.

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<sup>254</sup> This number consists of the counts of participants not favouring any structure in 1.21 and favouring *quoi-in-situ* in 1.22 (n=6), participants favouring *qu'est-ce que* in 1.21 and none in 1.22 (n=14), and participants favouring *qu'est-ce que* in 1.21 and *quoi-in-situ* in 1.22 (n=18).

Table 21: Overview of situation components and numbers of structure mentions in task 3

	<b>Item 3.1:</b> <i>Depuis quand tu parles aux journalistes ?</i> +[informal] +[reproach] +/-[surprise] -[answer]	<b>Item 3.2:</b> <i>Qu'est-ce que vous foutez sur ma scène de crime, vous ?</i> +/-[informal] <sup>255</sup> +[reproach] +/-[surprise] +/-[answer] <sup>256</sup>	<b>Item 3.3:</b> <i>Pourquoi tu prends jamais mon parti ?</i> +[informal] +[reproach] -[surprise] -[answer]	<b>Item 3.4:</b> <i>Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ici ?</i> +[informal] -[reproach] +[surprise] +/-[answer]
<b>QVs</b>	22 + 12	11+3	30	33
<b>QEsV</b>	12 + 3	-	10 + 8	-
<b>QsV</b>	-	0 <sup>257</sup>	-	0 <sup>258</sup>
<b>svQ</b>	7 + 1	13 + 7	0 <sup>259</sup>	33+3

Of course, comparisons between items are easiest when items include the same authentic form, so comparisons between items 3.1 + 3.3 (authentic form of a wh-ex-situ declarative) and 3.2 + 3.4 (authentic form with *est-ce que*<sup>260</sup>) were most straightforward. Nonetheless, a comparison of the distribution of QVs and svQ-structures between items 3.1 and 3.2 also proved to be fruitful.

Interestingly, the differences between **items 3.1 and 3.3** are significant only when taking into account the number of wh-in-situ indications ( $p = 0.02015$ ); without the counts of svQ-mentions, distributions are very similar and differences are likely to be due to chance ( $p = 0.616$ ). In other words, the two items differ only in their mentions of the wh-in-situ form. This is interesting for two reasons: First, the comparable numbers substantiate the reliability of the answers because the two situations are very similar and would thus be expected to show similar distributions. Secondly, this validates the dislike of *pourquoi*-in-situ: While *quand*-in-situ seems to be possible, *pourquoi*-in-situ does not. On the other hand, it is interesting that wh-in-situ was mentioned at all. Since the context clearly suggests a reproach and thus a question with a somewhat rhetorical meaning, a wh-in-situ question is rather unexpected. (cf. Boucher 2010). Taking Myers' (2007) notion of answerability, *quand* may however be inherently linked to a certain degree of answerability.

<sup>255</sup> Since the hearer is unknown to the speaker, this may be seen as a slightly more formal context. However, while the polite form *vous* confirms this idea, the verb *foutre* does not.

<sup>256</sup> The fact that the speaker is described as 'wanting to know' may be interpreted as expecting an answer, but indications which were non-conform with instruction (e.g. *Vous n'avez rien à faire ici [...] Dégagez au plus vite.*) suggested that answer-seekingness was not always seen as a core components of the situation.

<sup>257</sup> This is expectable for grammatical reasons (*\*Que/quoi vous foutez sur ma scène de crime, vous ?*)

<sup>258</sup> This is expectable for grammatical reasons (*\*Que/quoi s'est passé ici ?*)

<sup>259</sup> As described above, there were though 4 mentions of *Tu prends jamais mon parti, pourquoi ?*.

<sup>260</sup> Here, one should add that item 3.2 contains a question for the direct object and item 3.4 for the subject. Nonetheless, these forms are structurally very similar – especially when one considers *qu'est-ce qui* as a variant of *qu'est-ce qu'il* (then, both are indeed QEsV).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, it is though much more surprising that inverted structures were more frequently mentioned. Although a formal variant seems rather artificial in these informal contexts, the most often mentioned variant for both situations was QVs. Pragmatically, one could argue that clitic inversion may be used to express rhetoricity. In that case, one should however consider that this variant of item 3.3 was always indicated with full negation while the sociostylistically neutral variant was also indicated several times without *ne* (*Pourquoi est-ce que tu ne prends jamais mon parti ?* (10 times) and *Pourquoi est-ce que tu prends jamais mon parti ?* (8 times)).<sup>261</sup> This certainly corroborates the claim that clitic inversion belongs to a very high register, which requires other formal elements such as full negation. To put it differently, although the situation does not suggest a formal variant, the (potentially pragmatically justified) choice of clitic inversion leads to the rather formal retention of *ne*. If the choice of clitic inversion can be linked to rhetoricity, it seems thus nonetheless bound with formal structural characteristics.

Remarkably, alternatives with clitic inversion were less often indicated for **item 3.2**. While **item 3.1** favoured clitic inversions, item 3.2 favoured wh-in-situ constructions. Although both situations suggest a secondary meaning of a reproach, they differ significantly in their mentions of QVs and sVQ-structures ( $p = 0.0008525$ ). Since the situations vary with regard to the degree of informality as well as contextual answerability, there are logically two contextual features which could have caused this difference. However, the difference in formality is opposed to traditional sociostylistic ranking because item 3.2 contains a somewhat less informal context than item 3.1 (see table 11519). Hence, if this difference can be explained by one of the situation components given above, it is by contextual answerability.

The differences between **items 3.2 and 3.4** are comparatively hard to interpret. Differences occurred on two levels: total numbers and distribution of morphosyntactic types. There were overall less indications of alternatives in item 3.2, and only item 3.2 showed a structural preference, namely of wh-in-situ structures.<sup>262</sup> The lower number of indications may suggest that alternatives for the given context are generally less conceivable than in the context of 3.4. Unfortunately, it remains obscure why this should be the case. Likewise, the preference of wh-in-situ structures in item 3.2 rather than in item 3.4 may be unexpected: Since the speaker of 3.4 is an adolescent and he is surprised, one could have expected a clear tendency for a sociostylistically lower variant. Instead, the preference surfaced in item 3.2, in which the hearer is even addressed by the more formal *vous*. My hypothetical explanation for this is that the mere fact of a direct address of the hearer (be it by *vous* or by *tu*) increases answerability although the context does not determine whether an answer is expected. Also,

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<sup>261</sup> There were also 8 indications of the original variant with *ne*-insertion (*Pourquoi tu ne prends jamais mon parti ?*)

<sup>262</sup> This distributional difference can, however, not be proven to be significant ( $p = 0.6695$ ).



item 3.2 is more aggressively formulated (cf. *foutez* and subject repetition), and sVQ seems to be perceived as more insisting than QVs (cf. task 5). On the whole, the comparison of items 3.2 and 3.4 rather refutes the idea of sociostylistic marking, but can potentially be explained by pragmatic factors.

Since the task itself pushed participants to mention alternatives, it would have been possible that they indicated any grammatically possible structure without paying much attention to the context. As distributions were though stable under similar contextual circumstances (cf. items 3.1 and 3.3 without sVQ) and varied visibly across different situations, it was nonetheless sound to analyse which situational features influenced a structure's number of mentions. All in all, the pragmatic components of reproachfulness and answerability were particularly illuminating, but a combination of sociolinguistic and pragmatic accounts had the highest potential of explanation.

#### Task 4

For **item 4.1** (*Qu'est-ce qu'on a ?* 'What do we have?'), the four recurrently mentioned situations were pragmatically similar because they were all requests for information. They only differed with regard to what was asked about (cf. p.99). As for the degree of formality, the sociostylistic description as a neutral variant was confirmed: The situations indicated implied colloquial (e.g. at home talking about dinner) as well as more public but still not formal (e.g. at the doctor's) circumstances. Instead, the pragmatic accounts of Myers (2007) and Boucher (2010) were rather contradicted: Situations often implied a concise answer (i.e. high answerability) and were well-determined (i.e. strongly presupposed), so the descriptions would have suited wh-in-situ structures. As far as I am concerned, this can be seen as an indicator for the special status of *Qu'est-ce que*. Although I think that Myers is right about its grammaticalized form, I am not so sure about its comparability with usual wh-fronted declaratives.

Purely pragmatic accounts will also have difficulties explaining the agreement on the vernacular status of **item 4.2** (*Qui c'est qui sait conduire ?* 'Who knows how to drive?'). Virtually all comments on this interrogative pointed to its very low sociostylistic level – either by the speaker's young age, low level of education or drunken state. This corroborates Coveney's classification of the QcksV-structure (see table 19).

Likewise, **item 4.3** (*Vous êtes où ?* 'Where are you?') seemed to be classified correctly. As table 19 predicts, the situations associated with this interrogative were rather colloquial (i.e. between family members or friends) but not stigmatised (i.e. speakers were not imagined as belonging to a specific social group such as the deprived). Of course, accounts of answerability or a strong presupposed context are this time also compatible. What is though more interesting is that this question was mentioned to be typical of conversations on mobile phones. In that respect, one could say that there

was a medial bias. In my opinion, this strengthens my hypothesis that *wh-in-situ* is typical of direct interactions. Since a face-to-face interaction is very unlikely for semantic reasons, a phone call or text message is the most direct interaction easy to imagine.

The same goes for **item 4.4** (*Tu dirais quoi ?* 'What would you say?'). The cooperative decision making in exercises or games as well as asking for advice typically entails a face-to-face conversation. Hence, the utterance is associated with a certain directness. This directness may be linked to both, a low but non-stigmatised sociostylistic marking as well as answerability and a clearly delimited context.

In summary, the forth task mostly supported Coveney 2002, 2011 account because

- (i) *Qu'est-ce que* structures are associated with in informal or neutral situations,
- (ii) *qui c'est qui*, or possibly cleft structures in general, are stigmatised, and
- (iii) *wh-in-situ* constructions are associated with informal situations but are not stigmatised.

### Task 5

Since item series 5.1 was the only **item series on yes/no-interrogatives**, this was the only possibility to check Hansen's (2001) hypothesis. As deducible from the descriptions above (see p.101), answers did though not suggest any difference in knowledge distribution: All three variants were clearly associated with requests for information. What is more, the authentic situation in which the *est-ce que* interrogative was used, was a B-event: The hostess used this question form to enquire about whether the guests had passed a good night at their guest house. Therefore, the results of this item clearly refute Mosegaard Hansen's presumption.<sup>263</sup> Nonetheless, the answers did offer evidence for variationist as well as pragmatic accounts: EsV and sV were classified as colloquial or neutral, whereas Vs was mostly described as either written or formal, and the *est-ce que* variant was several times described as more doubtful, reinforcing, or more clearly expecting an answer.

In the **two-variant item series on *Qu'est-ce que* vs. *quoi-in-situ***, i.e. item series 5.2 and 5.5, there was no agreement on whether there was a difference in formality or not. Many participants indicated that *On fait quoi ?* and *Et ça, c'est quoi ?* would be more colloquial than *Qu'est-ce qu'on fait ?* and *Et ça, Qu'est-ce que c'est ?*.<sup>264</sup> Others believed that the two constructions would be equal in status. At any rate, it seems plausible that a difference between neutral and colloquial forms will be perceived as smaller than a difference between neutral and formal forms. On the other hand, Myers (2007) claimed that *Qu'est-ce que* is a grammaticalized form and should thus be classified as a *wh-fronted declarative* structure. Following table 19, QsV-structures should be slightly lower than sVQ-structures, but none

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<sup>263</sup> Of course, one should test more than one item. The hypothesis will thus be retested in chapter 5 and 6, but this item already shows that the notion of B-event is not very conclusive.

<sup>264</sup> Interestingly, some even claimed *Et ça, c'est quoi ?* to be *courant* ('common language use') and *Et ça, qu'est-ce que c'est ?* to be *plus soutenu* ('elevated/formal').

of the participants ranked *Qu'est-ce qu'on fait ?* lower than *On fait quoi ?*. Instead, Myers' notion of answerability was (at least partly) supported: Since *On fait quoi ?* was associated with an accident or a problem for which immediate action should be taken, it is conceivable that the wh-in-situ form stresses the need for an answer. Although the answer to this question may not be easy, its possibility and conciseness are strengthened by its necessity. Likewise, *Et ça, c'est quoi ?* was said to be more insisting on an answer, which also suggests a high degree of (presumed and imposed) answerability. For the latter item, the recurrent mention of a lost and found object can also be taken as a piece of evidence for the link between the wh-in-situ form and answerability: In this case, the question is so answerable that it becomes rhetorical. In comparison, *Et ça, Qu'est-ce que c'est ?* was sometimes associated with curiosity or interest in details. If one considers more details as requiring a less concise or more complicated answer, QESV can indeed be described as less answerable than svQ. In contrast, Boucher's account could not be supported. According to table 20, svQ-structures should be associated with a strongly presupposed context, and QESV-structures should be rather open unrestricted questions. As far as I am concerned, the comments on the two items neither really endorse nor refute these pragmatic categories. However, the author explicitly excludes *Qu'est-ce que* (Boucher 2010: 115) and explains that he had to use yes/no interrogatives to proof his ideas on (Q)E{s/S}V-structures, so his account was never intended to be tested with *Qu'est-ce que*.<sup>265</sup>

In the **three-variant item series**, i.e. item series 5.3 and 5.4, the sociostylistic ranking of table 19 was partly confirmed and partly contradicted. While the classic view that inverted structures (*Comment allez-vous ?* and *Où vas-tu ?*) are formal and declarative ones (*Comment vous allez ? / Vous allez comment ?* and *Où tu vas ? / Tu vas où ?*) informal is substantiated, wh-in-situ was never described as less stigmatised than wh-fronting (contra Coveney 2002: 98 and 2011: 124, Myers 2007: 83). Moreover, Myer's notion of answerability is provided with some support in the answers: The wh-in-situ variants of both item series were sometimes described as more insisting on an answer. Hence, the hearer is pushed towards a response, which means that the speaker is implying the possibility of an answer. Besides, a reproachful question (as was mentioned for *Où tu vas ?*) is certainly less answerable than a question pointed out as a direct reaction (e.g. to somebody getting up and leaving the room). Also Boucher's (2010) account can thus be seen as partly confirmed. Since *Où tu vas ?* was described as being typical of reproaches, this structure was indeed associated with disapproval, and *Tu vas où ?* with a direct reaction which could be seen as inferring a strongly presupposed context. However, it should be stressed that this was not a distinction all participants made. What was not predicted by any

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<sup>265</sup> Obviously, this is a weakness in Boucher (2010) argumentation. On the one hand, it will be precipitate to assume that the morphosyntactic forms of wh- and yes/no-interrogatives will behave in the same way. On the other hand, an account which has to exclude the vast majority of occurrences is certainly not very helpful and *qu'est-ce que* questions constitute, as he points out, 99% of his QE{s/S}V-questions.

of the accounts, was the literal interpretation of *Vous allez comment ?*. In this item series, also the predicted difference of a rather incredulous or doubtful vs. a strongly presupposed question (cf. Boucher 2010) is hard to see in the answers for *Comment vous allez ?* and *Vous allez comment ?*. Indeed, both declaratives were sometimes claimed to imply a reason for doubting the proposition. However, this might also be due to the rarity of these structures. After all, views and beliefs on the use of these two declarative structures were widely divided and, in my opinion, linguistic intuitions will be prone to diverge when the linguistic forms are not frequently used. In the case of asking for an interlocutor's state of health, other questions forms such as *Ça va ?* or *Vous allez bien ?* will be much more commonly used in informal situations,<sup>266</sup> and make the use of sVQ-/QsV-structures superfluous. Hence, the great diversity of opinions does probably no more than reflect the rareness of the two declarative structures in authentic language use. As opposed to this, there are no more commonly used alternative formulations to the three variants of item series 5.4 ('Where are you going?'). Accordingly, opinions were not as widely spread in item series 5.4 as in item series 5.3 ('How do you do/go?').<sup>267</sup>

**To conclude**, none of the accounts was capable of explaining the whole data set. Nonetheless, there is some truth in Boucher's, Coveney's and Myers' accounts, so some pragmatic and sociostylistic tendencies could be detected: For example, both declarative forms were described as tendentiously vigorous: While QsV-structures were often seen as aggressive or authoritarian, sVQ-structures were frequently seen as insisting on an answer. As for sociostylistic marking, it seemed to be general consensus that QVs-structures are used in formal situations, but a difference in formality in declarative structures could not be pinned down. As the QsV-structures were not judged as more stigmatised than sVQ-structures (see item series 5.2 and 5.3), the question arises whether small differences in formality really exist. However, there is also a second possibility: Participants may have followed their linguistic nurture (see next subsection), in which differences between colloquial and cultivated language use will probably have been stressed, but no differences within colloquial registers will have been mentioned.

#### 4.4.3 The impact of the *bon usage*

When looking at the results, the first question that arises is whether this survey gives insight into **linguistic nature or nurture**. By this dichotomy, I mean the intuitions one has developed after acquiring one's first language in a natural context vs. the knowledge and behaviour one has learned and adopted in school or by societal rebuke. As I will argue, both are included but it is very hard to keep the two apart.

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<sup>266</sup> This is also confirmed by all of my corpora.

<sup>267</sup> Nonetheless, answers were still not fully convergent (see p.13).

Linguistic convictions which are taught in school and are omnipresent in the French society certainly have an influence. Normative pressure is very high in France (cf. Armstrong 2001: 133, also cited in Adli 2006: 170, and Gadet 2007: 27, also cited in Adli 2015: 195), and many speakers have internalised the prescriptive views on “correct” grammar and use. Indeed, indications often showed a condescending attitude toward more vernacular forms of language: Accordingly, in some cases the intonation question from item 5.1 (*Vous avez bien dormi ?* ‘Did you sleep well?’) was described as « incorrecte », inverted structures were claimed to be the only form possible although the authentically used form was a different one (cf. item 1.3) or more prestigious forms were even added when they were not given (« Je préférerais *Que fait-on ?*» for item 5.2). Two middle-aged participants (one man and one woman) explicitly claimed that both indicated questions from item 5.2 would be wrong (« formulations incorrectes »). Other participants tried making reference to the *bon usage* in a subtler way. For example, they used impersonal statements on what one does if he or she wants to conform with prescriptive standards (« si l’on s’exprime correctement, on dira : *où vas-tu ?* »<sup>268</sup>). Many comments show that the participants had difficulties thinking about language use without evaluating it. This observation can be exemplified by judgements like « Question 2 significative d’un vocabulaire pauvre »<sup>269</sup> or « La deuxième est incorrecte, la troisième familière (bravo pour la première) »<sup>270</sup> (both item 5.3). Also, prescriptive and descriptive standards were mixed several times (« La 2ème est plus correcte et usuelle »<sup>271</sup> for item 5.4), suggesting that vernacular forms would be less common than prestigious forms. However, as Adli 2015) showed, the preference of formal variants is not reflected in language use. Two earlier observations go in the same direction (Reinhardt 2016): In item 1.1, one participant inserted in red the negation particle *ne*, and another one commented that he would rather use *Qu’est-ce qu’il ne va pas encore ?* – which is not wrong but certainly not more prestigious than the *Qu’est-ce qui* variant either.<sup>272</sup>

These observations may suggest that it is mainly the diffusion of the *bon usage* which falsifies the language perception of French native speakers. However, it is equally possible that introspection is simply not sufficient when it comes to linguistic variation. At least, it does not seem to suffice for explaining differences in varying use. For example, it was stated that the second formulation of item 5.2 would be more often used than the periphrastic variant simply because it was shorter. However, the lengths of *Qu’est-ce qu’on fait* and *on fait quoi* mainly diverge orthographically. Phonologically,

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<sup>268</sup> English translation: ‘If one uses correct formulations, one will say *où vas-tu?*’

<sup>269</sup> English translation: ‘Question 2 suggests a poor vocabulary.’ In this quotation, a typing mistake has been corrected.

<sup>270</sup> English translation: ‘The second one is incorrect, the third one is colloquial (well done for the first one).’

<sup>271</sup> English translation: ‘The second one is more correct and more common.’

<sup>272</sup> In all probability, that participant was so occupied conveying the *bon usage* that he thought of the vernacular phonological variant /i/ for *il*.

both forms consist of three syllables (/kɛs.kõ.fɛ/ vs. /õ.fɛ.kwa/) and the second variant is only one phoneme shorter, so this is not a very plausible reason.

Nonetheless, the participants did not simply give an account of what is prescribed by the *Académie Française* or societal pressure. In some cases, they clearly described vernacular forms as the most likely forms to occur. For example, the authentically used item 1.21 (*Ils sont où, tes fruits ?*) obtained the highest acceptance rates even though it is not a prestigious form. Likewise, item 5.12 (*Vous avez bien dormi ?*) was described as the most ordinary and frequent variant for spoken speech (e.g. « correspond au français standard de la communication orale »), which is certainly an observation that did not originate in literary examples as presented in French grammar books. The same goes for item series 5.2 (*Qu'est-ce qu'on fait ? / On fait quoi ?*) and 5.5 (*Et ça, Qu'est-ce que c'est ? / Et ça, c'est quoi ?*) because both of their variants were – at least sometimes – described as being equivalent or part of the same (informal) register.

It is thus reasonable to state that some unbiased frequency observations and intuitions were given as well. The answers can therefore be considered to reflect both linguistic nature and nurture; the extent to which either applies seems to depend on the individual.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the conception and evaluation of a 5-task questionnaire on morphosyntactic variation in French interrogatives. As was revealed, authentic use was a good predictor for a high acceptance rate (and probability rating) of a structure, and situation depictions for specific interrogative forms often mirrored their original context. In accordance with this observation, appropriateness of an interrogative structure seemed to depend not only on its lexical content but also on its pragmatic meaning and other situational components. Beyond that, also linguistic standardisation was shown to have an impact on native speakers' conceptions of linguistic variation.

Regarding the **morpho-lexical content (a)**, one of the most important factors was the question word. Accordingly, ex-situ declarative variants with *que/quoi* were almost categorically refused, and *pourquoi*-in-situ was clearly disliked. Also, a low sociostylistic marking of the morpho-lexical string content (e.g. the choice of the vulgar verb *foutre* or *ne*-omission in negation) seemed to be less compatible with the choice of a prestigious (Q)vS-variant.

Apart from the morpho-lexical content of the string, also the **subject (b) and situation (c)** clearly influenced the estimated likeliness of a morphosyntactic structure. While such an influence could not be detected for the subject-dependent factor of sex, age did show a significant effect: Whereas younger participants were generally more generous with wh-in-situ structures, older ones were so with clitic inversion. As for the two opposed trends in situational dependency, differences in

sociostylistic marking as well as in pragmatic meaning were found. Although the degree of formality was the most recurrent element in the answers, there were also several pragmatic specifications. Structures with clitic inversion (QVs) were considered formal, clefts (QcksV) were stigmatised, and declarative structures could be shown to be typical of colloquial speech (cf. Coveney 2002). Within the latter group, QsV-structures seemed to be for reproaches and svQ-structures for high answerability (cf. Boucher 2010; Myers 2007). However, none of the variationist nor pragmatic systematisations or factors were capable of explaining the whole data set. Especially a structure's general frequency and its semantic content limited predictions across strings.

What is more, it seems likely that the acceptability of formal structures is artificially raised by **linguistic nurture (d)**. Therefore, prestigious forms which are expected as contextually inadequate were still accepted by a considerable percentage in casual situations. In this context, it should also be added that some participants seemed to merely echo their linguistic nurture by condemning non-standard forms.

To conclude, the appropriateness judgements and comments indicated support as well as limitations to many different accounts. Once again, the complexity of the French interrogative system was shown. This study has certainly extended our knowledge on what native speakers of hexagonal French think about certain morphosyntactic forms of interrogatives, but likewise, it has thrown up many questions in need of further investigation. Most importantly, it has shown that the number of potential factors is too great to be dealt with in a single questionnaire. Rather, questionnaires should be conceived for testing single hypotheses in a small-scaled investigation. Instead of observing the whole tangle of interrogative variation, studies should set out to add only small but illuminating pieces to the huge and obscure jigsaw puzzle. Further work needs to use more controlled and closed tasks if elaborated statistical evaluation shall be possible. For this, items should vary in only one condition. For example, the influence of the personal pronoun should be tested with two otherwise identical strings used in the same situation (e.g. *Vous êtes où ?* and *Tu es où ?*). Also, the medial conception of future questionnaires is worthy of consideration. Since written interrogatives will strengthen normative biases, it may be preferable to use recordings instead of writing. On the other hand, this will bring intonation into play, which is certainly interesting, but complicating matters even further. Finally, the method of a questionnaire survey should be taken with a pinch of salt. Since theoretical beliefs and actual use are (inter alia due to the *bon usage*) not directly related to one another, questionnaires cannot assess native speakers' language use, but their convictions about language use only. If one is interested in variation in use, one will have to examine linguistic productions. This is precisely why it was necessary to conduct the corpus studies presented in chapters 5 to 7. Undertaking a survey before analysing corpus data was though extremely helpful because it showed me what native speakers think about language use. This was a good starting point for the analysis of authentic language use.

## 5. Interrogatives in Reality TV: *Quelles formes sont utilisées quand ?*<sup>273</sup>

This chapter examines the morphosyntax and intonation of French interrogatives appearing in ten reality TV (RTV) shows. Based on a corpus of thirty episodes of televised competitions, I try to establish links between morpholexis (i.e. choice of words), grammatical structure (i.e. (kind of) morphosyntactic marking), prosodic realisation (i.e. nuclear configuration) and communicative situation (i.e. kind of interaction).

It is hypothesized that

- i. the directness of communication is negatively related to subject-verb inversion,
- ii. the directness of communication is positively related to final rises,
- iii. morphosyntactic marking<sup>274</sup> makes final rises less likely.

By calculating logistic regression models, it can be shown that hypotheses (i)-(iii)<sup>275</sup> are supported by this study's data: Morphosyntactically marked interrogatives as well as those uttered as rather indirect messages (e.g. comments or mere reflexions) show significantly more falls, and inverted word order occurs significantly more often in non-direct communication.

### 5.1 Introduction

Although the questionnaire survey from the last chapter brought some interesting results, it was clear from the outset that only corpus analyses would allow “l’observation et la description des usages authentiques de la langue”<sup>276</sup> (Jacques 2005 : 22-25). Importantly, they help to capture linguistic reality by including not only the most systematic aspects but also variation. Thanks to corpus approaches, we do not entirely rely on subjective introspection or grammaticality judgements (see also chapter 2.1.2). The latter certainly has its right on its own, but it should always be complemented by authentic data. With regard to interrogatives, corpus studies seem to be the most adequate form, knowing that speakers are usually unaware of the complexity of their French interrogative system, using questions in an intuitive way only. On top of that, pressure of the *bon usage* is high in France, so many speakers tend to give what they think to be the norm, and do not rely on their own *sentiment de langage* (‘feel for language’). An example of this is the fact that some participants even tried to “correct” my questionnaire (cf. p.127).

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<sup>273</sup> English translation: ‘Which forms are used when?’

<sup>274</sup> By *est-ce que* or inversion, but also the mere presence of a wh-word.

<sup>275</sup> Whenever I cite an enumerated element of the form (i), (ii), ..., I refer back to the directly preceding enumeration. In other words, this kind of enumeration is valid for one paragraph only.

<sup>276</sup> English translation: ‘the observation and description of authentic language uses’; for a discussion on the limitation of RTV’s authenticity, see appendix (p.408).



At any rate, indicating the interrogative one prefers is not the same as having used it spontaneously (cf. Adli 2015). Consequently, a questionnaire may be really interesting for learning to what extent speakers are aware of their use of interrogatives, but it cannot be employed to observe language use. For the latter, corpus studies are simply unavoidable.

This first corpus study is based on French reality television (in the following abbreviated as *reality TV* or *RTV*) shows. RTV belongs to the everyday life of a considerable amount of French people according to audience ratings. This is substantiated by the fact that the French-speaking community even adopted the term of RTV into their language system: According to the Petit Robert (see Robert 2009: s.v. "télé-réalité"), the French calque *télé-réalité* can be found from 1990 on, denoting a TV genre which consists of filming the everyday life of selected candidates who are placed into specific situations. From a linguistic perspective, this TV genre is particularly interesting for three reasons: First of all, it is defined as presenting everyday situations, which means that the recordings may contain speech which is similar to spontaneous language use.<sup>277</sup> Secondly, candidates will – unlike in most experiments – not just perform a certain task, but they will (at least in most cases) use language authentically (i.e. for the purpose of communication). Although the observer's paradox may still exist, participants will be less likely to focus on linguistic form while spontaneously interacting. Furthermore, whereas participants in experiments may find out what the study is about and adapt their linguistic behaviour accordingly, the participants in RTV are originally not recorded for linguistic investigations but for producing an entertainment programme. Hence, they could only adapt their linguistic behaviour according to what they think to be appropriate for public exposure on TV, but they will never use a certain structure to confirm or refute a linguistic hypothesis. Finally, interrogatives play an important role in RTV and are used not only in candidate interactions, but also for special purposes, such as guiding the thought of the audience by an off-voice comment, introducing interview statements, or reading out an SMS question. These different communicative situations all entail medially spoken utterances because they are either produced (semi-) spontaneously or they are oralisations of scripted material. However, they do vary with regard to their conceptual status. In an echo of Söll (see Müller 1990: 196), one could thus speak of oral and (oralised) scripted speech (*parlé phonique* and *parlé graphique*). In this respect, the variation in the use of interrogatives in RTV will be interesting in itself.

Most importantly, though, such a RTV-corpus study will allow (qualitative and) quantitative analyses for assessing the impact of certain linguistic and extralinguistic factors on the choice of a particular

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<sup>277</sup> At first, I was merely looking for a corpus which contained spontaneous speech in everyday situations. Although there already exist some oral corpora of French (OSLO, PFC), I did not find what I was looking for. Besides, it would be helpful to have a clear frame as well as a video of the concrete situation, in order to be able to understand the usage properly.

morphosyntactic and intonational form. Since this is the overall aim of this thesis, the following investigation is a further important piece in the complex jigsaw of the French interrogation system.

## 5.2 Method

Strictly speaking, I have created two RTV corpora: The first one by merely recording and selecting the episodes, the second one by extracting and annotating the interrogatives from the first one. In other words, I first built a source corpus, which was then used to collect question forms. In the second corpus, I transcribed and categorised the interrogatives. When relevant, I also included comments on the co- and context of an interrogative, e.g. by transcribing its preceding turn or the immediate reaction to it.

In the following subsections, I will depict the procedure of collecting and analysing my items as well as problems I encountered while doing so. I will first describe the selection of programmes and episodes for my source corpus (see 5.2.1), then the extraction (see 5.2.2.1), transcription & annotation (see 5.2.2.2), and finally the explorative as well as statistical analysis (see 5.2.2.3) of the interrogatives.

### 5.2.1 The source corpus

In 2014/2015, I conducted a pilot study which consisted in building a mini-corpus made of the movie *La Haine*, one reality TV show (*Bienvenue à l'hôtel*), one detective story (the very first episode of *Profilage*) and one episode of *Maya L'Abeille*. This selection was a convenience sample, i.e. I used programmes that were available without further expenditure of money or time.<sup>278</sup> After consulting the mini-corpus, the most interesting genre turned out to be the one of reality TV. One reason for this is that it is not entirely scripted. When candidates interact, they do not follow a screenplay. At the most, they are prompted to pose a question, but to my knowledge they are not given a sentence-structure nor are they instructed to use a certain prosody. The only prescription they get is thus what they should do next. Hence, these shows contain spontaneous speech. But even more importantly, the situations in RTV are clear-cut, recurrent and part of everyday life, so interpretation, comparability and generalisations would be facilitated. Also, there are many different interactions, i.e. communicative situations: direct interactions between candidates, comments by an off-voice, pseudo-interaction between the off-voice and candidates or the audience, interviews and even quiz questions for the audience. This offered new perspectives and research questions.

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<sup>278</sup> Although news programmes were available and may contain questions as well, I decided not to incorporate them into my mini-corpus. The motive for that was the scarcity of direct interaction, which seemed to be important for obtaining a range of discursive functions. As for talk shows, I would have included them if they had been available to me.

Consequently, I decided to build a corpus of RTV series, which meant that it would be a study based on “authentic” data (see the division of data types used in research on prosody by (Delais-Roussarie 2008).<sup>279</sup> This had the advantage, that I could record currently broadcast shows via OTR (online TV recorder<sup>280</sup>), and download them in avi-format, which is compatible with windows movie maker (which I used for cutting out the audio track of the interrogatives). Since my empirical investigation focused on hexagonal French, i.e. the variety spoken in continental metropolitan France, programmes and episodes shot in other francophone areas, such as Canada, Belgium or Switzerland were not incorporated.<sup>281</sup> The series I collected are all of a very similar (and wide-spread) format, which does exist not only in France, but also in England, in Germany, and in many other countries:<sup>282</sup> They are all competitive games taking place in real-life situations, such as a stay in a hotel, going to the hairdresser’s or attending a wedding. All of them contain a process of evaluation, which is done by the competitors and/or a third party. In order to obtain a corpus which could be considered representative for this type of reality TV show, I recorded several episodes of ten different televised competitions. Knowing that a single episode would not suffice to gain an insight into the shows’ characteristics and potential differences between them, I decided to analyse three episodes of each of the series. Since the candidates remain the same for a whole week in most of the shows<sup>283</sup>, it was advisable to incorporate episodes of different weeks. In case the content of the series varied according to the day, I opted for three different days of the week – usually Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

Each episode having a duration of about 50 minutes, the speech material used comprises about 25 hours. In those 25 hours, I observed almost three thousand question forms. Although the format of the series is very similar, the number of interrogatives highly depended on the show: In some shows, there were only slightly over 50 questions per episode, while in others, there were almost 200. As my analysis will show, this is mostly due to the different use of an off-voice and the presence or absence of experts, but in some cases, it might also be the situations which lead to more or less interaction. For this very reason, I will conclude this section giving a brief overview of the conception and characteristics of the shows.

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<sup>279</sup> Strictly speaking, RTV is a special discourse type, which is neither purely *authentic/documentary* nor purely *artificial/fictitious*. For a brief excursion on the hybridity of RTV, see appendix, p.407.

<sup>280</sup> <https://www.onlinetvrecorder.com/v2/>

<sup>281</sup> Although the latest episodes of *5 salons qui décoiffent* have been broadcast on a Belgian channel, they have been shot in two of the biggest cities of France, namely Paris and Marseille.

<sup>282</sup> Two international examples for series of this format are *Quatre mariages pour une lune de miel* and *Un Dîner Presque Parfait* with the equivalents *Vier Hochzeiten und eine Traumreise* and *Das Perfekte Dinner* in Germany, and *Four Weddings* and *Come Dine with Me* in England.

<sup>283</sup> This does not go for *La meilleure boulangerie de France*.

*Bienvenue au camping* (BVAC): Four couples who direct a camping site compete against one another, inviting the other ones to stay a night in their establishment. An off-voice comments on what is shown, but does not (pretend to) interact with anybody. [TF1]

*Bienvenue à l'hôtel* (BVAH): Four couples who direct a hotel compete against one another, inviting the other ones to stay a night in their establishment. An off-voice comments on what is shown, but does not (pretend to) interact with anybody. [TF1]

*Bienvenue chez nous* (BVCN): Four couples who direct a guest house compete against one another, inviting the other ones to stay a night in their establishment. An off-voice comments on what is shown, but does not (pretend to) interact with anybody. [TF1]

*Chasseur d'appart'* (CHAP): Three estate agents present houses and apartments which are for sale. The agent whose flat/house is finally chosen by the client(s) of the day gets one point. At the end of the week, the agent with the most points wins. There is an expert and an off-voice commenting, the off-voice is also dubbed as if addressing people on screen or the audience. [M6]

*Cinq salons qui décoiffent* (CSQD): Each week, five hairdressers of the same town compete against one another, presenting their salons and some exemplary haircuts and brushings. An off-voice comments on what is shown, and is regularly dubbed in as if it addressed people on screen or the audience. There is also an expert passing remarks. [M6 and RTL belgique]

*L'addition s'il vous plait* (ADDI): Four restaurateurs compete against one another, inviting the other candidates to their restaurant. An off-voice comments on what is shown, but does not (pretend to) interact with anybody. There is no expert. [TF1]

*La meilleure boulangerie de France* (MBOU): From Monday to Thursday, two experts visit eight bakeries (i.e. two per day) from different towns of the same region and evaluate their shops and products. Only the respective winners are invited to the regional final on Friday. An off-voice comments on what is shown, sometimes also pretending to address a person on screen or the audience. [M6]

*Les reines du shopping* (SHOP): Five individuals compete against one another, trying to find the perfect outfit for the topic of the week although they have limited time and budget. An off-voice comments on what is shown, and regularly addresses people on screen or the audience. There is also an expert who directs remarks to the candidates or to the viewers. [M6]

*Quatre mariages pour une lune de miel* (QUAM): Four brides compete against one another, inviting the other ones to their weddings. On Fridays, the weddings of the four previous days are recapulated and the last mark, the one for the bridal dresses, is disclosed. An off-voice comments on what is shown, but does not (pretend to) interact with anybody. There is no expert. [TF1]

*Un dîner presque parfait* (UDPP): Five individuals compete against one another, preparing a lavish dinner, including decoration and entertainment. An off-voice comments on what is shown, and is regularly dubbed in as if it addressed people on screen or the audience. There is no expert. [W9]

## 5.2.2 The corpus of interrogatives

By extracting all interrogatives from the source corpus, I constructed a reference corpus for the distribution of question forms in RTV shows (of the specific format mentioned above). Such a corpus allows a qualitative & quantitative analysis, and offers further insights into the frequency of certain variants as well as the intermeshing of their morphosyntax, intonation and meaning.

### 5.2.2.1 Construction

The first step was the selection and extraction of interrogatives. To that end, criteria for a structure being counted as an interrogative had to be defined. As stipulated in chapter 2, I consider interrogative any sentence or sentence-equivalent form which is (proto)typically used to express a request of information. This means, that each interrogative encodes an information gap (e.g. in the case of yes/no interrogatives the truth value of the proposition), due to which the structure can be used to elicit information (although it does not have to do so in the context it was uttered).

Whenever an utterance was morphosyntactically marked as an interrogative, i.e. when it contained a lexical mark such as a *wh*-word or the particle *est-ce que* (and not used as an exclamative, see below), or the syntactic mark of subject-verb inversion (without any other trigger), the structure was kept without taking into account its prosody or context. As for the questions without such a structural marking of the information gap, the decision how to proceed when establishing the corpus was more complicated. On the one hand, “there is in fact no such thing as an unambiguous ‘question intonation’” (Hansen 2001 : 472). On the other, a structure could be completely unmarked and still be just as readily interpreted as a question. What is more, one can even utter an assertive and expect its confirmation or rejection by one’s interlocutor. To illustrate these difficulties, several structures are presented in the following, for which the assignment of a sentence type (assertive vs. interrogative) does not go without saying:

- (I) (The candidates are interviewed one after another about their ideas of what could be behind the name of the different courses of that day’s menu.)
- L’entrée : le Napoléon d’Aphrodite. (Julien, one of the candidates, reading out loud)
  - Alors là, je cherche... (Réjane, a candidate)
  - Ça m’évoque la graisse... (Jean-Baptiste, a candidat)
  - [Je] pourrais pas deviner si c’est une entrée chaude ou une entrée froide. (Julien)
  - Ouuuu... Ça, c’est une bonne question... (Réjane)
  - Alors, Napoléon, c’est un Français, alors... (Jean-Baptiste)
  - Ça sera un gâteau ./? ↑ (Dominique, a candidate)
  - Mmhhh... (Réjane)

- Mais... salé./ ? ↑ (Dominique)

Source : *Un dîner presque parfait*, broadcast the 02/05/2016 from 16.50 on W9

(II) (The candidates are discussing while having an aperitif.)

- [...] J'en apprends tous les jours, avec mes canards, les... (the host of the day)
- Tu as des canards ./ ? ↓ (another candidate)
- J'en ai soixante-dix. (the host of the day)

Source : *Un dîner presque parfait*, broadcast the 02/05/2016 from 16.50 on W9

(III) (The experts Bruno and Norbert are visiting one of the bakeries. They are looking at some bread rings.)

- Elles sont sympas, vos couronnes. Qu'est-ce que c'est ? (Bruno)
- C'est la fagotine. (one of the sellers)
- La ? ↑ (Bruno)
- La fagotine. C'est...(the same seller)
- La pagotine./? ↓ (Bruno)
- La FAgotine. (all three sellers)

Source : *La meilleure boulangerie de France*, broadcast the 27/09/2016 from 17.30 on M6

In example (I), it is difficult (if not impossible) to say whether the two sentences with rising melody should rather be considered as assertives expressing a certain degree of insecurity, or as interrogatives used as tentative answers which are to be confirmed or rejected. In (II), the melodic pattern suggests a certain evidentiality (it is rising until the very end, which is, however, falling), which may be explained by the fact that the potential information gap had already been closed. Such a sentence, i.e. one with declarative word order and a terminal fall, would normally be classified as structurally assertive. Still, the structure is clearly meant as a request for confirmation, and the answer elicited also shows that the interlocutor has understood that he is supposed to explain himself, giving some additional information (namely the number of ducks he owns). In (III), the elliptical structure with falling sentence melody does not necessarily feel interrogative, but in terms of answer elicitation, it is certainly interpreted as a question. Since scientific research should, though, not be based on one's gut feelings, this kind of linguistic intuition had to be operationalised. Therefore, I formulated two conditions – the first one being sufficient in itself, the second one being a remedy for the cases in which (i) was ruled out:

- If a structure is encoding an information gap by *est-ce que*, an interrogative word or subject-verb inversion, it is counted as an interrogative regardless of the context.
- Otherwise, the structure is only retained if it is regularly used to elicit information and its usage cannot be accounted for by a reinterpretation of another sentence type.

To illustrate these operationalisations, I will give four further examples:

(85) *Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez* ↓ (CHAP\_1\_00\_13\_42)  
what-Q<sup>284</sup> you<sub>SBJ</sub> pro think<sub>2pl</sub>  
'What do you think (about that)?'

(86) *Qu'est-ce qu'elle est belle* ↑↓ (QUAM\_2\_01\_04\_40)  
what-Q she is beautiful  
'How beautiful she is!'

(87) *c'est japonais* ↑ (MBOU\_3\_00\_18\_11)  
that is Japanese  
'That's Japanese? / Is that Japanese?'

(88) *c'est japonais* ↓ (MBOU\_3\_00\_18\_10)  
that is Japanese  
'That's Japanese.'

In the case of (85), there is no need for any context to claim that this sentence marks an information gap. The proposition contained is 'vous en pensez X', so there is clearly a variable which has not been filled in, and which is prototypically to be filled in by the interlocutor. At first sight, (86) might also look as if it encoded such an information gap, but on closer examination, it does not. Although it contains *Qu'est-ce que*, the speaker of the sentence is declaring his support for the proposition 'elle est [très] belle' ('she is [very] beautiful') – and there is no missing information whatsoever. Therefore, it can not be counted as an interrogative in contemporary French, and should thus not be incorporated into a corpus of interrogatives.<sup>285</sup> In the case of (87) and (88), the same string is pronounced, once with a rising and once with a falling contour. While these two structures are traditionally seen as a minimal pair of an interrogative (87) and an assertive (88) SVO-structure, such a distinction becomes less clear in context:

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<sup>284</sup> This structure contains a question particle. However, I will argue later on that *qu'est-ce que* is actually a grammaticalized version of *que* ('what').

<sup>285</sup> Interestingly, the semantics of those sentences can be directly derived from their lexical content: Whereas monovalent evaluative predicates, such as the appreciative copula construction *être beau* ('to be beautiful') or the pejorative intransitive verb *puer*, are readily interpreted as exclamation (= > *Qu'est-ce qu'elle est belle !* 'How beautiful she is!', *Qu'est-ce qu'elle pue !* 'How she stinks!'), non-evaluative transitive verbs like *faire* or *dire* offer only an interrogative reading (= > *Qu'est-ce qu'elle fait/dit ?* 'What is she doing/saying?'). Even an exclamative intonation cannot change this: With an exclamatory prosody, the sentence is presented as a rhetorical question, but semantically it still contains an information gap (cf. 'What on earth is she doing?!'). There are only single cases, such as the combination of a verb with a derogatory adverb *chanter mal* ('to sing badly', which are open for both interpretations (= > *Qu'est-ce qu'elle chante mal ?!* 'What does she sing badly?'/ 'How badly she sings!') because the verb is used transitively as well as intransitively.

(IV) (The candidate shows the experts his method of putting bread crumbs on his pastry in order to prevent the dough from blowing up.)

- Ça s'appelle du [miguRi]. (Philippe, the candidate)
- Du ? (Bruno and Norbert, the experts)
- Du [miguRi]. (Philippe)
- Du [migoRi]. (Bruno)
- Du [miguRi]. (Philippe)
- Alors, c'est quoi ? C'est le patois de chez vous ? Non ? C'est quoi ? (Bruno)
- C'est japonais. (Bruno)
- C'est japonais. (Norbert)
- C'est japonais ? (Bruno)
- C'est japonais. (Norbert)

Source : *La meilleure boulangerie de France*, broadcast the 21/09/2016 from 17.30 on M6

Surprisingly, there is only one rising *c'est japonais*, and it does not appear first, but after two falling ones. Obviously, the first utterance of *c'est japonais* is requesting some reaction, but I consider it a typical example of an assertive which is reinterpreted as requesting an answer. In other words, the structure does not contain an information gap, but the context makes further interaction, namely the negotiation of what they will agree on taking for the etymology of the unknown term, necessary. While the first assertive is a first – and rather jocular – attempt of answering the question for which nobody has a serious response and the second one a mere repetition of that idea, the third utterance is prosodically marked as being a true negotiation and thus a request for confirmation. The fourth one can be considered a final confirmation, and since nobody rejects the idea, it is taken to be accepted. Consequently, in this case I have incorporated into my corpus only the variant traditionally considered to be an interrogative.

Reconsidering the examples mentioned above, the interrogative status of the utterances in (II) and (III) is dubious because one would have to argue for a non-inverted structure with a terminal fall being semantically interrogative. This is normally only possible if there is either another phonetic cue (e.g. a pre-terminal tonal movement) which makes this structure phonologically different from an assertive, or if one is willing to assume an ambiguous structure. As far as I am concerned, the context seems to have a great impact on pragmatic interpretation, so I would rather count them as – interrogatively reinterpreted – assertives. As for (I), the decision whether such constructions should be counted as questions or not is more of a conceptual issue. Tentative answers are inherently hybrid in meaning, because they state a believe while calling for a confirmation or rejection. In my opinion, such structures do yet clearly encode an information gap: The final rise indicates the uncertainty of what is stated and is regularly interpreted as requesting an answer.

To sum up, the examples in (I) to (IV) illustrate cases that were unclear with regard to their interrogative status. In the end, I decided to also retain dubious cases, but to add comments to them and to discard all for which I could not find a justification in accordance with rule (ii) (p.136). Since there is a certain



risk of overlooking interrogatives, I opted for rather retaining too many utterances and to revise them in a second step. This was also recommendable because it facilitated the discussion about the interrogative status of an utterance whenever I was insecure whether to in- or exclude it.<sup>286</sup>

Another problem arose with regard to the counting: Many structures containing more than one question form are pronounced as one turn (and often even with a single intonational contour) and, if they elicit an answer, they do never require two separate answers.

(89) *Ça va, ça a été votre nuit un peu ou pas ?* (BVAH\_1\_00\_56\_27)

(90) *Qu'est-ce qu'on voit au fond là-bas, là, c'est quoi ?* (MBOU\_1\_00\_13\_23)

(91) *C'est quoi, ce... C'est un gros pain ?* (MBOU\_2\_00\_07\_50)

(92) *Alors, qui remportera le titre de meilleur hôtel de la semaine... et la somme de 3000 euros ?* (BVAH\_2\_01\_11\_56)

From a pragmatic perspective, such structures would thus be counted as one question only (cf. Druetta 2009). However, in those structures are encoded several independent information gaps.<sup>287</sup> Consequently, I decided to count those questions as more than one interrogative for the sake of consistency. Also, for an accurate morphosyntactic annotation, there must be the possibility to capture the totality of different forms and even unachieved sentences, such as the first part of (91). Therefore, I operationalised the criterion of not containing two independent information gaps as follows:

Questions containing

- (i) more than one intonational phrase,
- (ii) more than one subject-verb construction,
- (iii) an interruption and reformulation as a morphosyntactically different structure

are to be counted as several forms. Once it was clear what should be considered a question, and as how many interrogatives it should be counted, the structures were cut out from the audio material.

### 5.2.2.2 Transcription and annotation

While extracting the interrogatives, I transcribed and annotated them in an excel sheet. The use of excel had several advantages: In general, excel sheets are well-structured and readable for most people. They offer the possibility of error-checking, so the risk of typos is minimised. Also, the table can be sorted according to several levels, which can be helpful when searching for examples of a specific type. Spread sheets are easily convertible (into csv- and txt-format) and thus compatible with a variety of other programmes, such as Perl scripts or R. Furthermore, manual annotations can be copied or adjusted by means of formulas, so manual annotations can be used for more fine-tuned

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<sup>286</sup> I had most transcribed utterances checked by a native speaker from Lyon.

<sup>287</sup> In contrast to multiple *wh*-questions (e.g. *Qui fait quel sport ?* 'Who does what sport?'), the information gaps contained in those structures are not intertwined.

automatic annotations. Such formulas can even be used for visualisation, such as the colouring of certain categories. Even though visualisation is irrelevant for statistical evaluation, I wanted to facilitate the reading of the data, knowing that big data amounts usually result in the inconceivability of the presented information. Accordingly, I also used colours to visually distinguish the manual from the automatic annotations – columns to be inserted by myself were written in black, routinely filled in ones in grey.

In the remaining part of this subsection, I will illustrate the entries I made in the excel sheet. Taken in the lump, there were three kinds of information to be captured: the (lexical, morphosyntactic and prosodic) form of the interrogative, its meaning and function, and the extralinguistic background for the utterance. For an illustrated overview of morphosyntactic types, see appendix p.405.

In order to collect the interrogatives in a rather intuitive way, I decided to **transcript the tokens orthographically**. Accepting that any representation would be an interpretation of the corresponding chain of speech sounds (cf. Delais-Roussarie 2003: 98f.), I wanted to stay with reading habits. In other words, a phonetic transcription was dismissed for the sake of readability. Besides, I did not expect segmental realisations to be of general importance to the formulation of interrogatives, so an IPA or SAMPA coding would have been unnecessarily laborious.

Next to the orthographic transcription of each interrogative, I inserted the abbreviated name of the show (e.g. BVCN), the day of the competition (i.e. 1-5) and the time position of the occurrence. By doing so, I facilitated the finding of it in the source corpus. This was imperative not only if I wanted to identify each token by keeping track of their chronological order<sup>288</sup>, but also if I wanted to revisit its context. The show name, competition day and time position were concatenated automatically, and used as an **ID for each token**.

Besides noting the details needed for token identification, I also noted the **speaker** who produced it. This annotation could be used as a random effect in statistical models. For most speakers, some background information, such as origin, age and profession, were given in the course of the show, so the impact of those extralinguistic factors could be assessed later on as well. For the present study, I focused on age<sup>289</sup> and sex, so each person was attributed a label which included these two features. This was done by ending the label in SEX(AGEGROUP):

- SEX: F for female, M for male
- AGEGROUP: y for young (i.e. <35), m for middle (i.e. 35-59), o for old (i.e. 60+)

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<sup>288</sup> Originally, I assigned chronological numbers to the interrogatives. However, it became apparent that such a procedure is impractical at any rate because some potential interrogatives may be added or discarded belatedly.

<sup>289</sup> For the speakers whose age was not mentioned, I estimated their age group and commented the uncertainty by a question mark.

A female speaker aged 25 was thus annotated as F(y). It would certainly have been better to have a more fine-grained analysis of age, but there were very few speakers aged below 25 and none over 70, so this was unfortunately not possible. It goes without saying that this entails that the analysis of the age-factor will only be tentative.

Also, I inserted manually several formal characteristics: Each token was classified according to its information gap (semantic type), word order (morphosyntactic type), nuclear configuration (intonational type), question word and subject type.

In the case of the **semantic type**, there were the three possibilities mentioned in chapter 2 (pp.23ff.) as well as a fourth one:

- NNN: unclear (in some elliptical constructions, e.g. *Alors ?*)

The **morphosyntactic type** was captured by manual classification into eleven types, which could be automatically subsumed under the tertiary categorisation of ‘inversion’, ‘est-ce que’ and ‘neither’ (or binary classifications) (cf. 2.2.2 pp.27ff., see also appendix p.405). In the case of ESK and FRO, it was added automatically (to a separate column) whether the wh-element functioned as the subject or not. This was done by checking whether the subject type was WHO (see below). In the latter case, FRO and ESK were reannotated as

- SUB: structure with a wh-pronoun functioning as the subject pronoun (Q={s/S}V, {QE}={s/S}V).

As for the annotation of the intonational form, it was decided to focus on sentence-final movement. More precisely, the F\_ToBI-system was taken as a starting point for the intonational analysis (for the reasons of this choice as well as the category definitions, see pp.43ff.). The final intonational pattern was seized by entering the **nuclear configuration**, which could be automatically split into its two binary components: the pitch accent (T\*: H\* vs. L\*) and the boundary tone (T% H% vs. L%). By doing this, the final contour was classified and thus made countable.

For determining the **subject type**, i.e. the morphological nature of the subject, the whole intonation phrase was considered, so also subject doubling was taken into account.<sup>290</sup> In total, there were annotated eleven different subject types, which were later used for finding potential dislocations as well as testing the influence of utterance length:

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<sup>290</sup> I am aware of the fact that there have been claimed differences between (full-NP) subject dislocations and the use of clitics as affixes (see e.g. Culbertson (2010)). For example, prosodic phrasing has been shown to confirm that structures like *la brageole + c'* are rather monoclauses than real subject dislocations. For a study on interrogatives, such a distinction would though complicate things without gaining much.

- WHO : wh-phrase only (e.g. *Quel duo remportera le titre de meilleur camping de la semaine ?*)
- NUL: null subject (e.g. *Mais faudrait passer à la barbe, non ?*)
- PRO: pronoun only – including non-reduplicated *ça* and expletives (e.g. *Vous me suivez ?*)<sup>291</sup>
- PRD: doubled personal or demonstrative pronoun (e.g. *Alors, où nous sommes, nous ?*)
- NPO: nominal phrase which consists of a proper noun (e.g. *Christian a employé Laetitia ?*)<sup>292</sup>
- NPC: as NPO but with clitic doubling (e.g. *Stéphanie + elle...*)
- NSO: short nominal phrase, i.e. no more than one lexeme with a function word, such as determiner + noun (e.g. *les notes*), several coordinated phrases of that kind (e.g. *le frère et la sœur*), generic terms with zero article (e.g. *rouge et bleu*)
- NSC: as NSO but with clitic doubling (e.g. *la brageole + c'*)
- NLO: long nominal phrase without clitic reduplication, i.e. more than one lexeme and usually at least three words than NS (e.g. *notre arbitre du jour*)
- NLC: as NLO but with clitic doubling (e.g. *le petit Mikael + il*)
- NQO: quantifying indefinite pronoun (e.g. *quelqu'un* or *tout le monde*)
- NQC : quantifying indefinite pronoun with clitic doubling (did not occur)

Neither vocatives (*Stéphanie, est-ce que vous vous allez rattraper avec la coiffure ?* => PRO) nor incisions (*Mouna, notre étudiante dans le luxe, va-t-elle relevé le niveau ?* => NPC) were counted.

Originally, I also inserted the pragmatic type and the degree of an interrogative's context-embeddedness for capturing the discourse function of an interrogative, but I soon had to admit that many classifications were unclear and not easily operationalisable. Besides, there would have been at least ten very unevenly distributed categories, which would also have been a problem for statistical evaluation. Therefore, I decided to rather analyse the influence of pragmatics in an explorative (and thus more qualitative than quantitative) way. What seemed to be more easily conductible for the quantitative analysis of this corpus' interrogatives, was the **speech type**, i.e. the communicative situation, in which the tokens appeared: The scripted comments by an off-voice, which did not address anybody, were clearly formulated in another way than spontaneous interactions. There were found six different speaker/hearer situations:

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<sup>291</sup> Demonstrative pronouns (i.e. *cela, ça*, and *c'*) are also subsumed under this category. The structure *C'est ça ?* has been counted as PRO because *ça* functions as subject attribute and not as grammatical subject. Every as subject doubling counted structure could be left out without resulting in an ungrammatical or incomplete structure.

<sup>292</sup> Of course, two coordinated proper nouns (e.g. *Cédric et Noah*) are also counted as proper-noun phrases.

- On-screen interaction (IA): candidates or experts are communicating with one another



(93) La cuisine, elle va pas un peu comme ça ?<sup>293</sup> (CHAP\_1\_00\_13\_56)

- Off-voice pseudo-interaction (PI): an off-voice pretends to communicate either with persons on screen or with the audience.



(94) Mouna, le look de Dominique, est-ce qu'il vous plaît ?<sup>294</sup> (SHOP\_1\_00\_10\_09)

- Off-voice comment (CO): an off-voice guides the thoughts of the audience by explicating reflections.



(95) Mais estimeront-ils qu'ils ont passé une nuit de rêve quand il faudra payer ?<sup>295</sup> (BVAH\_1\_00\_21\_26)

- Interview (IW): a candidate or expert explicates his reflections in front of the camera.



(96) Est-ce qu'elle sait cuisiner ?<sup>296</sup> (CHAP\_1\_00\_28\_04)

<sup>293</sup> English translation: 'Doesn't the kitchen go a bit like this?' (='Isn't the kitchen a bit sloping?') (CHAP\_01\_00\_13\_56)

<sup>294</sup> English translation: 'Mouna, do you like the look of Dominique?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_10\_09)

<sup>295</sup> English translation: 'But will they judge that they have passed a dream night when they have to pay?' (BVAH\_01\_00\_21\_26.)

<sup>296</sup> English translation: 'Does she know how to cook?' (CHAP\_1\_00\_28\_04)

- SMS Quiz (QU): an off-voice reads out the SMS quiz, which is also presented in writing on the screen.



(97) Stéphanie a une passion pour... 1) les girafes 2) les éléphants ?<sup>297</sup> (SHOP\_1\_00\_25\_11)

- Quiz introduction (QI): an off-voice introduces the SMS-quiz by addressing the audience



(98) Ça vous tente ?<sup>298</sup>

Besides these major factors, I also annotated more specific details, such as whether a wh-phrase was prepositional, the construction was negated, the question contained a dislocated subject (relevant for NLC, NSC, NPC)<sup>299</sup>, or the subject was the demonstrative pronoun. For these specifications, the interrogatives were filtered automatically to determine which interrogatives were prone to contain a relevant element. For example, only interrogatives which had not been annotated as “NNN” for the variable of question word were checked for prepositions, and only if a preposition was found in the transcription, the cell was marked as ‘to be filled in’. Finally, automatic concatenations of several columns (e.g. semantic and morphosyntactic type) and counters of the existing combinations (e.g. YNI\_DEC) were created.

### 5.2.2.3 Data exploration and statistical evaluation

After transcribing and annotating the interrogatives of the 30 episodes in an excel sheet, the collected data were evaluated statistically by calculating chi-squared tests and logistic regression models with R (R Core Team 2016, version 3.3.3, 2017-03-06).

Potential non-proportionalities in contingency tables can be tested by the chi-squared test and – especially for tables with small counts – the Fisher’s exact test of independence (Baayen 2008: 113). If

<sup>297</sup> English translation: ‘Stéphanie has a passion for... 1) giraffes 2) elephants?’ (SHOP\_1\_00\_25\_11)

<sup>298</sup> English translation: ‘Doesn’t this sound tempting?’ (ADDI\_2\_00\_46\_40)

<sup>299</sup> While PRD always contains a dislocated subject pronoun, clitically reduplicated noun phrases can be complex inversions as well as subject dislocations.

the p of these tests is low, the counts are not proportional and hence the two samples are significantly different. If the two samples differ in one factor only, an observed difference can be straightforwardly interpreted as an influence of this very factor. In authentic corpora, this is though rather problematic since samples always differ in various aspects. For this reason, even statistical significance should not be mistaken as a solid proof of the effect of a certain factor. Independence tests are thus calculated although I am perfectly aware of the fact that, strictly speaking, they cannot proof the effect of a factor. Nonetheless, statistical tests are helpful to decide whether a factor is likely to be of importance or not. Such tests are particularly useful for first data exploration, focussing on a certain factor (e.g. *vous* vs. *tu* as subject) without looking at the whole complexity of interrogative variation. For measuring not only the significance but also the effect size, Cramer's V was calculated, using the *lsr*-package. Values below 0.1 show a weak correlation, values around 0.3 describe a medial correlation, and values of 0.5 and over are taken to show a strong correlation.

Another way of determining which factors are statistically significant and of measuring effect sizes is the calculation of regression models. In the present study, all variables are categorical, and the dependent variables can be brought down to binary factors: straight vs. inverted word order, presence vs. absence of the question particle *EST-CE QUE*, preverbal vs. postverbal wh-word, and high vs. low boundary tone. For this kind of data, logistic regression models can be calculated (cf. Baayen 2008: 165+195). However, there can occur problems when it comes to checking potential factors: The factors in multiple regression models should ideally be uncorrelated. As we will see, many of the (so-called but unfortunately not quite literally) independent variables are actually correlated. As Baayen (2008: 182) puts it, in this case it is possible that "[t]oo many variables tell the same story". For this reason, collinearity has to be assessed (i.e. the condition number *kappa* has to be calculated), and the most promising one of the tightly correlated (i.e. those whose condition number is 30 or more (Baayen 2008: 182)) predictors has to be selected.<sup>300</sup> The predictors chosen are then inserted into a model. Subsequently, superfluous factors are removed by the *fastbw()* function. Finally, the explanatory potential of the remaining factors is determined via the *anova()*-function applied to the final model.

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<sup>300</sup> If possible, less tightly but still considerably correlated predictors (i.e. those whose condition number is between 7 and 29 (Baayen 2008: 182)) should be optimised.

## 5.3 Description and Interpretation of Results

### 5.3.1 Morphosyntax

#### General Results

The RTV corpus consists of 2712 interrogatives that were analysed morphosyntactically. For most of these interrogatives (i.e. 2646), the semantic type could be determined.<sup>301</sup> The majority were yes/no-interrogatives (1770 occurrences), but *wh*-interrogatives were not marginal either (814 occurrences). Only disjunctive interrogatives were rather scarce (62 occurrences) and will therefore be left aside for the analysis of most factors. Similarly, the numerous (i.e. 725 and 89) elliptical and tag interrogatives will not play an important role for word-order variation. As these constructions either do not contain a conjugated verb or have to be in declarative word order + question tag, they are not of great interest for morphosyntactic analysis.

As a consequence, statistical analyses will be limited to interrogatives with a conjugated verb form. These interrogatives were classified morphosyntactically according to the...

- a) presence vs. absence of a *wh*-word
  - i. for structures with a *wh*-word: position of the question word (preverbal vs. postverbal)
- b) order of subject and verb
- c) subject type<sup>302</sup>
- d) presence vs. absence of the question particle
  - i. for structures with a question particle: *EST-CE QUE* vs. *QUE* only

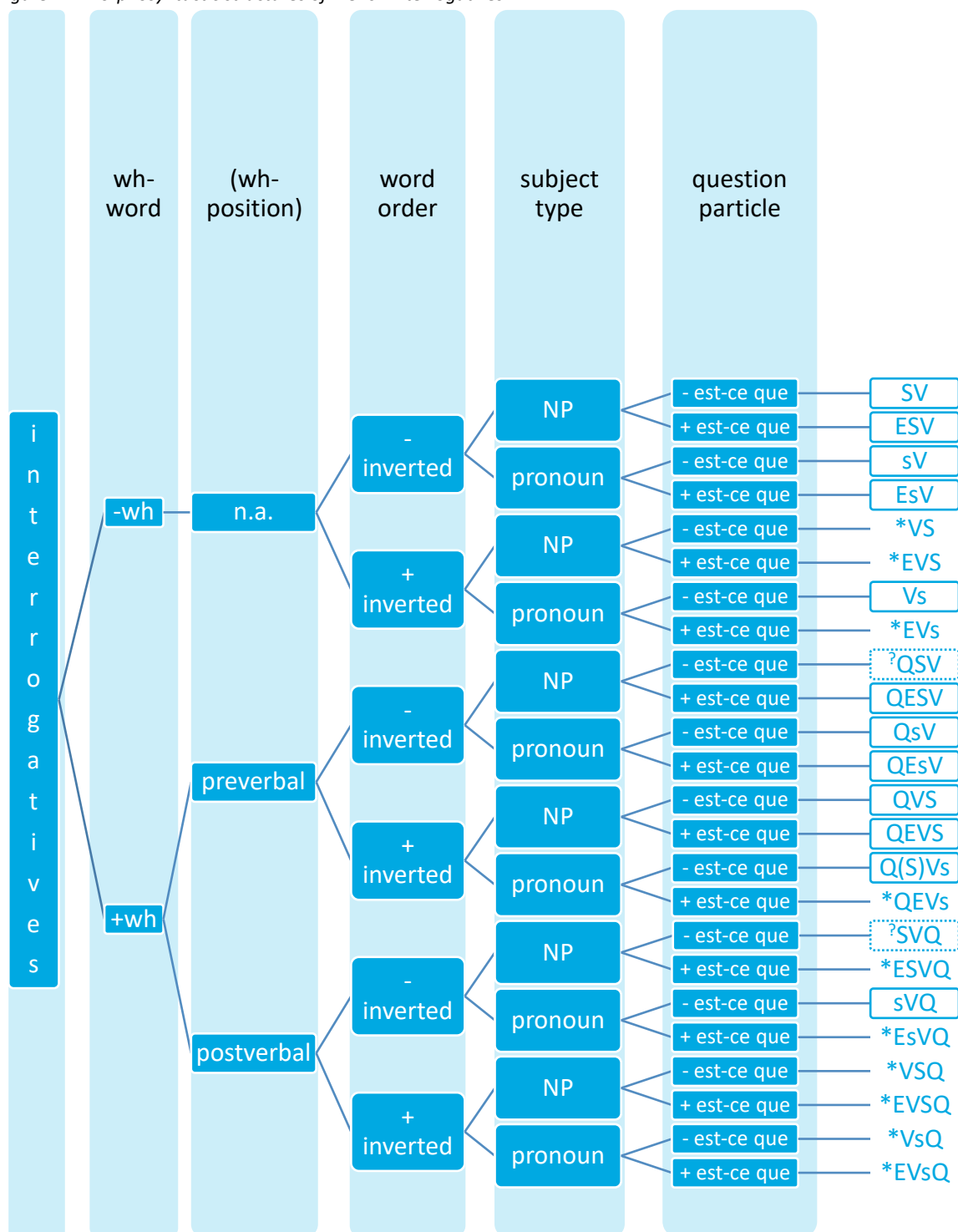
By this classification, twenty-four theoretically possible different morphosyntactic types could be determined, of which thirteen were found in the corpus. Indeed, most absent structures seem to be ungrammatical (see figure 17). The distribution of these types is illustrated in the following chart pie (figure 18).

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<sup>301</sup> For elliptical interrogatives, this is not always possible. For example, a question such as *Et alors ?* could be read either as 'So what?' or as 'Can you please continue?'.  
<sup>302</sup> SVs is considered a special case of Vs, so it is not listed on its own. This is done because otherwise, one would also have to include subject dislocations in the scheme, and this would make the overview much more complex.

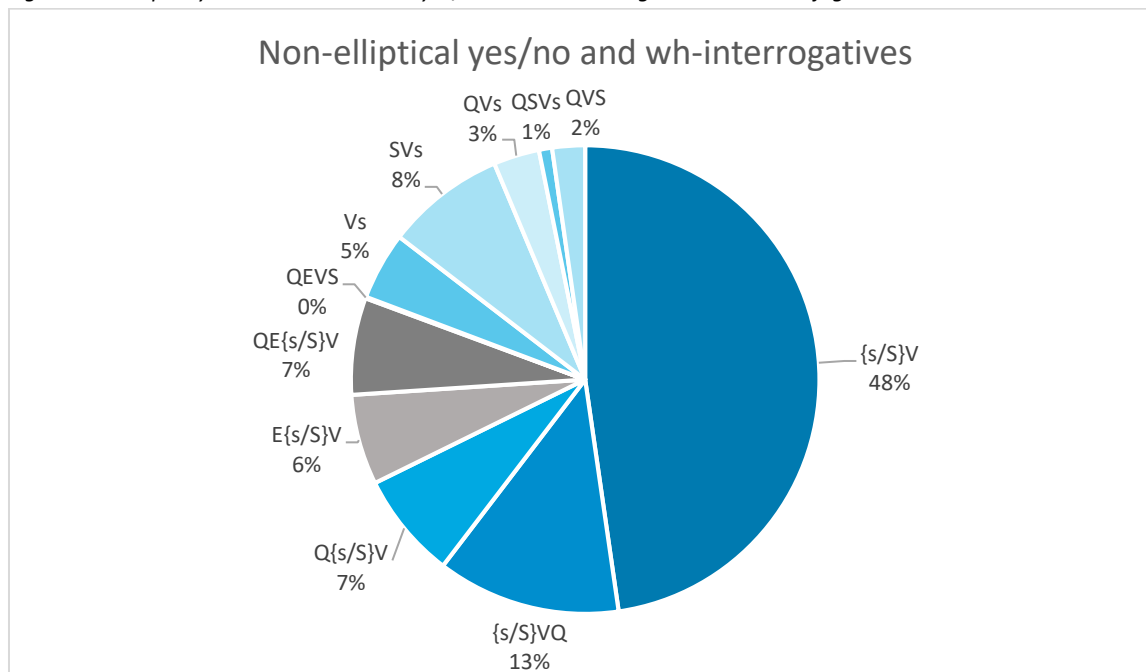


Figure 17: Morphosyntactic structures of French interrogatives<sup>303</sup>



<sup>303</sup> The structures framed are clearly grammatical and occurred in the RTV-corpus. The unframed structures, which are additionally marked by an asterisk, are plainly ungrammatical and did, accordingly, not surface. The two structures framed by a dotted line, which are additionally marked by a question mark, were absent (QSV) or extremely rare (SVQ, only 1 counted occurrence) in the RTV-corpus, and are unclear with regard to their status of grammaticality.

Figure 18: Morphosyntactic distribution in yes/no and wh-interrogatives with a conjugated verb<sup>304</sup>



The declarative structures without question particle (see parts in dark shades of blue) constituted more than two thirds of the structures. Inverted structures (see parts in light shades of blue) amounted to 19.3%, and periphrastic structures (see parts in shades of grey) to 13.1%.

Of the interrogatives without question word, declarative structures without question particle (i.e. {s/S}V) were the biggest proportion (71.4%), followed first by inverted structures (i.e. Vs and SVs, 19.1%) and last by yes/no-interrogatives with question particle (i.e. E{s/S}V, 9.3%<sup>305</sup>).

Of the interrogatives with a question word, a bit less than two thirds of the structures were morphosyntactically marked only by the question word. More precisely, 37.9% were wh-postverbal and 22.2% wh-preverbal declarative structures. As in interrogatives without a question word, almost a fifth (19.2%) of the structures were inverted. In contrast to interrogatives without a question word, more than a fifth (20.7%) of the interrogatives were periphrastic. The question particle was thus much more common with question words than without.

In the next subsection, we will see that these distributional differences can be systematised to some extent. A bundle of linguistic as well as extralinguistic factors can predict the choice of a morphosyntactic variant quite accurately. Nonetheless, there did also exist some cases which were not predictable.

<sup>304</sup> Qk{s/S} has been counted as a subtype of QE{s/S}.

<sup>305</sup> The percentages only amount to 99.9% because numbers are rounded to the first decimal place.

## Factorial analysis

In this subsection, the impact of potential factors will be assessed. While the first part examines purely linguistic dependencies (i.e. correlations of a string's morphosyntactic form with its morpho-lexical content), the second one takes into account the circumstances under which a certain string is produced (i.e. situation and subject).

### Linguistic factors

In the following, several linguistic factors will be examined:

- (i) Type of information gap (yes/no vs. *wh* vs. disjunctive (a); question word (b); prepositional vs. non-prepositional *wh*-phrase (c))
- (ii) Subject type (pronominal vs. non-pronominal (a); *tu* vs. *vous* (b), *ça* (c))
- (iii) Verb type (modal vs. non-modal (a); compound vs. non-compound (b); verbal complements (c); semantic content (d); sociostylistic marking (e))
- (iv) Negation (negated vs. non-negated (a); *ne*-retention vs. *ne*-omission (b))

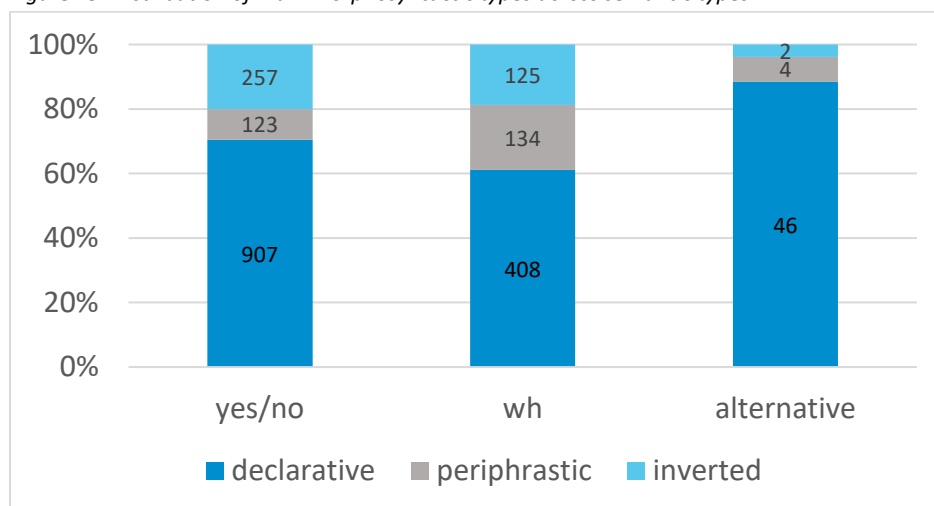
As will be shown, most but not all of these factors seem to be of importance to the probability of a structure's use.

One of the most well-known linguistic factors is the **type of information gap (i)** of an interrogative. One of the oldest categorisation is certainly the distinction between **semantic question types (a)**, such as yes/no vs. *wh* vs. alternative question (see 2.2.2). Studies as early as the one of Fromaigeat (1938) reported great differences in the distribution of morphosyntactic forms across these types (see 3.1). Recent studies confirm the distinct behaviour of the three categories (Coveney 2002; Quillard 2000; Druetta 2009)<sup>306</sup>. As already suggested by the differences between questions with and without *wh*-words (see last subsection, p.148), such distributional variances were also found in the RTV corpus (see figure 19).

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<sup>306</sup> The order of studies follows the chronological order of the first publication of data. As Coveney's work was first published in 1996, it appears before Quillard.

Figure 19: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types across semantic types

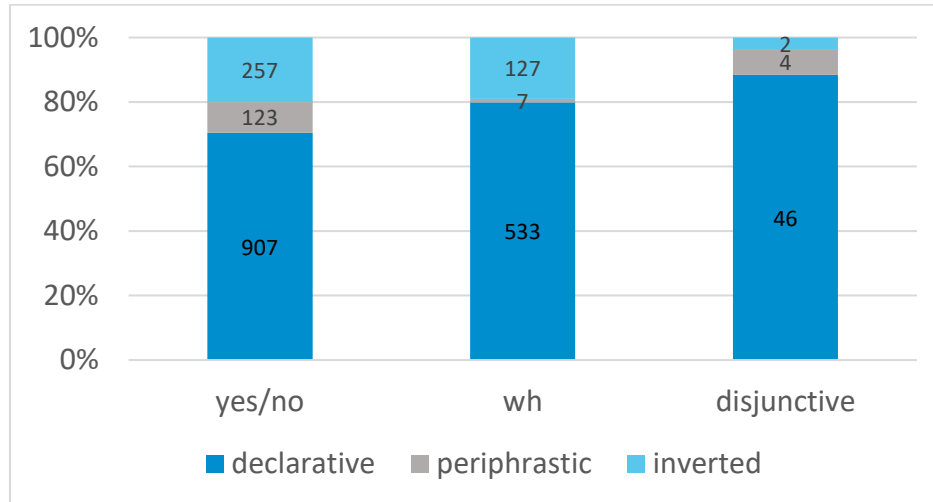


Although all three semantic types show a clear prevalence of declarative forms, the proportions of the main morphosyntactic types vary significantly.<sup>307</sup> Interestingly, yes/no-interrogatives were not less often inverted than wh-interrogatives. This differs from the results of Behnstedt (1973: 102)<sup>308</sup>, who observed that declarative word order was more accepted in yes/no-interrogatives than in wh-interrogatives. As will be shown later on, the proportion of inverted structures may though rather be explained by the extralinguistic factor of speech type (see p. 186). What is more, wh-interrogatives favour periphrastic structures. However, this apparent promotion of *EST-CE QUE* was due to a single question word: *QUE* (see p. 160). In other words, it was not the semantic type of wh-interrogative which favoured periphrasis but the question word *QUE*. If one follows Myers (2007) in analysing *Qu'est-ce qu{e}/i* as a grammaticalized question word (i.e. if these constructions are counted as declarative and inverted structures), periphrastic structures are even disfavoured in wh-interrogatives (see figure 20).

<sup>307</sup> If the differences between yes/no-interrogatives and disjunctive interrogatives or yes/no-interrogatives and wh-interrogatives are evaluated statistically, they are proven to be significant ( $p = 0.01019$  and  $p = 4.492e-10$ ). If all semantic types are taken into account at once, it is thus as good as excluded that the distributional differences observed are due to chance ( $p = 4.254e-11$ ).

<sup>308</sup> And also Fromageat (1938).

Figure 20: Adjusted distribution of main morphosyntactic types across semantic types



On top of the differences in the proportions of the main morphosyntactic types, there were also differences in the subtypes. These differences can be put down partly to logical availability, and partly to linguistic restrictions.

Since *wh*-questions “create an open proposition by leaving parts of the description of the proposition unspecified” (Krifka 2011: 1744), they must somehow encode a missing constituent. In most cases, this is done by means of a question word, but there is also the possibility of using an incomplete sentence. Semantically speaking, one could thus say that there is either an explicit *wh*-expression or a *wh*-null element. Additionally, question words can appear pre- as well as postverbally, and the *wh*-phrase can function as the grammatical subject itself. Hence, there are four variants for a *wh*-interrogative with straight word order and without *est-ce que* (i.e.  $\{s/S\}VQ$ ,  $Q\{s/S\}V$ ,  $Q=\{s/S\}V$ , and  $\{s/S\}V\emptyset$ ) whereas there is only one variant for the corresponding *yes/no*-interrogatives (i.e.  $\{s/S\}V$ ) (see chapter 2, p.38). While the 892 morphosyntactically unmarked *yes/no*-interrogatives are thus homogenous in nature (i.e. all are of the same form as (93)), the 408 corresponding *wh*-interrogatives consist of 250 *wh*-in-situ (of which one is given as (94)), 89 *wh*-ex-situ ones (of which one is given as (95)), 58 *wh*-subject (illustrated by the analogously constructed example (96)), and 11 *wh*-left-out (of which one is given as (97)) structures.

- (93) On met sept ?<sup>309</sup> (sV)
- (94) Vous chaussez du combien ?<sup>310</sup> (sVQ)
- (95) Combien de variétés de pain, excusez-moi, vous avez là ?<sup>311</sup> (QsV)
- (96) Combien de candidats participent à *Les Reines du Shopping* ?<sup>312</sup> (Q={s/S}V)
- (97) J'en avais demandé ... ?<sup>313</sup> (sV $\emptyset$ )

<sup>309</sup> English translation: ‘Shall we put seven?’ (BVAH\_1\_01\_00\_53)

<sup>310</sup> English translation: ‘What shoe size do you wear?’ (SHOP\_2\_01\_11\_34)

<sup>311</sup> English translation: ‘How many bread sorts, excuse me, do you have there?’ (MBOU\_3\_00\_06\_51)

<sup>312</sup> English translation: ‘How many candidats participate in *Les Reines du Shopping*?’

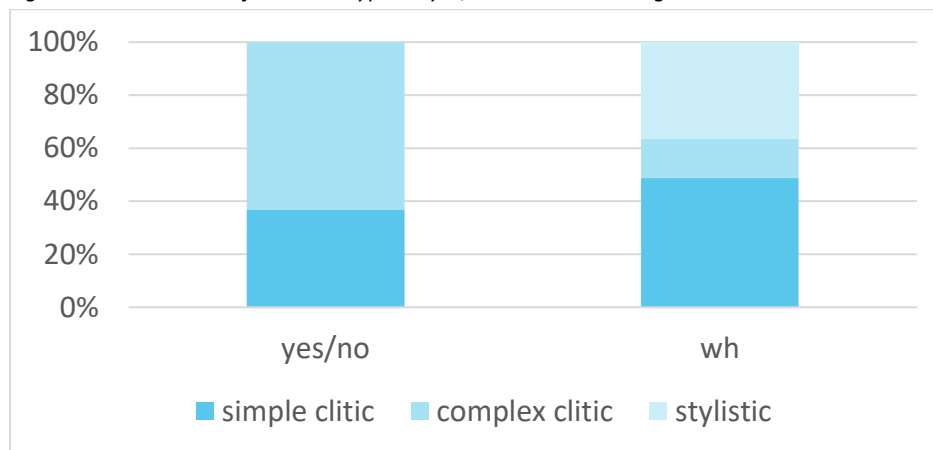
<sup>313</sup> English translation: ‘I had ask for [how many]?’ (CHAP\_1\_00\_29\_41)

Similarly, but to a lesser extent, periphrastic wh-interrogatives are not restricted to one form either. Here, there seem to be two possibilities: one with declarative word order (i.e. QE{s/S}V) and one with subject-verb inversion (i.e. QEVS). While there were 134 instances of periphrastic wh-structures with declarative word order (of which one is given as (98)), there were only 2 with subject-verb inversion (given as (99) and (100)).

- (98) Qu'est-ce que les autres en pensent ?<sup>314</sup> (QESV)  
 (99) Qu'est-ce que va choisir Charlotte ?<sup>315</sup> (QEVS)  
 (100) D'après vous, Qu'est-ce que mangent les canards ?<sup>316</sup> (QEVS)

Likewise, although the proportions of subject-verb inversion in yes/no- and wh-interrogatives were similar, the two semantic types did not show the same distribution of inverted structures (see figure 21).

Figure 21: Distribution of inversion types in yes/no- and wh-interrogatives



For one thing, it was confirmed that inversion of non-pronominal subjects is only possible with wh-words (QVS vs. \*VS). In other words, stylistic inversion is restricted to wh-interrogatives. For another, complex clitic inversion was much more common in yes/no-interrogatives than in wh-interrogatives.

In conclusion, there are several restrictions and tendencies which can be attributed to the semantic type of a question. It is thus clear that yes/no- and wh-interrogatives behave differently from a morphosyntactic point of view.

As far as constituent questions are concerned, the semantic content can be further classified since, depending on what information is lacking, the wh-expression is chosen. That the choice of a certain **question word (b)** influences the morphosyntactic structure of an interrogative has been known for a long time (see studies as old as the ones of Pohl 1965 or Ashby 1977, and to some extent even

<sup>314</sup> English translation: 'What do the others think of that?' (UDPP\_1\_01\_12\_44)

<sup>315</sup> English translation: 'What will Charlotte choose?' (CHAP\_1\_00\_44\_54)

<sup>316</sup> English translation: 'According to you, what do ducks eat?' (UDPP\_1\_00\_43\_42)

Fromaigeat 1938) and could also be shown in the previous chapter. Accordingly, the impact of this factor shall not only be confirmed for current language use but also assessed in terms of size.

Interrogatives with the subject pronoun *QUI* ('who')<sup>317</sup> were mostly (i.e. in 52 out of 59 cases) realised as Q={s/S}V-structures (of which one is given as (101)). This is in line with previous studies (Coveney 2002; Quillard 2000; Druetta 2009). Apart from this pattern, there were only single instances of other structures, which surfaced exclusively with *être*: 1 instance of QsV (see (102)), 1 instance of QVs (see (103)), 2 instances of sVQ (see (104) and (105)), and 3 instances of *qui c'est qui* (of which one example is given as (106)). There was no occurrence of *qui est-ce qui*, which was also absent from the corpora of Coveney (2002: 214) and Druetta (2009: 85)<sup>318</sup>. Equally, there were only two occurrences of *qui* functioning as an object pronoun – and both of them were prepositional: There was 1 instance of preverbal *à qui* (given as (107)), and 1 instance of postverbal *à qui* (given as (108)).

- (101) Qui remportera le titre de meilleur hôtel de la semaine ?<sup>319</sup> (Q={s/S}V)
- (102) Qui c'est ?<sup>320</sup> (QsV)
- (103) Mais à part ça, qui est-elle ?<sup>321</sup> (QVs)
- (104) Mais c'est qui, Aurélie ?<sup>322</sup> (sVQ+S)
- (105) C'était qui, Tanko ?<sup>323</sup> (sVQ+S)
- (106) Monsieur, qui c'est qui vous achète ça ?<sup>324</sup> (QsV)
- (107) À qui tu vas faire visiter en premier ?<sup>325</sup> (QsV)
- (108) Tu penses à qui ?<sup>326</sup> (sVQ)

As for the subject pronoun *QUE* ('what')<sup>327</sup>, there could be observed more variation: All three main morphosyntactic types were used to a considerable proportion. Quite surprisingly, the most frequent structure was not, as suggested by other studies (e.g. Coveney 2002; Druetta 2009), QEsV (43 occurrences, see (109) and (110))<sup>328</sup>, but {s/S}VQ (68 occurrences, see (111)). Since *quoi*<sub>subject</sub> can appear in-situ only with *être* (i.e. only as subject attribute), the big number of occurrences of

<sup>317</sup> Strictly speaking, this pronoun can function as the grammatical subject as well as the subject attribute. From a semantic perspective, it is sensible to treat both as equivalents. What is more, with *que* a clear distinction is not always possible: Since *il* can be pronounced /i/, *Qu'est-ce qu'il s'est passé ?* is not necessarily distinguishable from *Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ?*.

<sup>318</sup> In contrast, Quillard (2000: 120) and Myers (2007: 178f.) did each find 3 occurrences of periphrastic *qui*<sub>subject</sub>. In the former, they seemed to be genuine questions whereas in the latter, they were used in jokes and reported speech only.

<sup>319</sup> English translation: 'Who will get the title *best hotel of the week*?' (BVAH\_1\_01\_08\_08)

<sup>320</sup> English translation: 'Who is it/that?' (UDPP\_1\_00\_39\_42)

<sup>321</sup> English translation: 'But apart from this, who is she?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_01\_38)

<sup>322</sup> English translation: 'But who is Aurélie?' (BVCN\_1\_00\_32\_44)

<sup>323</sup> English translation: 'Who was Tanko?' (BVAH\_1\_01\_05\_27)

<sup>324</sup> English translation: 'Who buys that for you?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_28\_01)

<sup>325</sup> English translation: 'Whom are you going to make visit [the apartment] first?' (CHAP\_3\_00\_23\_36)

<sup>326</sup> English translation: 'Whom are you thinking of?' (BVAH\_2\_01\_01\_11)

<sup>327</sup> The question word *QUE* can occur as *qu'*, *que* and *quoi*.

<sup>328</sup> The structure QEsV comprises to subtypes: the true subject *qu'est-ce qui V* and the subject-attributive *qu'est-ce qu'il V*. As E stands for *est-ce qu-*, the subject is in the first case the ending *-i* whereas it is the impersonal *il* in the second case.

*quoi*<sub>subject</sub>-in-situ shows the wide spreading of {*C'/Ce*} + {*est/était/était/sera*} + *quoi*. Similarly, the share of subject-verb inversion could be attributed to the use of a (quasi-)lexicalised<sup>329</sup> structure: QVs-structures were remarkably often (13 out of 16 occurrences) used with the fixed expression *qu'en {est/sera-t}-il de ...* ('What about...?', see (112)). As a consequence, if the two most recurrent structures (i.e. {*C'/Ce*} + {*est/était/était/sera*} + *quoi* and *qu'en {est/sera-t}-il de ...*) are excluded from the counts, the periphrastic structure is indeed the by far most frequently used variant.

- (109) *Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ?330* ({QE}={s/S}V)
- (110) *Euh, Qu'est-ce qu'il reste ?331* (QEsV)
- (111) *Au fait, c'est quoi, le secret d'un bon cannelé, Patty ?332* (sVQ+S)
- (112) *Qu'en sera-t-il des accompagnements ?333* (QVs)

The distribution of main morphosyntactic types was similar for *QUE* in the function of a direct object. Here as well, all three types were used to a considerable proportion. To the available options *QUE*<sub>subject</sub>, stylistic inversion was added.<sup>334</sup> For each morphosyntactic variant, one example is given hereafter (see (113) for wh-in-situ, (114) for a structure with question particle, (115) for simple clitic inversion, and (116) for stylistic inversion).

- (113) *Vous savez quoi ?335* (sVQ)
- (114) *Qu'est-ce qu'on disait ?336* (QEsV)
- (115) *En attendant, Cristina, que faut-il retenir du shopping de JS ?337* (QVs)
- (116) *Et que pense Lisa de sa transformation ?338* (QVs)

Also here, in-situ structures and periphrastic structures were both very common (i.e. 89 and 86 occurrences respectively). As opposed to *QUE*<sub>subject</sub>, inverted forms were more often (i.e. 35) used, which was at least partly due to the additionally available variant of stylistic inversion (14 instances<sup>339</sup>). Since these distributional differences are not significant ( $p = 0.167$ ), there was no evidence for an influence of the function of the pronoun. Nonetheless, it is obvious that at least the *quoi*-in-situ

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<sup>329</sup> When searching the world wide web, one encounters only single cases of "qu'est-ce qui en sera de" and "qu'est-ce qu'il en sera de", but many thousands of "qu'en sera-t-il de".

<sup>330</sup> English translation: 'What happened?' (BVAC\_3\_00\_38\_59)

<sup>331</sup> English translation: 'Uh, what is left?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_24\_58)

<sup>332</sup> English translation: 'By the way, what's the secret of a good *cannelé* [specific pastry], Patty?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_14\_10)

<sup>333</sup> English translation: 'What about the side dishes?' Preceding utterance: *La viande fait presque l'unanimité. 'There is almost consensus on the meat.'* (UDPP\_1\_01\_06\_52)

<sup>334</sup> Logically, complex clitic inversion would also be possible for objective *que*. It has however been claimed that *que* and the conjugated verb form have to be adjacent (Prévost 2009: 327), and *que* is usually described as ungrammatical with complex inversion (see e.g. Kleineidam 1990: 136). Indeed, no complex inversion was used, but two instances of subject dislocation could be found (see p. 22).

<sup>335</sup> English translation 'You know what?' (introductory question) (ADDI\_2\_00\_38\_37)

<sup>336</sup> English translation 'What did we say?' (SHOP\_3\_00\_20\_13)

<sup>337</sup> English translation: 'While we are waiting: what do we have to recall from JS's shopping tour?' (SHOP\_2\_01\_08\_10)

<sup>338</sup> English translation: 'And what does Lisa think of her transformation?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_44\_57)

<sup>339</sup> The remaining two instances were all



structures are very different in nature: While *QUE<sub>subject</sub>* appeared postverbally only in copula constructions with *être*, *QUE<sub>object</sub>* surfaced also postverbally with many different transitive verbs. Hence, it is particularly remarkable that subject *quoi*-in-situ was almost as common as object *quoi*-in-situ. This makes clear that *c'est quoi* (+ dislocation) is a very recurrent structure, which can be assumed to be typical of contemporary spoken French.

Another interesting observation is that two of the clitically inverted structures contained left-dislocated subjects (see (117) and (118)):

(117) Et Gibé, que pense-t-il de la purée de sa protégée ?<sup>340</sup> (S+QVs)

(118) Et les autres, qu'ont-ils pensé de la visite ?<sup>341</sup> (S+QVs)

Since both of the structures contain *que* and inversion is the least common main morphosyntactic type for this question word, it is conceivable that this kind of structure is linked to 'what'-questions. This supports Prévost's (2009: 327) and Kleineidam's (1990: 136) observation that *que* requires adjacency to the verb. Since complex clitic inversion is ungrammatical (*\*Et que Gibé pense-t-il de la purée de sa protégée ? / \*Et que les autres ont-ils pensé de la visite ?*), a different yet morpho-lexically similar structure is used. In other words, the dislocation of the subject is probably employed as a remedy for expressing the subject without breaking the constraint on adjacency between *que* and the verb.

Since the third interrogative pronoun, i.e. *LEQUEL*, occurred only 5 times (4 times as a subject and once as an object), the morphosyntactic distribution is not very reliable. Its rare usage seems though quite representative of its general frequency in spoken French: As Druetta (2009: 135)<sup>342</sup> inferred from the fact that *lequel* represented only 3 out of the 375 wh-words of his corpus, the use of this question word seems to be very limited in spoken French. Although all wh-subject occurrences patterned alike (i.e. Q(=)SV; the most recurrent Q={s/S}V example is given as (119), the single occurrence of Q{s/S}V is given as (120)), this should not be taken as an indicator for a categorical constraint. As has been shown in previous studies,<sup>343</sup> *lequel* is not restricted to preverbal declarative structures. Although, to my knowledge, none of the studies conducted so far encountered an inverted structure, inversion too is certainly possible (see numerous examples on the web, of which one is given as (121)).

(119) Alors, lequel de nos chasseurs d'appart' marquera des points ?<sup>344</sup> (Q={s/S}V)

(120) Bon, laquelle je prends ?<sup>345</sup> (QsV)

<sup>340</sup> English translation: 'And Gibé, what does he think of the mash of his protégé?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_56\_05)

<sup>341</sup> English translation: 'And the others, what do they think of the visit?' (BVAH\_3\_00\_22\_21)

<sup>342</sup> « [C]e pronom doit être d'un emploi fort limité dans presque tous les usages de la langue parlée ».

<sup>343</sup> See Quillard (2000), structure (1133) for an instance of *c'est lequel* and Myers (2007: 156) for an instance of *c'est laquelle*

<sup>344</sup> English translation: 'So which of our "flat hunters" will score points?' This interrogative closed all three episodes of *Chasseur d'appart'*. (CHAP\_1\_00\_49\_28)

<sup>345</sup> English translation: 'So... Which one shall I take?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_37\_23)

(121) Chaleur ou glace, lequel dois-je choisir ?<sup>346</sup> (QVs)

Its adjective counterpart, i.e. *QUEL*, seems to be much more common: It surfaced 64 times. Hence, the distribution of morphosyntactic types is comparatively sound. In both functions, inverted structures predominated (14 out of 20 as subject and 33 out of 44 as object), but a few instances of declarative structures occurred as well (see (357) for a wh-preverbal and (123) for a wh-postverbal instance). While inverted structures with *QUEL*<sub>subject</sub> were restricted to the form *quel(le)(s) {est/sont/sera}* (i.e. attributive use of *QUEL* with stylistic inversion; one example is given as (124)), *QUEL*<sub>object</sub> surfaced with all three kinds of inversion (see (125) for simple clitic inversion, (126) for complex clitic inversion, and (127) for stylistic inversion).

(122) Quel genre vous cherchez ?<sup>347</sup> (QsV)

(123) Vous avez quel âge ?<sup>348</sup> (sVQ)

(124) Quelle est la surprise ?<sup>349</sup> (QVs)

(125) Quelles notes vont-ils lui attribuer ?<sup>350</sup> (QVs)

(126) Alors quelle influence l'addition aura-t-elle sur leurs jugements ?<sup>351</sup> (QSVs)

(127) Quelle note va donner Diane-Laure ?<sup>352</sup> (QVs)

The interrogative quantifier *COMBIEN* ('how much/many') appeared most often (i.e. 22 times) in-situ (of which one is given as (128)), but wh-fronted declaratives (of which one is given as (129)) were not rare (i.e. 7 occurrences) either. Inverted structures were rather scarce: 1 stylistic inversion (given as (130)) and 1 complex clitic inversion (given as (131)) were observed.<sup>353</sup>

(128) On en prend combien ?<sup>354</sup> (sVQ)

(129) Alors, combien je vous dois ?<sup>355</sup> (QsV)

(130) Combien coûtait la prestation ?<sup>356</sup> (QVs)

(131) Alors, combien Guillaume va-t-il obtenir pour sa salle ?<sup>357</sup> (QSVs)

Of the adverbial question words, *QUAND* ('when') was the least frequent one: There were only 3 occurrences, of which 1 was elliptical. The two remaining structures (of which the first one is given as (132)<sup>358</sup>) both contained *EST-CE QUE*. Since they were part of an interview answer and uttered in

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<sup>346</sup> English translation: 'Heat or ice, which one should I choose?' Source: <http://physiomedic.ca/chaleur-ou-glace-lequel-dois-je-choisir/> [20/11/17]

<sup>347</sup> English translation: 'What kind are you looking for?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_41\_18)

<sup>348</sup> English translation: 'How old are you?' (MBOU\_5\_00\_21\_35) Interestingly, all in-situ structures were with *avoir*<sub>conjugated</sub> *quel* *âge*.

<sup>349</sup> English translation: 'What is the surprise?' (CHAP\_2\_00\_18\_21)

<sup>350</sup> English translation: 'Which marks will they give him?' (ADDI\_2\_01\_00\_39)

<sup>351</sup> English translation: 'So what influence will the bill have on their judgements?' (ADDI\_2\_01\_03\_41)

<sup>352</sup> English translation: 'Which mark will give Diane-Laure?' (CSQD\_3\_00\_18\_37)

<sup>353</sup> Besides, 7 elliptical constructions were found.

<sup>354</sup> English translation: 'How many of them shall we take?' (QUAM\_3\_00\_34\_23)

<sup>355</sup> English translation: 'So how much do I owe you?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_40\_42)

<sup>356</sup> English translation: 'How much was the service?' (CSQD\_4\_00\_43\_07)

<sup>357</sup> English translation: 'So how many points will Guillaume obtain for his room?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_26\_59)

<sup>358</sup> The second structure is not completed. The speaker stops after *quand est-ce que*.

sequence by the same person, the limitation to one variant is though not very surprising and does not allow any conclusions about whether the question particle is favoured by *QUAND*.

(132) *Quand est-ce que je vais arrêter de pleurer ?*<sup>359</sup> (QEsV)

The vast majority of the *où* ('where') questions (i.e. 32 out of 42) were formulated as wh-in-situ structures (of which two are given as (133) and (134)). Apart from this structure, there were only 4 wh-fronted declarative (of which two are given as (135) and (136)), 2 periphrastic (given as (137) and (138)), 3 stylistically inverted (given as (139) and (140)) and 1 elliptical structures.

- (133) *On va où du coup ?*<sup>360</sup> (sVQ)
- (134) *Il est où, le sel ?*<sup>361</sup> (sVQ+S)
- (135) *Où c'est ?*<sup>362</sup> (QsV)
- (136) *Alors, où nous sommes, nous ?*<sup>363</sup> (QsV+s)
- (137) *Où est-ce que j'arrive ?*<sup>364</sup> (QEsV)
- (138) *Alors, où est-ce qu'on va mettre ça ?*<sup>365</sup> (QEsV)
- (139) *Où est cachée Maya l'Abeille ?*<sup>366</sup> (QVS)
- (140) *Où se déroule le mariage de Dani ?*<sup>367</sup> (QVS)

In contrast, the French *how*-equivalent, i.e. *COMMENT*, occurred most often in the form of a wh-fronted declarative: Almost half of the occurrences with a conjugated verb (i.e. 45 out of 91)<sup>368</sup> were QsV-structures (of which one is given as (141)). Wh-in-situ was though not rare either: With 26 occurrences, sVQ was the second-most common structure (of which one is given as (142)). Inverted structures came to 19 occurrences (7 simple clitic inversion, of which one is given as (143); 4 complex clitic inversions, of which one is given as (144); and 8 stylistic inversions, of which one is given as (145)), and there were only single occurrences of full (given as (146)) and reduced (given as (147)) *EST-CE QUE*.

- (141) *Comment vous faites pour manger de la chèvre ?*<sup>369</sup> (QsV)
- (142) *Et au niveau de l'électricité, on fait comment ?*<sup>370</sup> (sVQ)
- (143) *Comment vont-ils réagir ?*<sup>371</sup> (QVs)
- (144) *Comment Laetitia et Christian se sont-ils rencontrés ?*<sup>372</sup> (QSVs)
- (145) *Comment va Silvain ?*<sup>373</sup> (QVS)

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<sup>359</sup> English translation: 'When will I stop crying?' (QUAM\_3\_00\_48\_09)

<sup>360</sup> English translation: 'So where are we going?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_33\_27)

<sup>361</sup> English translation: 'Where's the salt?' (MBOU\_1\_00\_18\_14)

<sup>362</sup> English translation: 'Where is that?' (ADDI\_1\_00\_35\_43)

<sup>363</sup> English translation: 'So where are we?' (ADDI\_1\_00\_58\_25)

<sup>364</sup> English translation: 'Where am I coming?' (ADDI\_3\_00\_08\_22)

<sup>365</sup> English translation: 'All right... Where shall we put this?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_10\_42)

<sup>366</sup> English translation: 'Where is Maya the Bee?' (MBOU\_2\_00\_29\_57)

<sup>367</sup> English translation: 'Where does Dani's wedding take place?' (QUAM\_3\_00\_48\_40)

<sup>368</sup> Additionally, there were 3 infinitive and 6 (other) elliptical interrogatives.

<sup>369</sup> English translation: 'How do you do for eating goat?' (BVNC\_3\_00\_48\_05)

<sup>370</sup> English translation: 'And electricity-wise, what do we have to do?' (BVAC\_1\_00\_22\_55)

<sup>371</sup> English translation: 'How will they react?' (QUAM\_1\_00\_02\_48)

<sup>372</sup> English translation: 'How did Laetitia and Christian meet?' (BVAH\_2\_00\_44\_44)

<sup>373</sup> English translation: 'How is Silvain?' (UDPP\_1\_00\_25\_00)

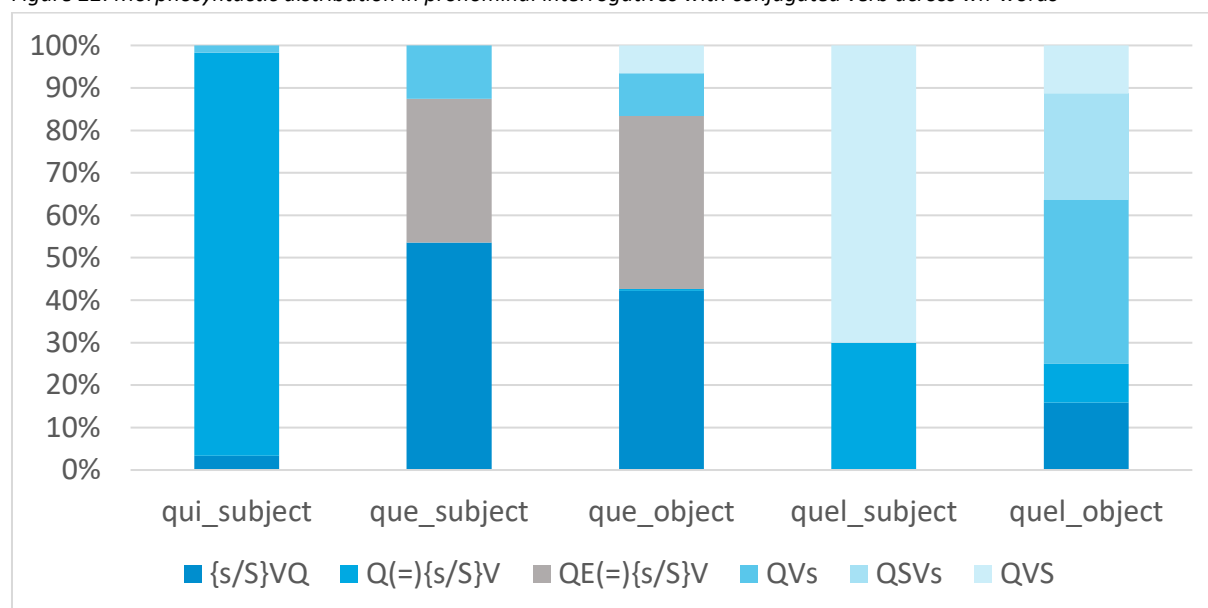
- (146) Comment est-ce qu'ils vont faire ?<sup>374</sup> (QEsV)  
 (147) Comment que ça marche, ça ?<sup>375</sup> (QksV+s)

An even stronger link to the QsV-structure could be observed for *POURQUOI* ('why'): All of the 11 occurrences with a conjugated verb were in the wh-fronted declarative form (three of them are given as (148) to (150)). Hence, the previous observation that *pourquoi* continues to be disfavoured in-situ (see previous chapters, pp.94 and 121), is further substantiated. However, it should be added that this question word was mostly used in non-finite constructions. There were as many as 39 instances of questions without a verb as well as 3 infinitive questions.<sup>376</sup>

- (148) Ben, pourquoi vous stressez comme ça ?<sup>377</sup> (QsV)  
 (149) Pourquoi ils sont emballés comme ça les jeunes ?<sup>378</sup> (QsV)  
 (150) Pourquoi t'aurais besoin d'un rideau, d'toute façon ?<sup>379</sup> (QsV)

In the following, the counts of morphosyntactic types of interrogatives with a conjugated verb are given in two overviews. The first overview shows distributions across pronominal wh-words (see figure 22), the second one does so across *combien* and adverbial wh-words (see figure 23). Since distributions of infrequent forms run the risk of being distorted and thus misleading, I only included question words which occurred more than 10 times.<sup>380</sup>

Figure 22: Morphosyntactic distribution in pronominal interrogatives with conjugated verb across wh-words<sup>381</sup>



<sup>374</sup> English translation: 'How will they manage?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_25\_59)

<sup>375</sup> English translation: 'How does this [stupid thing] work?' (BVCN\_1\_00\_54\_54)

<sup>376</sup> Since my focus remains on word-order variation, I limit the discussion of this observation to the claim that the lexical semantics of *pourquoi* seem to favour elliptical use.

<sup>377</sup> English translation: 'Well, why are you so stressed?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_48\_22)

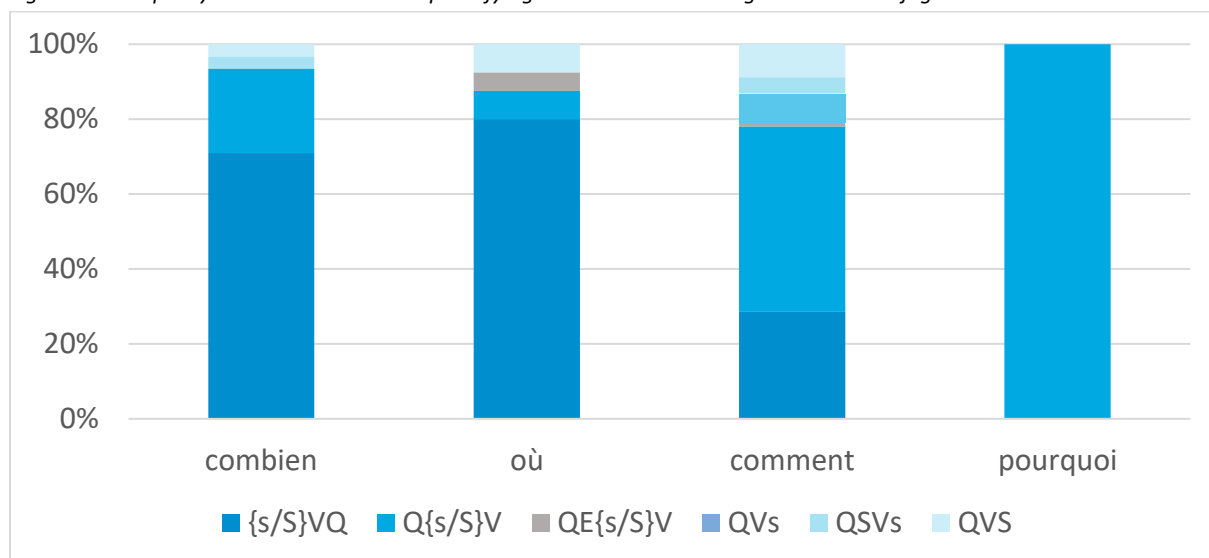
<sup>378</sup> English translation: 'Why are the young people so taken [with this apartment]?' (CHAP\_3\_00\_45\_43)

<sup>379</sup> English translation: 'Why, at any rate, would you need a curtain?' (CHAP\_3\_00\_46\_13)

<sup>380</sup> The threshold of 10 occurrences was already used in Ashby (1977: 38).

<sup>381</sup> Wh-words with less than 10 occurrences (i.e. *qui*<sub>object</sub>, *lequel*<sub>subject</sub> and *lequel*<sub>object</sub>) were excluded.

Figure 23: Morphosyntactic distribution in quantifying and adverbial interrogatives with conjugated verb across wh-words

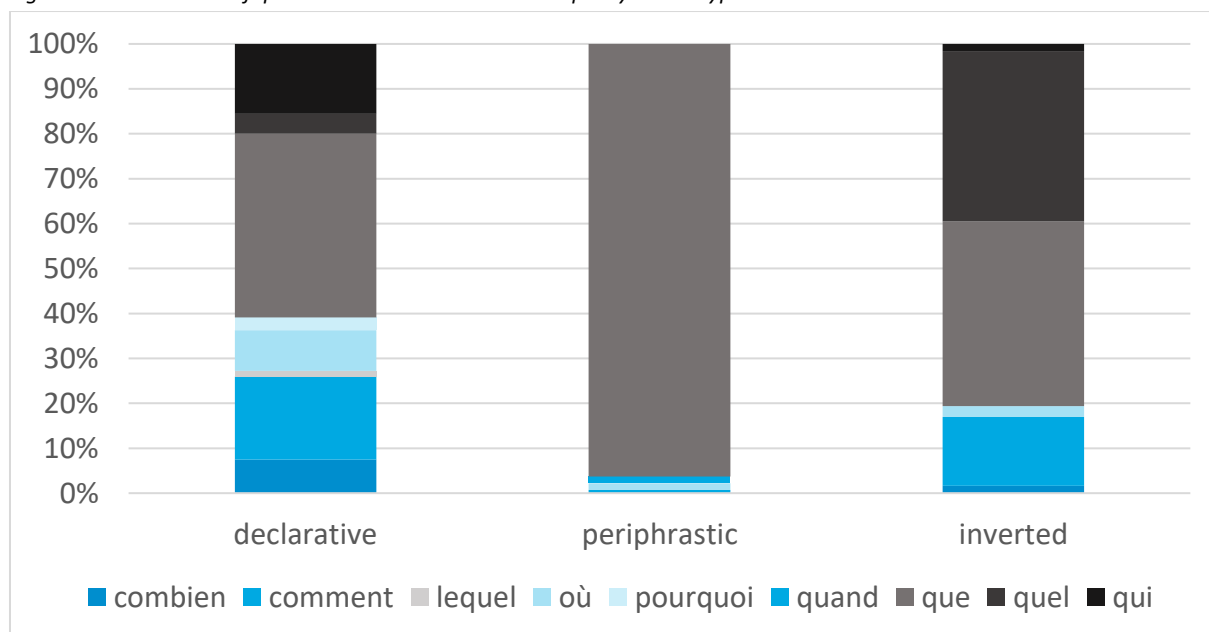


As becomes obvious, the three wh-pronominals (i.e. *QUI*, *QUE*, *QUEL*) behaved quite differently from one another: While *QUI* appeared almost exclusively in declarative and *QUEL* mostly in inverted structures, *QUE* occurred with all three main morphosyntactic types.

In contrast, all recurrent wh-adverbials (i.e. *OÙ*, *COMMENT*, *POURQUOI*) as well as the wh-quantifier (i.e. *COMBIEN*) occurred mostly in declarative structures. While *COMBIEN* and *OÙ* occurred more often postverbally, *COMMENT* and *POURQUOI* showed a preference for wh-preverbal declarative structures.

Let us now take a different perspective and consider the main morphosyntactic types across question words (see figure 24).

Figure 24: Distribution of question words across main morphosyntactic types



While declarative structures occurred with nearly all question words, periphrastic structures were almost restricted to ‘what’-questions: 129 out of the 134 periphrastic wh-interrogatives (i.e. 94.9%) were *Qu’est-ce qu-* structures. This observation led to the above-mentioned conclusion that the question particle is not favoured by constituent questions in general, but only by ‘what’-interrogatives. With other wh-phrases, the question particle even seems to be disfavoured compared to yes/no-interrogatives (see p. 150). As for inversion, we can see that there are only three wh-words which are recurrently used: *QUE*, *QUEL*, and *COMMENT*. As will be shown in the next subsection (see p. 191), this is due to the distribution of question words in off-voice comments.

As the bars show, *QUE* is the most frequent question word in all main morphosyntactic types. Therefore, *QUE* seems promising for an analysis of morphosyntactic variation with the same question word. However, *que* is certainly quite special due to its preference for the question particle and its impossibility of declarative fronting. Hence, an investigation of *COMMENT* and *OÙ* may be more straightforward. They were less common and their proportions varied quite strongly, but at any rate they surfaced with all three main morphosyntactic types (and they seem to be possible with all subtypes). Since *COMMENT* is polysemous (information-request on manner, name-giving prompt, repetition prompt, ...; see also Myers 2007), *OÙ* may be preferable for reasons of simplicity. These observations and reflections explain why in the study presented in chapter 6, *OÙ* was chosen for an in-depth analysis.

Another disparity of wh-expressions concerns the kind of link between the verb phrase and the complement. While in most cases, complements are directly attached as a noun phrase (as in *souhaiter quelque chose*, see (151)), they can also be introduced by a preposition (as in *venir de quelque chose*, see (152)). As it has been claimed that prepositional wh-expressions disfavour periphrastic structures,<sup>382</sup> one can expect distributional differences according to **the presence or absence of a preposition (c)** in the beginning of a wh-phrase.

(151) Et Qu’est-ce que vous souhaiteriez ?383 (QEsV)

(152) Ça vient de quoi ?384 (sVQ)

Out of the 862 analysed interrogatives with a question word, only 35 contained a prepositional wh-phrase. Of the latter, 5 were elliptical. 80.0% of the remaining cases were constituted by wh-in-situ structures. Such a clear preference is striking, considering that wh-in-situ structures only amount to slightly more than a third in the non-prepositional structures (see figure 25). As a chi-squared test

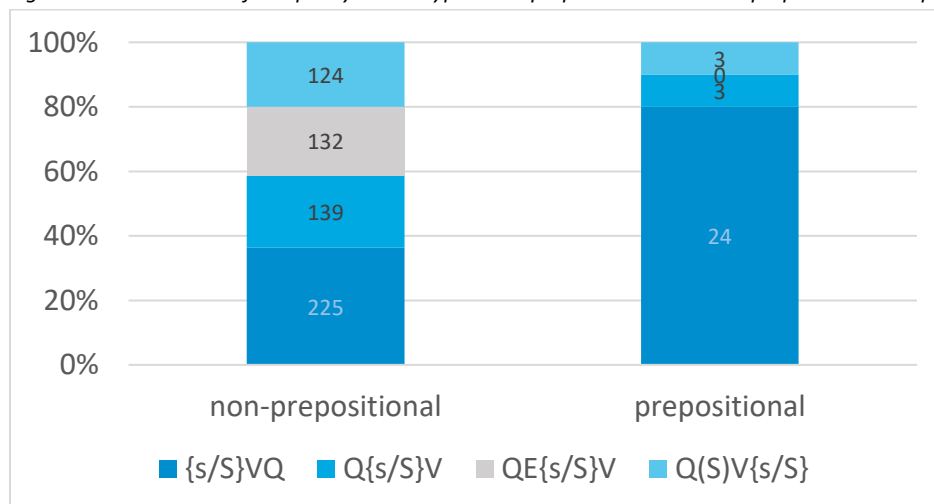
<sup>382</sup> According to Fromageat (1938: 40), prepositional wh-expressions would prefer inverted over periphrastic structures, and Behnstedt (1973: 95) states that prepositional *quoi* disfavors *est-ce que*.

<sup>383</sup> English translation: ‘And what would you like (to have)?’ (CSQD\_4\_00\_26\_39)

<sup>384</sup> English translation: ‘Where does that come from?’ (UDPP\_1\_00\_45\_42)

shows, the difference between in-situ and ex-situ counts in the two samples is highly unlikely to be due to chance ( $p = 3.885e-06$ ). Of course, the two subsamples will vary in many other factors,<sup>385</sup> so the observed difference cannot statistically prove an impact of the prepositional phrase. Nonetheless, the much stronger tendency to postpone the wh-word in prepositional wh-phrases than in non-prepositional ones, and the categorical absence of the question particle are striking. As far as I am concerned, the metrical strength of prepositional wh-phrases may be responsible for these structural preferences: Prepositional wh-phrases contain more syllables and are thus heavier than non-prepositional ones. An additional element such as *EST-CE QUE* would make them even heavier and can thus be expected to be disfavoured. As for the favouring of wh-postposition, one should consider that the phrase-final position is stressed in French (see e.g. Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 65; Pustka 2016: 132). Since such a position is perceived as prominent, it may be a good target for heavy elements. Hence, the observed tendencies may be explained by prosodic weight.

Figure 25: Distribution of morphosyntactic types with prepositional and non-prepositional wh-phrases



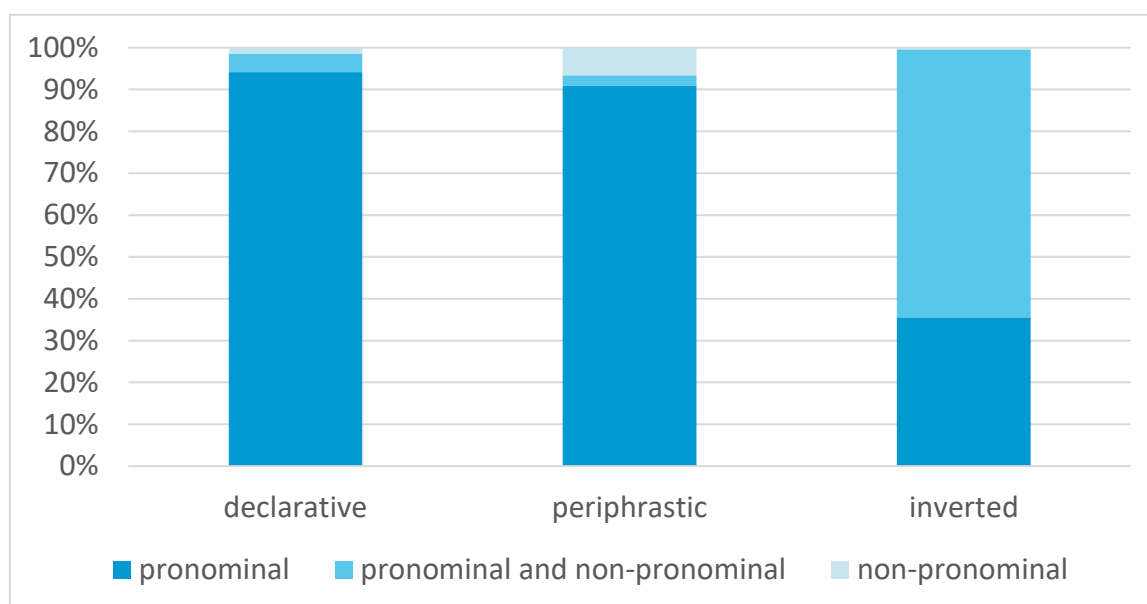
As for the second linguistic factor of **subject type (ii), non-pronominal (a)** subjects were not very common. Only 3.5% of the analysed interrogatives (i.e. 1.7% of the yes/no- and 6.9% of the wh-questions) had exclusively non-pronominal subjects.

Let us first consider the distribution of subject types in total questions (see figure 26). Since stylistic inversion is restricted to interrogatives with a question word (see int. al. Kayne & Pollock 1978: 596; Coveney 2002: 197), a comparison of the proportions of non-pronominal subjects across main morphosyntactic types was not expected to be very informative: As inversion without clitic

<sup>385</sup> It goes without saying that I tried to find extralinguistic factors which might cause these distributional differences. However, there were no clear relations to the distribution of speech types or pragmatics. Besides, there was a question word for which the use of a preposition did not seem to have a real influence: *QUEL*. Here, most straight-word order interrogatives contained a preposition, but the wh-phrase occurred in both positions to similar proportions (see p. 88).

reduplication is ungrammatical in yes/no-interrogatives, the categorical absence of lone NP-subjects in inverted structures was by no means surprising.

Figure 26: Distribution of subject types in yes/no-interrogatives across main morphosyntactic types



However, there could still be made an interesting observation: Inverted and non-inverted interrogatives greatly differed in their proportions of reduplicated subjects. While non-inverted structures had an exclusively pronominal subject in over 90%, inverted structures did so in only a third of the cases. This is particularly interesting because Ashby (1977: 39) hypothesized that the syntactic complexity of clitically inverted structures would lead to a rarer use of noun subjects in structures with straight word order. At least in this corpus, this was thus not the case.

From this perspective, it is also interesting that the possibility of dislocating a subject (and reduplicating it by insertion of a clitic) was comparatively seldom used. In the 892 non-inverted yes/no-structures without question particle, there were left (of which one is given as (153)) and right (of which one is given as (154)) subject dislocations. Similarly, the 123 non-inverted yes/no-structures with question particle only contained left (of which one is given as (155)) and right (which is given as (156)) subject dislocations. It would have been conceivable to find subject doubling by right dislocations (e.g. (154) 'Est-il prêt, cet apéro ?') in inverted structures as well. The fact that this was though not the case may corroborate the assignment of declarative interrogatives and dislocations to informal spoken language, while inverted interrogatives are attributed to written or very formal spoken language.

(153) Et euh... le lit il a pas grincé ?386 (S+sV)

(154) Bon, il est prêt, cet apéro ?387 (sV+S)

<sup>386</sup> English translation: 'Uhhh... the bed didn't squeak?' (BVCN\_2\_01\_00\_46)

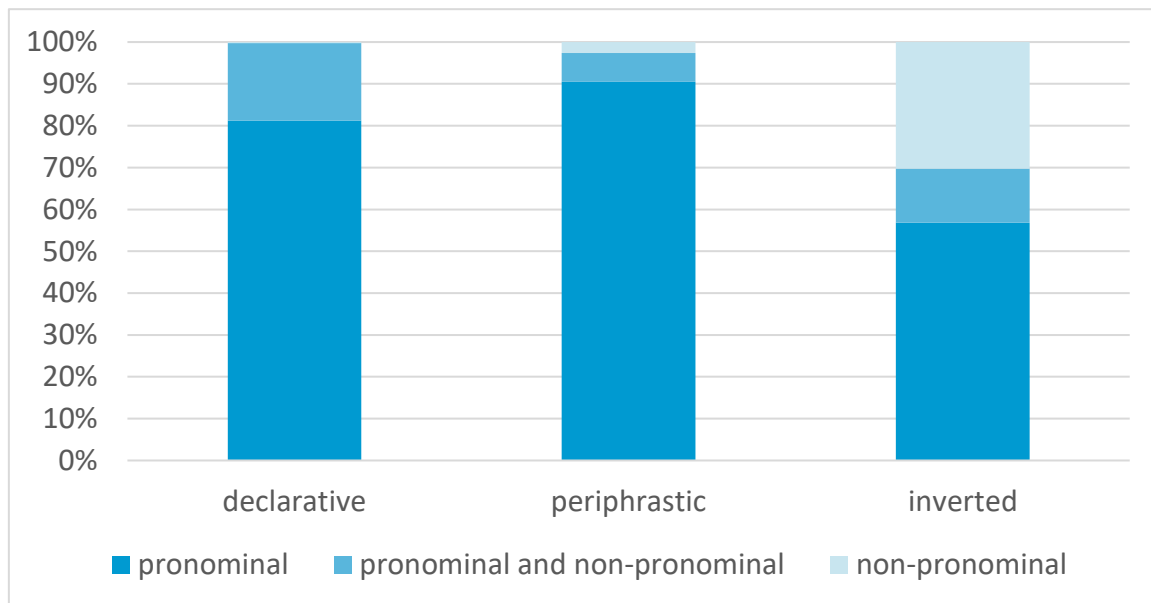
<sup>387</sup> English translation: 'Well, is the pre-starter ready?' (BVAC\_2\_00\_26\_30)



- (155) Mouna, le look de Dominique, est-ce qu'il vous plait ?388 (S+EsV)  
 (156) Est-ce que c'est bon, dix minutes, pour tout le monde ?389 (EsV+S)

In *wh*-interrogatives, noun subjects were not very common either. The only exception here were inverted structures, which contained full-NP subjects in about a third of the cases. Subjects with clitic doubling were not as unusual as non-pronominal subjects, but they were still much less common than exclusively pronominal subjects. To illustrate these differences, the proportions of subject types are visualised in figure 27.

Figure 27: Distribution of subject types in *wh*-interrogatives across main morphosyntactic types



As in *yes/no*-interrogatives, there was thus a clear prevalence of exclusively pronominal subjects for declarative and periphrastic structures. It is certainly remarkable that out of the 253 counted *wh*-in-situ structures, only 1 was non-pronominal (given as (157)). A second one (given as (158)) was pronounced by a non-native speaker and was thus not taken into account.

- (157) Votre produit fétiche est quoi ?390 (SVQ)  
 (158) Les produits sont où ?391 (SVQ)

This supports the hypothesis that *wh*-in-situ is common with pronominal subjects only (cf. Mathieu 2016: 275; Kaiser in preparation; Wallner in preparation). However, this observation extended to all

<sup>388</sup> English translation: ‘Mouna, do you like the look of Dominique?’; originally cited as (94). (SHOP\_1\_00\_10\_19)

<sup>389</sup> English translation: ‘Are ten minutes okay for everybody?’ (SHOP\_1\_00\_45\_51)

<sup>390</sup> English translation: ‘What is your cult product?’ (MBOU\_3\_00\_16\_02)

<sup>391</sup> English translation: ‘Where are the supplies?’ (ADDI\_1\_00\_32\_49) It should also be mentioned that, at least theoretically, *ils* could have been realised as /i/. In that case, a distinction between clitic reduplication and a simple noun phrase would be hard to be heard in the phonic environment of *produit*, which also ends in an /i/. Moreover, this interrogative was uttered during an interview and is not a canonical question. Rather, it makes explicit what the speaker is worried about (i.e. she does not understand how a restaurant can exist without any food stocks) and introduces the comment “Il n’a rien.”

declarative wh-interrogatives, since in the 147 wh-ex-situ declarative structures, not even a single occurrence of a non-reduplicated non-pronominal subject could be found. This means that interrogatives with a non-pronominal subject always contained clitic doubling.

From a proportional perspective, virtually all declarative wh-interrogatives contained thus a pronominal subject. When a non-pronominal subject was mentioned, it was generally reduplicated by a pronominal one. In other words, non-pronominal subjects mainly occurred as (clitically doubled) dislocations, and the latter were substantially more frequent than constructions with a non-doubled full-NP subject. This begs the question whether dislocations in wh-interrogatives only occur with declarative word-order. This is not the case, but dislocations clearly correlate with the use of structures with straight word-order. In total, there were found cases of left and cases of right subject dislocation in declarative wh-interrogatives<sup>392</sup>. Dislocated subjects were by far most common with wh-in-situ (16 cases of left (see (159)) and 329 cases of right subject dislocation (see (160))),<sup>393</sup> but they also occurred in wh-ex-situ declaratives (of which one is given as (161)) and even the generally low-frequent complementary interrogatives (of which one is given as (162)). While the former were categorically right dislocations, the latter were categorically left dislocations.

(159) *Alors cette journée, Roland, ça s'est passé comment ?*<sup>394</sup> (S+sVQ)

(160) *C'est où, la lumière ?*<sup>395</sup> (sVQ+S)

(161) *Cristina, comment il fait, Samir, s'il veut la retrouver cette boutique ?*<sup>396</sup> (QsV+S)

(162) *Alors Norbert, il goûte ... ?*<sup>397</sup> (S+sVØ)

These correlations are tendencies rather than restrictions, but they are quite strong. At any rate, a chi-squared test reveals that the difference between the counts of subject dislocation in wh-postverbal and pre-verbal declarative structures are statistically significant ( $p = 5.913e-14$ ).<sup>398</sup>

Dislocations were sometimes also used in periphrastic wh-interrogatives, of which one is given as (163)). Additionally, with *Qu'est-ce QUE* there were also some occurrences of a similar structure, which is, strictly speaking, not a right dislocation (see (164)) because it is attached by *que*.<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> Dislocations have been mentioned to be widespread in spoken French (Delais-Roussarie & Doetjes, Jenny & Sleeman, Petra 2004: 502). With regard to the function of dislocations, Hamlaoui (2010) points out that "French resorts to clitic right dislocation of discourse-given DPs", and Delais-Roussarie & Doetjes, Jenny & Sleeman, Petra (2004) agree on this observation by adding that for left as well as right dislocation, "[t]he discourse referent is strictly given, textually or situationally evoked or inferred."

<sup>393</sup> This somewhat confirms Mathieu (2016: 275), who states that "it appears that French wh in situ phrases are likely to surface with post-wh material. This is a preference and is not obligatory, since simple questions such as *Tu vas où?* 'where are you going' and *Tu fais quoi?* 'what are you doing?' are also very common in speech."

<sup>394</sup> English translation: 'So, Roland, how did this day go?' (BVCN\_3\_01\_00\_33)

<sup>395</sup> English translation: 'Where's the light?' (BVAC\_1\_00\_25\_36)

<sup>396</sup> English translation: 'Cristina, how what can Samir do if he wants to find that boutique?' (SHOP\_3\_00\_40\_22)

<sup>397</sup> English translation: 'So Norbert tastes...?' (MBOU\_1\_00\_15\_05)

<sup>398</sup> The levels of the variable 'dislocation' were defined as 'left', 'right', and 'none'.

<sup>399</sup> Nonetheless, such examples are not treated as dislocations. They are mentioned for the sake of completeness.

- (163) Mais au fait, Qu'est-ce qu'elle a de si spécial, notre spécialité ?<sup>400</sup> (QEsV+S)  
 (164) Qu'est-ce que c'est que des « long boots » ?<sup>401</sup> (QEsVKS)

Apart from these structures, non-pronominal subjects were rather scarce with periphrastic wh-structures as well. Only 3 (given as examples (98) to (100) on p.152) out of the 136 periphrastic wh-structures did not contain a pronominal subject. Although it is true that the number of instances is too low to make any generalisations, it is interesting that subject-verb inversion was used for non-pronominal subjects. While the non-inverted periphrastic variant was used for pronominal and non-pronominal subjects alike (i.e. QEsV and QESV), the inverted one was limited to non-pronominal subjects (i.e. QEVS).<sup>402</sup> To the latter, it should be added that clitic inversion is ungrammatical with the question particle (i.e. \*QEVs, cf. (23') \**Qu'est-ce que va-t-on manger ?*).<sup>403</sup> Strikingly, all non-pronominal periphrastic wh-structures contained *QUE*. Since *Qu'est-ce QUE* is the only frequent periphrastic wh-structure (see p.160), this is though not very surprising, and one should not deduce a constraint from that fact. As a web research shows, there seem to exist instances of other question words with these forms as well (see (165) to (167)).

- (165) Quand est-ce que le syndicat peut agir en justice ?<sup>404</sup> (QESV)  
 (166) Où est-ce que va le projet ?<sup>405</sup> (QEVS)  
 (167) Quand est-ce qu'est mis en place le CSE ?<sup>406</sup> (QEVS)

The only wh-structure that occurred regularly with non-reduplicated noun subjects was QVS (i.e., *per definitionem*, stylistic inversion). More precisely, 42 (of which 5 are given as examples (168) to (172)) out of 140 inverted structures contained an exclusively non-pronominal subject.

- (168) Et côté agencement, comment s'organise votre salon, Myrienne ?<sup>407</sup> (QVS)  
 (169) Tony, quel est le point fort de ton mariage ?<sup>408</sup> (QVS)

<sup>400</sup> English translation: 'But by the way, what is so special about our specialty?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_09\_31)

<sup>401</sup> English translation: 'What [on earth] are *long boots*?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_41\_21)

<sup>402</sup> It remains an open question whether QVS and QSV are in free variation or not.

<sup>403</sup> Of course, this cannot be inferred by the mere absence of the structure, but by introspection. This has also been confirmed by native speakers.

<sup>404</sup> English translation: 'When can the union take legal action?'  
[https://blogavocat.fr/space/jpschmitt/content/quand-est-ce-que-le-syndicat-peut-agir-en-justice\\_\[06/12/2017\]](https://blogavocat.fr/space/jpschmitt/content/quand-est-ce-que-le-syndicat-peut-agir-en-justice_[06/12/2017])

<sup>405</sup> English translation: 'Where is the project going?' Song by Sexion d'assaut - On t'a dit.

<sup>406</sup> English translation: 'When is the CSE [comité social et économique] put into place?'  
<https://humanite.fr/fusion-des-irp-ce-dp-chsct-questions-reponses-sur-le-cse-dentreprise-642726> [23.11.2017]

<sup>407</sup> English translation: 'And on the organisational side: How is your salon set up, Myrienne?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_13\_47)

<sup>408</sup> English translation: 'Tony, what's the specialty of your wedding?' (QUAM\_1\_00\_07\_02) Structures with *quel* + *être* are often excluded from variationist analyses because they cannot appear in any other form. However, such an exclusion is problematic: A linguistic form can be sociostylistically high regardless of whether there is a neutral or colloquial equivalent or not. The use of some expressions, such as *voire* ('or even, not to say') or *la première constatation qui s'impose, c'est...* ('the first observation one has to make is...'), will certainly evoke an elevated register in oral speech although truly synonymous structures without this connotation of sophistication will be difficult to find. What is more, the semantic content of this very interrogative could be reformulated as "Qu'est-ce que le point fort de ton mariage ?" or "C'est quoi, le point fort de ton mariage ?". In that case, the

- (170) Qu'en pensent vraiment nos quatre professionnels ?<sup>409</sup> (QVS)  
 (171) Combien coûtait la prestation ?<sup>410</sup> (QVS)  
 (172) Où est cachée Maya l'Abeille ?<sup>411</sup> (QVS)

Furthermore, this regular use of stylistic inversion seems to partially repress complex inversion: After all, complex inversion was much less common in *wh*- than in *yes/no*-interrogatives. Nonetheless, this cannot simply be due to the avoidance of syntactic complexity (cf. Ashby 1977). If this was the case, simple clitic inversion with dislocations should be expected to replace complex clitic inversion, which is not the case. Although dislocations did exist in two cases with clitic inversion as well (see (117) and (118) on p. 155),<sup>412</sup> the use of complex clitic inversion was much more frequent than the use of dislocation, which were used in inverted structures only when complex clitic inversion would have been ungrammatical.

To sum up, noun subjects were generally more frequent with inversion. As for clitically doubled subjects, dislocation was very rarely used with inversion although it existed with all three main morphosyntactic types. It was especially recurrent in *wh*-in-situ interrogatives, so {s/S}VQ-structures seem to favour subject dislocations. In conclusion, non-doubled non-pronominal subjects were scarce in declarative and periphrastic *wh*- structures, but they were not so uncommon in inverted ones. On the other hand, dislocations were scarce in inverted *wh*-structures, but quite usual in declarative ones. One reason for this may be that dislocations as well as declarative structures are typical of informal French while inversion is typical of a more formal register.

Let us now turn to the **second person singular subject pronoun (b)**. Since declarative structures are said to belong to a colloquial register, one might assume that in these constructions, the polite form of 'you' (i.e. *vous*) will be less used than the informal one (i.e. *tu*).<sup>413</sup> In contrast, since inverted

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question word would have to be changed, but then a periphrastic or *wh*-in-situ structure would be equally possible.

<sup>409</sup> English translation: 'What do our four professionals really think of that?' (CSQD\_3\_00\_40\_23)

<sup>410</sup> English translation: 'How much was the service?'; this example was already mentioned as (130). (CSQD\_4\_00\_43\_07)

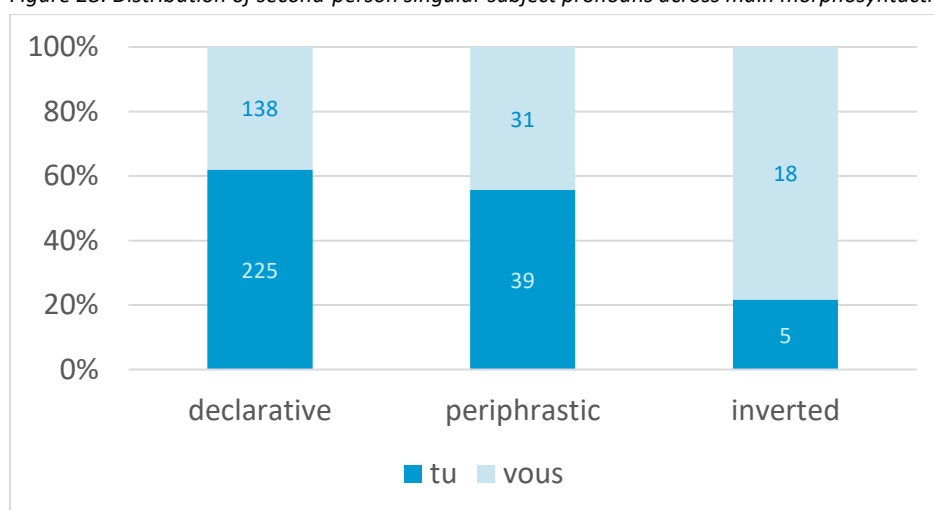
<sup>411</sup> English translation: 'Where is Maya the Bee hiding?' (literally: *être caché* 'to be hidden'); this example was already mentioned as (139). (MBOU\_2\_00\_29\_57)

<sup>412</sup> As far as I am concerned, this may be interpreted as a piece of evidence against diglossia: Since dislocations have traditionally been described as part of the low variety of French and inverted structures as part of the high variety (Zribi-Hertz (2011), these two structures should never appear together. Even if one considers the fact that, in inverted structures, dislocations only occurred with *que*, such a restriction does not explain its use. It still remains unexplained why the ungrammaticality of *\*Et que les autres ont-ils pensé de la visite ?* should lead to a structure which is typically associated with the low variety. Putting it differently, it is still unexpected that a structure which is analogous to a low variety's structure is used as a last resort strategy for the high variety.

<sup>413</sup> NB that the underlying factor for such a correlation can still be presumed to be extralinguistic in nature because the choice of pronoun as well as the choice of morphosyntactic structure would be put down to the degree of formality.

structures are said to belong to a formal register, they can be expected to occur more often with *vous* than with *tu*. When looking at figure 28, this hypothesis is confirmed (contra Ashby 1977: 41)<sup>414</sup>.

Figure 28: Distribution of second-person singular subject pronouns across main morphosyntactic types



In declarative and periphrastic structures, almost two thirds of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular pronouns were *tu* while, in inverted structures, only slightly over a fifth was so. Nonetheless, it should be stressed that {s/S}V and sVQ-structures, such as (173) to (176), were not rare with *vous*, and that a few inverted structures did contain *tu* (given as (177) to (180)):<sup>415</sup>

- (173) Fabien Provost, vous êtes d'accord ?<sup>416</sup> (sV)
- (174) Vous allez bien, Madame Simon ?<sup>417</sup> (sV)
- (175) Et vous, Cristina, vous en pensez quoi ?<sup>418</sup> (sVQ)
- (176) Vous faites quoi pour être bg, enfin beau-gosse, chaque matin ?<sup>419</sup> (sVQ)
- (177) As-tu vérifié la pression d'eau ?<sup>420</sup> (Vs)
- (178) Des girafes, en veux-tu ? Des girafes en voilà.<sup>421</sup> (Vs)
- (179) Comment vas-tu ?<sup>422</sup> (QVs)
- (180) Que nous as-tu prévu comme originalité dans ton mariage ?<sup>423</sup> (QVs)

The use of *vous* does thus by no means automatically lead to inversion, nor is the use of *tu* a reason to avoid inversion. When comparing the distribution of main morphosyntactic types across the two 2<sup>nd</sup>

<sup>414</sup> Here, it should be added that my corpus

<sup>415</sup> QsV-structures also existed with both pronouns, but they were generally less frequent: There were 15 occurrences with *tu* and 6 with *vous*.

<sup>416</sup> English translation: 'Fabien Provost, do you agree?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_14\_05)

<sup>417</sup> English translation: 'How are you (doing), Mrs. Simon?' (CSQD\_4\_00\_05\_36)

<sup>418</sup> English translation: 'And you, Cristina, what do you think of that?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_43\_15)

<sup>419</sup> English translation: 'What do you do in the morning for being "bg" [slang abbreviation for good-looking], for looking good?' (SHOP\_3\_00\_21\_23)

<sup>420</sup> English translation: 'Did you check the water pressure?' (CHAP\_1\_00\_36\_03)

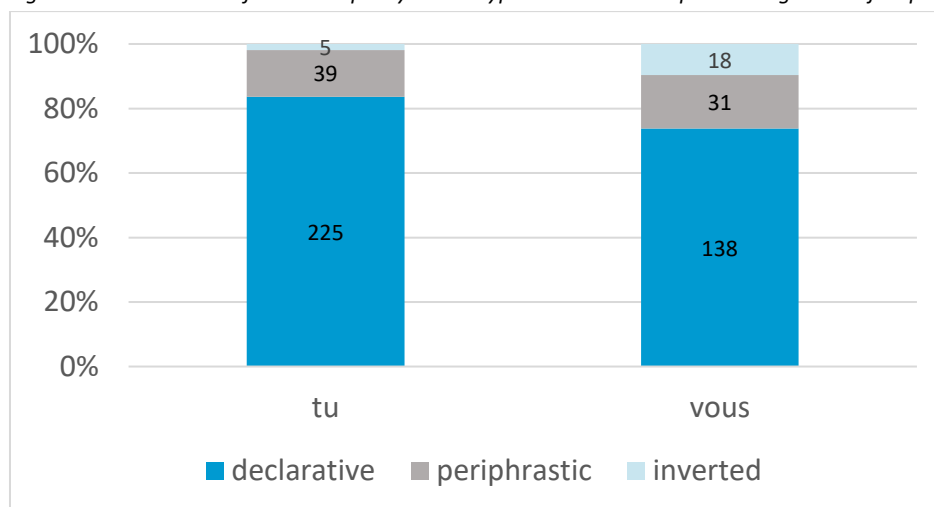
<sup>421</sup> English translation: 'Do you want giraffes? Here they are.' (play on words with the expression *en veux-tu en voilà* 'in large quantities / as many as you wish / in plenty') (SHOP\_1\_00\_23\_36)

<sup>422</sup> English translation: 'How are you (doing)?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_28\_17 and UDPP\_3\_00\_34\_34)

<sup>423</sup> English translation: 'What kind of originality have you planned for us for your wedding' (QUAM\_1\_00\_04\_06)

person singular subject pronouns (see figure 29), it becomes obvious that declarative structures prevail with both pronouns.

Figure 29: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types across second-person singular subject pronoun



While it is thus true that *vous* was proportionally more often used with inversion than *tu* (18/269 vs. 5/187), even with the more distant 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular subject pronoun declarative structures were used in more than three quarters of the cases. Hence, although there was a correlation between the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular subject pronoun and the morphosyntactic structure, there is a general predominance of declarative structures.<sup>424</sup> Using an inverted structure may thus be a good predictor for using *vous*, but using *vous* seems to increase the probability of using an inverted structure only slightly.

The third kind of subject that was examined was the **demonstrative pronoun *ça* (c)**. Here, I tested Fromageat's (1938: 30) observation that interrogatives with *cela* or *ça* generally occur with periphrastic rather than with inverted structures. Since *c'* is another very common variant of this pronoun (in particular, but not exclusively, with the verb *être*), I also considered including the latter. However, *c'* clearly differs morphologically from the other two. Being a proclitic, *c'* is possible only in structures without subject-verb inversion. In the end, I decided to examine both options: Once taking into account *c'* as well, giving semantics priority to morphosyntactic restriction, and once excluding *c'*, giving morphosyntactic restriction priority to semantics. The interrogatives were thus searched for the stated three (two)<sup>425</sup> forms and annotated as 'with *ça*' whenever one of the alternatives was being used as grammatical subject. As a matter of fact, with demonstrative pronouns *EST-CE QUE* was much more common than inversion: There were 44 (17) instances of periphrastic structures (of which three are given as (181) to (183)), but only 1 instance of an inverted structure (given as (184)).

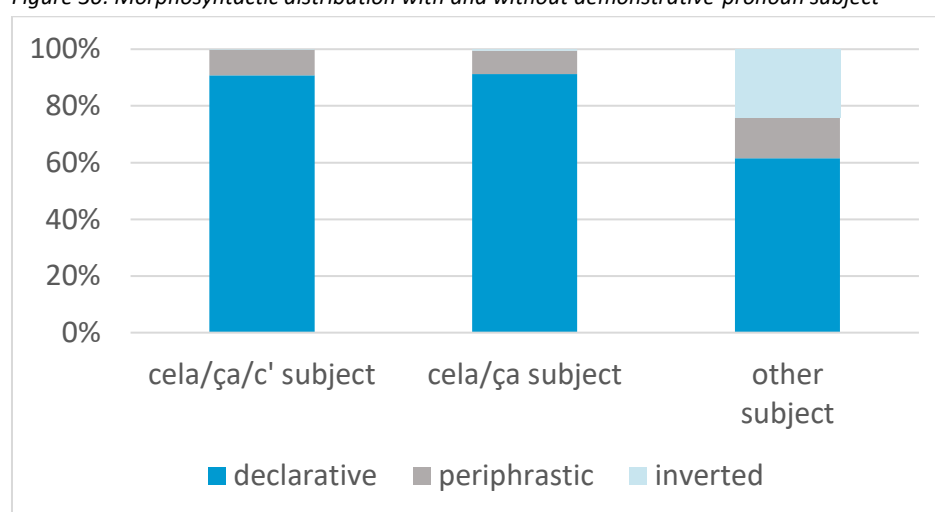
<sup>424</sup> This predominance can be seen as an indicator of the spoken character of this corpus.

<sup>425</sup> In the following, the numbers in brackets indicate the counts without *c'*.

- (181) Ah, est-ce que ça vous donne envie, les amis ?<sup>426</sup> (EsV)  
 (182) Est-ce que cela va continuer avec la mise en beauté ?<sup>427</sup> (EsV)  
 (183) « Une pâte gomme », Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça ?<sup>428</sup> (S+QEsVks)  
 (184) Cela va-t-il mettre la diva dans le rouge ?<sup>429</sup> (sVs)

This observation should though not be mistaken: This does, of course, not necessarily mean that the use of the question particle is promoted by *ça*. In fact, demonstrative subjects are most common in declarative structures: Here, 439 (188) instances were found. If *ça* has an influence on morphosyntax, it will hence most likely be the general promotion of declarative word order. However, such an influence can only be detected by comparing distributions of demonstrative subjects with non-demonstrative subjects. Such a comparison is illustrated in the following bar plot (figure 30).

Figure 30: Morphosyntactic distribution with and without demonstrative-pronoun subject



While inversion was used in 25.6% (24.3%) of the interrogatives without a *ça*-form as subject, the solitary instance of an inverted interrogative with a *ça*-form as subject amounts to only 0.2% (0.5%). Such a difference is, of course, highly significant – no matter whether one is willing to exclude *c'* or not. What is more, periphrastic structures are shown to be actually more common with subjects other than *ça/cela/c'*: *EST-CE QUE* appears with every tenth demonstrative-pronoun subject (10.0% (9.0%)), and with every seventh other subject (14.5% (14.2%)). In other words, *ça/cela* (and of course *c'*) favour declarative structures by disavouring inversion to a very strong and periphrasis to a medial extent. One reason for this is certainly the high frequency of some structures, such as (*comment*) *ça va*, and – if *c'* is counted as well – *c'est + ça/quoi* and clefts (i.e. *c'est... qui/que*). These structures are so recurrent that they are almost fixed expressions. Besides, *ça*-questions with a question word occur mostly with *que* and *comment* (88.1% (87.2%)). This may also contribute to the promotion of declarative forms (see p.149 for the influence of the choice of a question word). Finally, it should be mentioned that

<sup>426</sup> English translation: 'Ah, is that tempting for you (my friends)?' (ADDI\_1\_00\_43\_40)

<sup>427</sup> English translation: 'Will that continue like this with the beauty treatment?' (SHOP\_1\_01\_02\_05)

<sup>428</sup> English translation: 'What [on earth] is a *pâte gomme*?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_24\_56)

<sup>429</sup> English translation: 'Will this put the diva in the red?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_27\_20)

demonstrative-pronoun subjects are very scarce in non-interaction. On-screen interactions and pseudo-interactions between an off-voice and a person on screen constitute 94.7% (94.4%) of the cases. Hence, also the speech-type distribution with *ÇA* may be responsible for this correlation (for the impact of speech type of morphosyntax, see p.182).

The third linguistic factor which shall be examined is the **verb type (iii)**. Since a detailed examination of all theoretically possible verbal dependencies (e.g. lexeme<sup>430</sup>, person, number, mode, tense, aspect, length, ...) would go beyond the scope of this thesis, I limit my investigation to four aspects.

As for the **modal status (a)** of an interrogative's conjugated verb, two interesting observations can be made: First, modals are not excluded from (non-echo) *wh*-in-situ constructions. As opposed to Chang (1997: 19) and Cheng & Rooryk (2000: 11), and in favour of Adli (2006: 180) and Hamlaoui (2010: 157), modals are possible in *wh*-in-situ structures:

- (185) Tu veux te mettre où ?<sup>431</sup> (sVQ)
- (186) Et tu voudrais dire quoi à maman ?<sup>432</sup> (sVQ)
- (187) Alors, Norbert, tu veux commencer par quoi ?<sup>433</sup> (sVQ)

Secondly, the distribution of main morphosyntactic types differs between modal and non-modal verbs. Questions with modals were more frequently realised as periphrastic structures (see figures 31 and 32).

Figure 31: Morphosyntactic distribution in yes/no-interrogatives with and without modal verbs

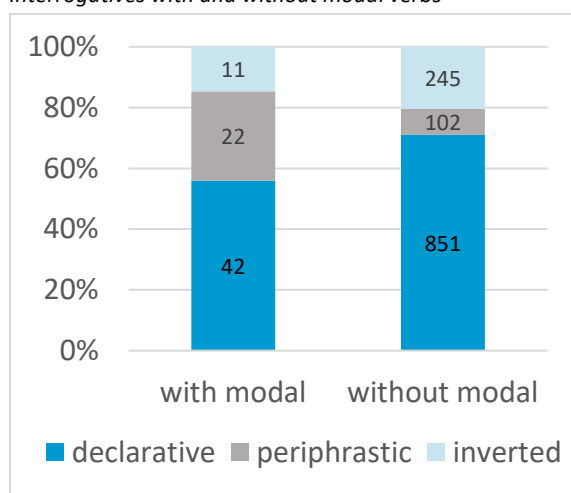
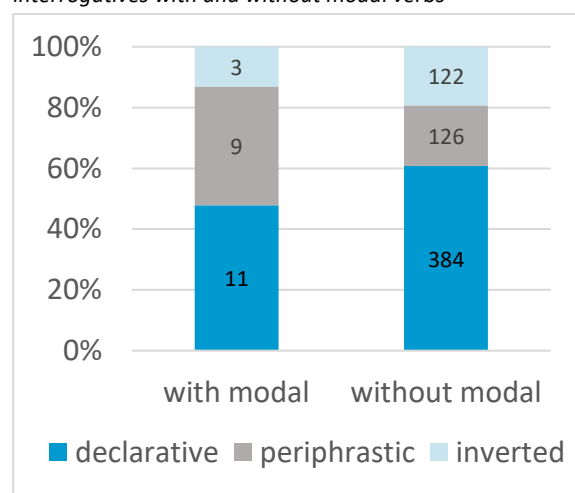


Figure 32: Morphosyntactic distribution in *wh*-interrogatives with and without modal verbs



<sup>430</sup> I am though quite sure that some lexemes do have an impact on the choice of a morphosyntactic structure. For instance, with *devoir* 'to owe' *combien* was used only as *wh*-ex-situ declarative variant: *Alors combien je vous dois ?* (4 times). *Je vous dois combien ?* is certainly not ungrammatical, but there seems to be a preference for putting *combien* in the preverbal position.

<sup>431</sup> English translation: 'Where would you like to sit down?' (UDPP\_1\_00\_52\_18)

<sup>432</sup> English translation: 'And what would you like to say to mum?' (QUAM\_3\_00\_47\_28)

<sup>433</sup> English translation: 'So, Norbert, with what do you want to start?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_43\_57)



As chi-squared tests show, the distributional differences in yes/no interrogatives are extremely unlikely to be due to chance ( $p = 2.699e-08$ ), whereas the ones in wh-interrogatives only approach significance ( $p = 0.08054$ ). Therefore, one can assume that the use of a modal in total questions favours the use of *EST-CE QUE*. It is though probably not the modal itself which causes this correlation. As far as I am concerned, it seems far more likely that modals are more often used in specific pragmatic types and that these pragmatic types favour the use of periphrastic structures (see p.198).<sup>434</sup>

To see whether the **compositionality of a verb form (b)** also had an influence on the selection of morphosyntactic types, forms in *passé composé*, *plus-que-parfait*, *futur composé*, *futur antérieur*, and *conditionnel composé* as well as all passive forms<sup>435</sup> were annotated as ‘compound’. It goes without saying that there are other cases which could be regarded as verbally compound (e.g. lexicalised forms like *être en train de faire qqc* or *avoir raison*, and combinations of verbs like *venir voir* or modal + infinitive), but for this study, the category of ‘compositional’ was limited to the before-mentioned forms. This was done partly to limit search criteria, partly to stay close to Valdman's original examples (which were in *passé composé*). In doing so, I could search my corpus for QVS-structures with a compound verb form. As eight occurrences (see (188) to (195))<sup>436</sup> prove, stylistic inversion is also possible with compound verb forms (contra Valdman 1967: 6)<sup>437</sup>:

- (188) Quelle note va donner Diane-Laure ?<sup>438</sup> (QVS)
- (189) Quelle(s) note(s) vont attribuer nos trois mariées juges à l’ambiance du mariage de Maria ?<sup>439</sup> (QVS)
- (190) Après une première impression mitigée, que vont penser nos mariées juges de l’intérieur de la salle de réception d’Élodie ?<sup>440</sup> (QVS)
- (191) Alors, que vont penser les rivales de Nathalie de ses choix pour être tendance avec un sweat ?<sup>441</sup> (QVS)
- (192) Alors, comment va se passer la rencontre entre la parisienne au style chic et discret et sa rivale tout feu tout flamme ?<sup>442</sup> (QVS)

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<sup>434</sup> Since experiments (e.g. a task in which permission as well as information requests are elicited) would be needed to confirm this hypothesis, I leave this open for further investigation.

<sup>435</sup> Ambiguous forms, such as *c’est* + past participle or *être inspiré* without a *par-complément*, were excluded since they might rather be seen as instances of *être* + adjective.

<sup>436</sup> The case of stylistic inversion with *qu’est-ce que* (example (99): *Qu’est-ce que va choisir Charlotte ?*) was not counted, but could certainly be used as further evidence.

<sup>437</sup> NB that this is in a wider sense also contra Ashby (1977: 40) because the latter believes inversion to be rare if not inexistent with compound verb forms.

<sup>438</sup> English translation: ‘Which mark will give Diane-Laure?’ (CSQD\_3\_00\_18\_37)

<sup>439</sup> English translation: ‘Which mark(s) will give our three brides (and jury members) for the atmosphere of Maria’s wedding?’ (QUAM\_2\_01\_02\_57)

<sup>440</sup> English translation: ‘After a first mixed impression : What will our brides (and jury members) think of the interior of Élodie’s reception hall?’ (QUAM\_1\_00\_33\_23)

<sup>441</sup> English translation: ‘So what will Nathalie’s rivals think of her choices for being fashionable with a sweat-shirt?’ (SHOP\_2\_00\_54\_19)

<sup>442</sup> English translation: ‘So how will be the encounter of the chic and discrete Parisian and her very hot rival?’ (SHOP\_1\_00\_07\_47)

- (193) Alors, quelle tenue aura finalement choisie notre modéliste en herbe pour être chic avec une pièce moulante ?<sup>443</sup> (QVS)
- (194) Alors, comment s'est passé la nuit de Sabine et Laurent ?<sup>444</sup> (QVS)
- (195) Alors, comment s'est passé votre nuit ?<sup>445</sup> (QVS)

Most occurrences found were in future tense ((188) to (192) in *futur composé*, and (193) in *futur antérieur*), the rest in *passé composé* (see (194) and (195)). None of the other possibilities occurred. Hence, the question arises whether stylistic inversion with compound verb forms is restricted to these two grammatical categories. However, the fairly recurrent use of future tense is also explicable by the situation in which these forms occur: All future forms were produced in off-voice comments and were used either to keep the audience in suspense or to introduce scenes which offer the answers to those questions. These comments are thus typically moving the plot forward. Using the past tense in this kind of comment is only sensible for flashbacks or unknown actions which will be discovered later on. The use of passive voice is generally quite restricted (cf. Willems 2000), and occurrences may thus be expected to be quite rare anyway. Therefore, it is no surprise that no such construction was found. What is more, on (trustworthy) websites stylistic inversion is used with passive voice (see (196) and (197)) as well as other verbs in *passé composé* (see (198) and (199)):

- (196) Où a été tourné "Le Jour le plus long" ?<sup>446</sup>
- (197) Quand a été écrit le livre de la jungle ?<sup>447</sup>
- (198) Qu'a fait Harvey Weinstein ?<sup>448</sup>
- (199) Comment vous est venue l'idée du roman ?<sup>449</sup>

If there is some truth in Valdman's observation that questions like *Où ont habité vos parents ?* or *Qu'a dit Jean ?* are barely acceptable, the reason for this will lie elsewhere. My first guess would be that this is a frequency issue. While there are certain simple-form structures like *Où est/sont + NP* and *Que fait/font + NP* which are frequently used even in ordinary speech, other forms are hardly ever used. As the morpho-lexical content of his two examples clearly suggests an everyday conversation rather than a truly written or more formal context, formulations like *Et vos parents, ils ont habité où ?* or *Et Qu'est-ce qu'il a dit, Jean ?* will simply be more frequently used and thus more readily accepted.

If we compare the interrogatives with compound verb forms to the ones without (see figures 33 and 34), it becomes clear that stylistic inversion was about equally rare in both conditions. More

<sup>443</sup> English translation: 'So which outfit will our budding modelist have chosen in order to be chic with a tight piece of clothing?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_49\_07)

<sup>444</sup> English translation: 'So how was Sabine and Laurent's night?' (BVCN\_1\_00\_59\_43)

<sup>445</sup> English translation: 'So how was your night?' (BVCN\_1\_01\_00\_22)

<sup>446</sup> <https://www.ouest-france.fr/europe/france/d-day-ou-ete-tourne-le-jour-le-plus-long-2487949> [31/10/2017]

<sup>447</sup> <http://education.francetv.fr/matiere/actualite/ce1/video/quand-a-ete-ecrit-le-livre-de-la-jungle> [01/11/2017]

<sup>448</sup> [https://ptitlibe.liberation.fr/p-tit-libe/2017/10/20/qu-a-fait-harvey-weinstein\\_1604079](https://ptitlibe.liberation.fr/p-tit-libe/2017/10/20/qu-a-fait-harvey-weinstein_1604079) [31/10/2017]

<sup>449</sup> <http://www.lecthot.com/entretien-avec-leonor-de-recondo> [01/11/2017]

surprisingly, there are though observable other differences in the proportions of declarative and inverted structures:

Figure 33: Distribution of morphosyntactic types with compound and non-compound verb forms in yes/no-interrogatives

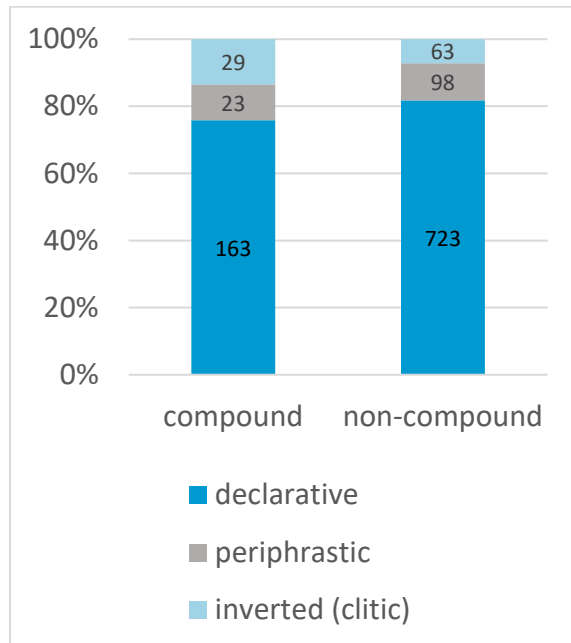
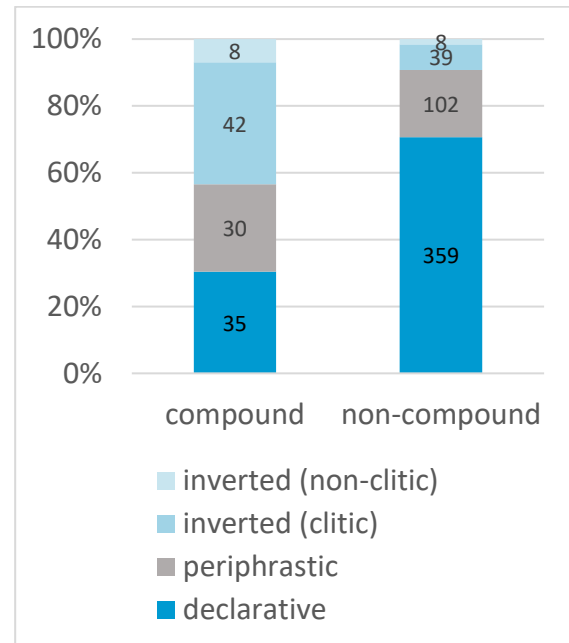


Figure 34: Distribution of morphosyntactic types with compound and non-compound verb forms in wh-interrogatives



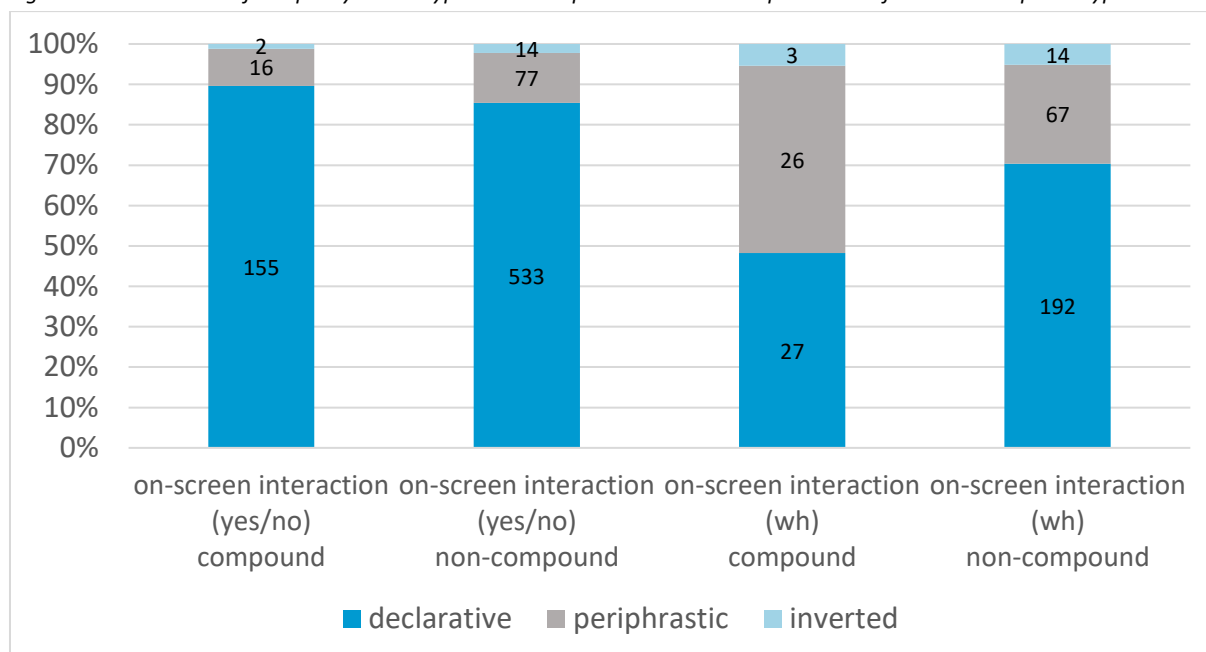
By the looks of it, compound verb forms promote thus the use of clitic inversion instead of declarative forms.<sup>450</sup> This is particularly surprising because Ashby (1977: 40) found no inverted structures with compound verb forms. The author put this down to syntactic complexity (i.e. the splitting of the verb form by inserting a pronoun). As far as I am concerned, such an explanation has always been dubious because syntactic complexity depends on one's perspective. Indeed, I do not see why the insertion of a pronoun between an auxiliary and a participle should be any costlier than the insertion between a verb and an object. At any rate, my data clearly prove Ashby wrong.

However, a promotion of inversion by compound verb forms, as suggested by figures 33 and 34, would be difficult to explain. Being at loss for an explanation, I considered the fact that the two subsamples differed in many more factors than just the compositionality of the verb. The most evident factorial difference lied in the uneven distribution of speech types: From a proportional perspective, compound verb forms were mentioned much more often in off-voice comments than in on-screen interactions. Since interrogatives in on-screen interactions are overall more frequent, speech type distributions had the potential to distort a comparison between verbally compound and non-compound structures. For verifying whether it could really be verbal compositionality which led to the distributional differences

<sup>450</sup> The differences between the distributions of main morphosyntactic types can also be shown to be significant ( $p < 2.2e-16$ ).

observed, comparisons had to be made within the same speech type. As suspected, when taking only direct interactions, the apparent word-order differences are substantially reduced (see figure 35):

Figure 35: Distribution of morphosyntactic types with compound and non-compound verb forms across speech types



However, there might be a difference in the probability of the use of the question particle. As chi-squared tests show, the differences in the distribution of morphosyntactic types in on-screen interactions may very well be due to chance in the sample of yes/no-interrogatives ( $p = 0.336$ ), but not in the subsample of wh-interrogatives ( $p = 0.003529$ ). Therefore, verbal compositionality does not seem to have a general main effect on the morphosyntactic form of an interrogative, but there may be some influence on wh-interrogatives. Nonetheless, it cannot be proved that it is verbal compositionality and not some other factor in this subsample, which is responsible for the difference. In fact, I'd rather expect some other factor to be responsible.<sup>451</sup>

A similar claim can be made regarding the effect of **verbal complements (c)**. According to Chevalier (1969: 37)<sup>452</sup>, *EST-CE QUE* would be used to disambiguate the interrogative scope in yes/no-interrogatives. More precisely, it would be a strategy to encode broad focus, i.e. its employment would clarify that “the verb, and not some other constituent, is being questioned.” (Ashby 1977: 44)

Consequently, *EST-CE QUE* should be (almost) exclusively used for interrogatives that contain a verbal complement. This alleged predominance of verbal complements in periphrastic yes/no-interrogatives can though be diminished by my data. At least 23 out of the 124 analysed tokens were without any

<sup>451</sup> Also, there may be a relation between speech type and verbal compositionality: In comments, there were significantly more inverted structures. This will be discussed on p. 186.

<sup>452</sup> Unfortunately, this article was not available to me. Whenever I quote Chevalier 1969, I quote thus only indirectly, using the references from Ashby 1977.

relevant verbal argument or adjunct.<sup>453</sup> They consisted of intransitive verbs without relevant adjuncts<sup>454</sup> (see (200)), reflexive verbs without relevant adjuncts (see (201)), copula constructions (see (202)) and set expressions (see (203)).

- (200) Et toi, est-ce que tu as bien dormi ?<sup>455</sup> (s+EsV)
- (201) Dis-donc, p p re, est-ce qu'on va se promener ?<sup>456</sup> (EsV)
- (202) Est-ce que c'est bon ?<sup>457</sup> (EsV)
- (203) Cristina, cette jupe en cuir camel, est-ce que  a le fait ?<sup>458</sup> (S+EsV)

What is more, there were also some instances with complements which showed that *EST-CE QUE* cannot be a means of disambiguation. First, for some verb-object combinations there is no necessity to differentiate between a focus on the whole verbal phrase versus only the direct object. This is, for example, the case in (204). As this interrogative is uttered during a game in which each person has to guess what desert he or she is (similar to the game *Qui suis-je ?*, in which participants have to guess which celebrity they are), it is obvious that participants will try to guess which ingredients their desserts contain. The point of asking whether one 'has nougat' is to gain information on what kind of desert one is. Hence, even if the question was understood as 'Do I contain NOUGAT?', the purpose of this utterance would still be fulfilled. Secondly, there were several cases of *EST-CE QUE* with pronominalized objects (of which one is given as (205)). Since clitics cannot be clefted, the object pronoun would have to be a demonstrative in order to be focused (*C'est {\*le/cela} que notre coiffeuse   l'am ricaine va remarquer ?*). Putting it differently, a pronominalized direct object can never be an instance of narrow focus. For such an emphasis on the before-mentioned direct object, demonstrative pronouns<sup>459</sup> are used.

- (204) Est-ce que j'ai du nougat ?<sup>460</sup> (EsV)
- (205) Est-ce que notre coiffeuse   l'am ricaine va le remarquer ?<sup>461</sup> (ESV)

There is, though, an even weightier argument against such a semantic conditioning of the question particle in total questions: If the question particle was used to achieve unambiguously broad focus,

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<sup>453</sup> There were also several cases which I estimated too contentious to be included in the counts. Since Ashby (1977) does not explicate his criteria for what he calls "complements" (he only indicates that *Tu viens demain ?* has a complement and *Est-ce que vous fumez, monsieur ?* does not), a narrow interpretation of 'structure without complement' was recommendable. Hence, any kind of object or adverbial was counted as a verbal addition.

<sup>454</sup> Strictly speaking, *bien* is an adjunct as well. However, this adjunct is different from the ones mentioned by Chevalier (1969) because it cannot be clefted (cf. the semantic difference that is provoked by clefting *bien*: *C'est bien que vous avez dormi ?* 'Is it good that you have slept?') Therefore, it is not relevant.

<sup>455</sup> English translation: 'And you -did you sleep well?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_13\_01)

<sup>456</sup> English translation: 'Well, fatty(/grandpa), shall we go for a walk?' (BVAH\_1\_00\_54\_19)

<sup>457</sup> English translation: 'Is it good?' (BVAH\_3\_00\_27\_30)

<sup>458</sup> English translation: 'Cristina, does that beige leather skirt do it?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_17\_23)

<sup>459</sup> For persons, a heavy pronominal (*lui/elle*) would be used.

<sup>460</sup> English translation: 'Do I contain nougat?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_35\_48)

<sup>461</sup> English translation: 'Will our American style hairdresser notice it?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_21\_50)

clefts could not occur with *EST-CE QUE*.<sup>462</sup> As my corpus proves, this is however very well possible (the two cleft structures with question particle of my corpus are given as (206) and (207)).

(206) Mais est-ce que c'est avec la coupe du King qu'elle deviendra queen ?<sup>463</sup> (EsV)

(207) Est-ce que c'est pour ça justement que vous avez des chambres avec deux petits lits plutôt que des grands lits ?<sup>464</sup> (EsV)

To put it briefly, my corpus provides numerous convincing counterexamples, which clearly prove Chevalier's hypothesis to be wrong. Yet, there may still exist some correlation between verbal complements and morphosyntactic types. In Ashby's corpus, only 1 out of 13 periphrastic yes/no-interrogatives did not contain any verbal addition. Since the author does not say anything about verbal additions in other morphosyntactic structures, this observation could though also be due to a general predominance of interrogatives with verbal additions. To see whether periphrastic forms appear proportionally more often with verbal additions than declarative or inverted forms do, 50 randomly chosen occurrences of each of the two other main morphosyntactic types have been annotated as well.

Interestingly, periphrastic and inverted structures showed similar proportions of lone verbs (18.5% and 12.0%) while declarative structures did not (42.0%). Verbs with neither an argument nor a relevant adjunct appeared thus significantly more often in declarative structures.<sup>465</sup> When taking a closer look, this can (at least partly) be attributed to frequent expressions, such as *ça va*, *tu vois* or *ça a été*. With these short (and quasi-lexicalised) turns, *EST-CE QUE* would give the question a rather unusual weight<sup>466</sup>, as if one wanted the interlocutor to stop to think about the answer. Hence, I hypothesize that ritualised questions are much more common as sV-structures and that, since most ritualised questions do not contain a complement, the proportion of complements is reduced in declarative yes/no-interrogatives.

A further promising aspect of an interrogative's VP is the **semantic content of the verb (d)**. In my corpus, semantically empty verbs, such as *être* in copula constructions and *avoir* in combination with an indication of age, tended to occur with postverbal wh-words.

(208) Un accueil à l'américaine, c'est comment ?<sup>467</sup> (S+sVQ)

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<sup>462</sup> For further (constructed) examples, see also appendix, p.399. For information on cleft-structures and their prosodic realisation, see Doetjes et al. (2004); Beyssade et al. (2004).

<sup>463</sup> English translation: 'But will the hair cut of the king make her the [shopping] queen?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_52\_11)

<sup>464</sup> English translation: 'Is that the reason why you have two small beds instead of one big one?' (BVAH\_1\_00\_29\_44)

<sup>465</sup> The differences are quite unlikely to be due to chance ( $p = 0.01196$ ).

<sup>466</sup> This effect may be caused by the lengthening of the utterance as well as the morphosyntactically explicit encoding of the utterance's questioning character.

<sup>467</sup> English translation: 'What is an American reception like?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_14\_27)

- (209) Au niveau du chrono, on est à combien là ?<sup>468</sup> (sVQ)  
 (210) T'as quel âge ?<sup>469</sup> (sVQ)

This may be seen as the semantic counterpart to pragmatic salience (often called “presupposition” or “givenness”): Since semantically empty verbs do not contribute new information, they are not likely to be focused. In contrast, semantically full verbs are not inherently unimportant, so they will not favour *wh-in-situ*.<sup>470</sup>

This sheds new light on the observation that *comment* occurred more often preverbally than postverbally. This could possibly be explained by the kind of verb it is mostly used with. In (592) to (214), *aller* and *se sentir* are used for giving a health state, *s'appeler* for referring to a name, and *présenter* for denoting the action of showing. None of them is thus as semantically empty as *être* or *avoir* in (208) to (210).

- (211) Comment tu vas ?<sup>471</sup> (QsV)  
 (212) Comment il s'appelle, ton canard ?<sup>472</sup> (QsV+S)  
 (213) Alors, Dédé, comment tu te sens ce matin ?<sup>473</sup> (QsV)  
 (214) Comment vous le présentez aux clients ?<sup>474</sup> (QsV)

In this regard, it is interesting that *être* appeared sentence-finally only when it was used with *que* or *qui*. In these cases, it might be considered as not as semantically empty as in the previous cases because there would be little information left without it.

- (215) Qu'est-ce que c'est ?<sup>475</sup> (QEsV)  
 (216) Qui c'est ?<sup>476</sup> (QsV)  
 (217) Où on est (quoi) ?<sup>477</sup> (QsV)

As far as yes/no-interrogatives are concerned, the semantic content of the verb is not of importance because the semantically empty verbs will not occur sentence-finally. For this reason, they will not have an influence on the choice of its morphosyntactic structure.

Of course, semantic emptiness is not easily measured, so for this study, I will limit the investigation of this factor to the above-mentioned observances. Nonetheless I would like to stress its potential explicability.

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<sup>468</sup> English translation: ‘Where are we time-wise?’ (CSQD\_4\_00\_29\_34)

<sup>469</sup> English translation: ‘How old are you?’ (SHOP\_1\_00\_08\_00)

<sup>470</sup> The latter also allow *wh-in-situ*, but then, the verb is presented as unimportant.

<sup>471</sup> English translation: ‘How are you?’ (ADDI\_2\_00\_12\_25)

<sup>472</sup> English translation: ‘What’s your duck’s name?’ (UDPP\_1\_00\_50\_19)

<sup>473</sup> English translation: ‘So, Dédé, how are you feeling today?’ (BVAH\_1\_00\_21\_49)

<sup>474</sup> English translation: ‘How do you present it to your clients?’ (MBOU\_3\_00\_31\_50)

<sup>475</sup> English translation: ‘What’s that?’ (BVAH\_2\_00\_55\_16)

<sup>476</sup> English translation: ‘Who is it/there?’ (UDPP\_1\_00\_39\_42)

<sup>477</sup> English translation: ‘Where are we?’ (ADDI\_3\_00\_08\_30)



Finally, it shall be demonstrated that the **sociostylistic marking of a verb (e)** is not directly linked to the use of a sociostylistically equivalent morphosyntactic structure. Since an exhaustive study of the influence of the sociostylistic marking of a verb would be unreasonably complicated, this study is limited to exemplary observations. As (the relevant uses of) *décrocher* and *décoller* can be classified as *familier* (see Petit Robert 2013)<sup>478</sup>, they would be expected to rather occur in declarative structures. However, in the present corpus all but one<sup>479</sup> occurrences (i.e. 12 out of 13) of these two verbs were realised with subject-verb inversion (cf. examples (218) to (221)).<sup>480</sup>

- (218) Alors, qui parmi eux décrochera le titre de meilleur hôtel de la semaine ?<sup>481</sup> (Q={s/S}V)
- (219) Quelle boulangerie décrochera son billet pour la finale de vendredi ?<sup>482</sup> (Q={s/S}V)
- (220) Mais les notes décolleront-elles avec la qualité des animations ?<sup>483</sup> (SVs)
- (221) Vont-ils décoller dans cette première épreuve grâce à leur pâté boulanger ?<sup>484</sup> (Vs)

Likewise, several other sociostylistic low verbal constructions appeared in inverted structures. The verbal constructions *être emballé*, *épater quelqu'un*, *mettre k.o. quelqu'un* and *être baba de quelque chose* are all indicated as *familier* in the Petit Robert (edition of 2013).

- (222) Mais Sabine et Laurent, seront-ils assez emballés par cet esprit safari des supporters assez comblés pour payer ce prix ?<sup>485</sup> (SVs)
- (223) La coiffure réalisée par Myrienne, a-t-elle épater notre spécialiste du chignon ?<sup>486</sup> (SVs)
- (224) Allez-vous les mettre k.o. avec votre transformation capillaire ?<sup>487</sup> (Vs)
- (225) Notre jury, en sera-t-il baba ?<sup>488</sup> (SVs)

Additionally, the numerous puns contained in the off-voice comments do not stop from interrogatives. Correspondingly, there can also be found creative language use in presumably formal question forms.

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<sup>478</sup> The meaning of *décoller* as it is used here is not explicitly mentioned in the Petit Robert. However, similar uses (such as 'to leave somebody alone' or 'to go away') are indicated as *familier*. At any rate, the shift in meaning from 'to detach' to 'to become different' (cf. Larousse online: 'En parlant d'un coureur, se faire distancer par ses rivaux ou ne plus pouvoir suivre son entraîneur.') suggests a rather non-standard (and hence more informal) use of the word.

<sup>479</sup> The only declarative structure contains a different meaning variant of *décoller*: *Mais alors, elle a décollé comment, cette passion pour la boulangerie ?* 'So how did this passion for the bakery start?'

<sup>480</sup> This might be taken as another counter-argument for diglossia. If there were two different (although overlapping) grammars, a colloquial choice of words would rather activate the grammar of the low variant. However, it is true that off-voice comments are scripted, so these utterances are not spontaneously used. Nonetheless, I think they show well that language can be used in a creative way, and I do not see why spontaneous speech would not use similar utterances for creating some special stylistic effect (e.g. when joking with friends).

<sup>481</sup> English translation: 'So who of them will get the title of best hotel of the week?' (BVAH\_2\_00\_08\_46)

<sup>482</sup> English translation: 'Which bakery will get the ticket for the final on Friday?' (MBOU\_1\_00\_02\_42)

<sup>483</sup> English translation: 'But will the marks diverge regarding the quality of the entertainment?' (BVAC\_3\_00\_41\_07)

<sup>484</sup> English translation: 'Will they go into the lead in this first task thanks to their pie?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_20\_16)

<sup>485</sup> English translation: 'But will Sabine and Laurent be sufficiently taken by the safari spirit of the [safari] fans to pay this price?' (BVCN\_1\_00\_25\_01)

<sup>486</sup> English translation: 'Did the hair brushing by Myrienne impress our specialist for hair buns?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_35\_07)

<sup>487</sup> English translation: 'Will you lay them out with your hair transformation?' (CSQD\_4\_00\_35\_59)

<sup>488</sup> English translation: 'Will our jury be flabbergasted?' (MBOU\_2\_00\_22\_02)



Humoristic play on words and neologisms are thus sometimes incorporated in inverted structures, as examples (226) to (228) illustrate:

- (226) Des girafes, en veux-tu ?<sup>489</sup> (Vs)
- (227) Cela va-t-il mettre la diva dans le rouge ?<sup>490</sup> (SVs)
- (228) Ou devrait-on dire votre institut « capivert » ?<sup>491</sup> (sV)

On the other hand, verbs that may be considered formal seemed to be mostly used in inverted structures. Correspondingly, all relevant occurrences of *consentir* (6) and *parvenir* (3<sup>492</sup>), and the majority of *accorder* (2 out of 3) and *obtenir* (4 out of 5) contained subject-verb inversion. As a consequence, in my corpus, a correlation between the high sociostylistic marking of the verb and the choice of an inverted form seems to exist.

- (229) Dani, consentez-vous à prendre pour époux Christophe ici présent ?<sup>493</sup> (Vs)
- (230) Alors, Laurie, parviendra-t-elle à faire passer tous les voyants au vert et à être chic avec une pièce moulante ?<sup>494</sup> (SVs)
- (231) Yvette, m'accordez-vous une danse ?<sup>495</sup> (Vs)
- (232) Quelle note Dominique a-t-elle obtenue ?<sup>496</sup> (SVs)

To conclude, there will probably be a correlation of the sociostylistic marking of the verb and the morphosyntactic form of an interrogative. However, this correlation will not be very strong since language use also allows unexpected combinations (e.g. a sociostylistically low verb, such as *épater* with a sociostylistically high structure, such as clitic inversion). Especially in RTV, where off-voice comments typically entail inverted question forms regardless of the interrogative's lexical content, there is thus no direct link between the sociostylistic marking of the verb and the choice of a morphosyntactic variant.

The last linguistic factor which shall be examined is **negation (iv)**. With regard to this factor, two questions shall be addressed:

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<sup>489</sup> English translation: 'Do you want giraffes?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_23\_36) example repeated from (178); Questions followed by *Des girafes en voilà* (Literally: 'Giraffes are here.' In this context: 'Here you are.'). The adverbial locution *en veux-tu en voilà* usually expresses a big quantity (sometimes translatable as 'as much/many as you like').

<sup>490</sup> English translation: 'Will this put the diva in the red?' (*être dans le rouge* 'to be in the red, i.e. to have debts') (CSQD\_1\_00\_27\_20) Here, the colour *rouge* ('red') is used as a contrast because the salon of the candidate has been described as *trop vert* ('too green'). This example was already mentioned as (184).

<sup>491</sup> English translation: 'Or should we say your *capivert* salon?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_11\_37) The neologism *capivert* is a blend of *capillaire* ('hair') and *vert* ('green'). The colour is added to point to the fact that the hairdresser's salon has been described as very green.

<sup>492</sup> There was also one question with *qui*<sub>subject</sub>. Since inversion is not possible in such a case, it was not considered as relevant.

<sup>493</sup> English translation: 'Dani, are you willing to take the present Christophe as your husband?' (QUAM\_3\_00\_32\_41)

<sup>494</sup> English translation: 'Will Laurie manage to turn all lights to green and be chic with a skin-tight garment?' (SHOP\_1\_01\_08\_18)

<sup>495</sup> English translation: 'Yvette, may I have a [/this] dance?' (CHAP\_2\_00\_46\_51)

<sup>496</sup> English translation: 'Which note did Dominique get?' (UDPP\_5\_01\_03\_17)

- a) Do negated and non-negated (matrix clauses of) interrogative have different morphosyntactic distributions?
- b) Within negated interrogatives: Is *ne*-retention linked to inverted structures and *ne*-omission to declarative structures?

Both questions can be broadly answered by yes. As figures 36 and 37 visualise, negated and non-negated interrogatives differed substantially in their morphosyntactic distributions.

Figure 36: Distribution of morphosyntactic structures in negated and non-negated yes/no-interrogatives

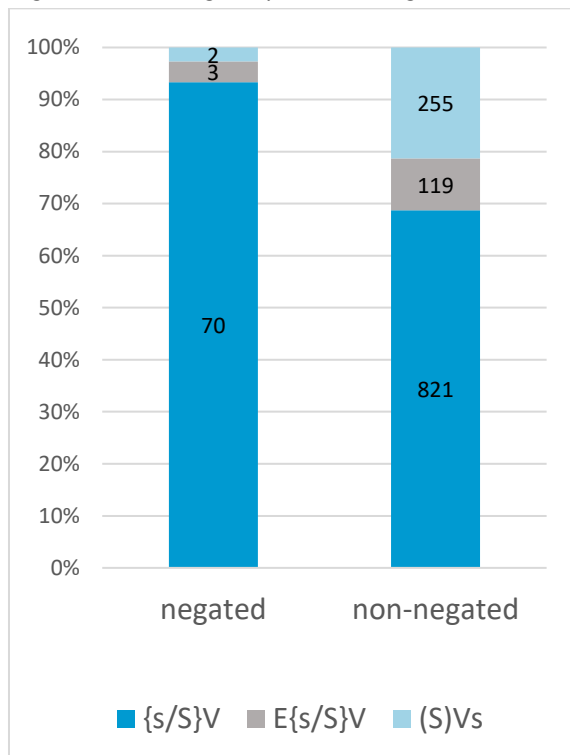
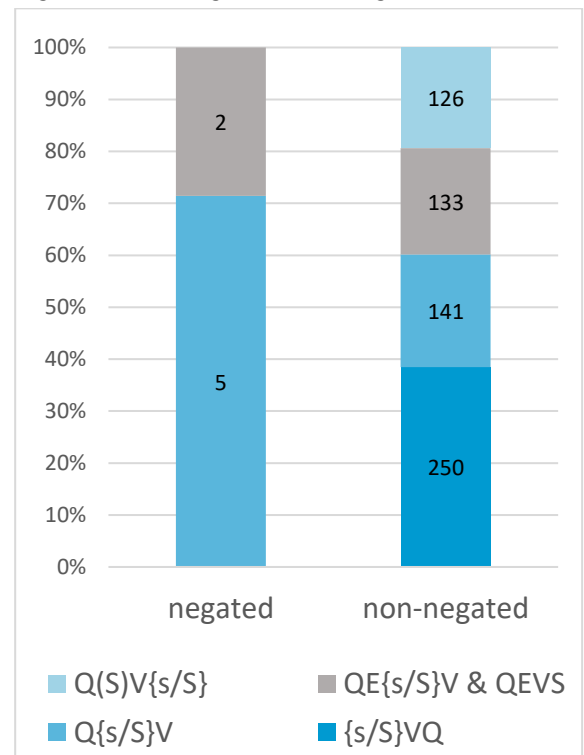


Figure 37: Distribution of morphosyntactic structures in negated and non-negated wh-interrogatives



As for yes/no-interrogatives (see figure 36), all three main morphosyntactic types occurred in negated as well as non-negated yes/no-interrogatives, and both subsamples show a tendency for {s/S}V-structures. However, this tendency was much greater in negated than in non-negated interrogatives: While more than 30% of the non-negated structures were morphosyntactically marked as interrogatives, less than 10% of the negated structures were so. A chi-squared test confirms the significance of this difference.<sup>497</sup> This is interesting from two points of view: For one thing, the huge prevalence of declarative structures shows that negation is a good predictor for choosing a morphosyntactically unmarked structure (such as (233) or (234)). For another, negation is yet not

<sup>497</sup> For this, the negated and non-negated subsample with regard to their distribution of main morphosyntactic types ( $p = 2.94e-05$ ).

limited to morphosyntactically unmarked structures, as the instances of inversion (given as (235) and (236)) and periphrasis (given as (237) and (238)) show.

- (233) Oui mais t'avais pas demandé un grand lit ?<sup>498</sup> (sV)
- (234) Tu sais pas ce que ça veut dire ?<sup>499</sup> (sV)
- (235) Guillaume, ne serait-il pas à un cheveu d'en faire trop ?<sup>500</sup> (SVs)
- (236) François ne pourrait-il pas intervenir au moins par solidarité masculine ?<sup>501</sup> (SVs)
- (237) Pour des jeunes comme ça, est-ce qu'une cuisine ouverte ne serait pas mieux ?<sup>502</sup> (ESV)
- (238) Si je te propose une cuisine juste à côté de cette pièce-là, est-ce que ça ne te dérange pas de casser deux cloisons, Anthony ?<sup>503</sup> (EsV)

As for *wh*-interrogatives, negation was generally very rare: Only 7 out of the 653 (i.e. 1.1%) *wh*-interrogatives were negated. This confirms Coveney (2011: 132), who claimed that negated interrogatives are not frequent in everyday French. On top of that, negation only appeared with two question words: in the non-elliptical interrogatives, 2 of the questions were with *que* (given as (239) and (240)), and 5 with *pourquoi* (given as (241) to (244)).

- (239) Et Qu'est-ce qu'il ne va pas ?<sup>504</sup> (QEsV)
- (240) Alors, Qu'est-ce qui n'allait pas ?<sup>505</sup> ({QE}={s/S}V)
- (241) Pourquoi tu n'as pas obtenu ce résultat de roux... flashant ?<sup>506</sup> QsV)
- (242) Pourquoi je [sic] vous goûtez pas les macarons ?<sup>507</sup> (QsV)
- (243) Pourquoi ça va pas rigoler là ?<sup>508</sup> (QsV)
- (244) Et suite à ça, pourquoi on fera pas un gâteau de chocolat bleu ?<sup>509</sup> (QsV)
- (245) Pourquoi j'ai pas mis plus ?<sup>510</sup> (QsV)

Both question words appeared in the morphosyntactic variant which is typical of them (i.e. QEsV for *que* and QsV for *pourquoi*), so there were no occurrences of postverbal *wh*-words. This may support the view that *wh*-in-situ is not possible with negation (cf. Chang 1997: 19f.), but the small numbers of negated structures for each morphosyntactic type suggests that this might simply be attributable to chance. As no inverted structures appeared either, one could just as well assume that inversion would not be possible with negation. On the other hand, it is also true that *wh*-in-situ structures were about double as often used as *wh*-fronted declarative and periphrastic structures, and for those, negated

<sup>498</sup> English translation: 'Yes, but didn't you ask for a big bed?' (BVAH\_1\_00\_25\_11)

<sup>499</sup> English translation: '{Don't you / You don't} what that means?' (QUAM\_2\_00\_09\_23)

<sup>500</sup> English translation: 'Isn't Guillaume only a hair's breadth from doing to much?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_42\_58)

<sup>501</sup> English translation: 'Couldn't François intervene at least for masculine solidarity?' (UDPP\_3\_00\_56\_41)

<sup>502</sup> English translation: 'For young people like them, wouldn't an open kitchen be better?' (CHAP\_1\_00\_25\_41)

<sup>503</sup> English translation: 'If I propose you a kitchen right next to that room, wouldn't it disturb you to break two walls, Anthony?' (CHAP\_3\_00\_13\_13)

<sup>504</sup> English translation: 'And what's wrong?' (SHOP\_3\_00\_51\_39)

<sup>505</sup> English translation: 'So what was wrong?' (SHOP\_3\_01\_06\_48)

<sup>506</sup> English translation: 'Why didn't you obtain that result?' (CSQD\_4\_00\_38\_02)

<sup>507</sup> English translation: 'And the macaroons, why don't I... [why don't] you try the macaroons?' (probably a reformulation after *je*) (MBOU\_1\_00\_09\_35)

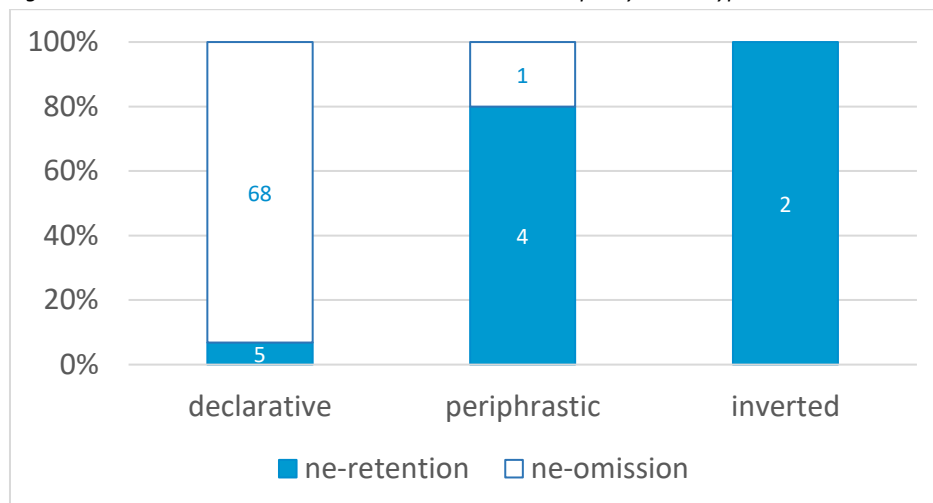
<sup>508</sup> English translation: 'Why won't they laugh?' (MBOU\_1\_00\_48\_58)

<sup>509</sup> English translation: 'And as a follow-up, why shouldn't we make a blue chocolate cake?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_13\_52)

<sup>510</sup> English translation: 'Why didn't I give her a better mark?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_26\_49); introductory question (used for introducing the reason).

structures surfaced. Indeed, these two reflections are mirrored when calculating statistical tests for the proportion of negation: If one compares the proportions of negation in *wh-in-situ* and *wh-ex-situ* structures, the fact that no negation occurred with *wh-in-situ* cannot be excluded from being due to mere chance ( $p = 0.09038$ ). Hence, there may be reason to assume that *wh-in-situ* disfavours negation, but my data cannot prove this statistically. However, when comparing the four structures, the proportional differences do reach significance ( $p = 0.007452$ ). What can thus be proven is that the division by the four morphosyntactic types do create significantly different subsamples with regard to negation. This may suggest that the choice of morphosyntactic structure and negation are correlated. Statistical significance is more easily proved for the second question. Here, regardless of the low numbers, chi-squared tests clearly show that the proportion of *ne*-omission significantly differs between declarative structures and periphrastic or inverted ones ( $p = 2.342e-05$  for declarative vs. periphrastic;  $p = 0.001213$  for declarative vs. inverted). While declarative structures tended to omit *ne*, negated periphrastic and inverted structures mostly retained it (see figure 38).

Figure 38: 'Ne'-omission vs. 'ne'-retention across main morphosyntactic types<sup>511</sup>



#### Extralinguistic factors

For the morphosyntactic analysis of my data, I will consider two factors concerning the speaker (i.e. factors (i) and (ii)), and two factors concerning the situation (i.e. factors (iii) and (iv)):

- (i) Age
- (ii) Sex
- (iii) Speech type
- (iv) Pragmatic function

<sup>511</sup> Two declarative structures had to be excluded because they started with *personne*, which makes it hard to decide whether the speaker actually says *personne + V* or *personne ne + V*.

As off-voice speakers do supposedly not choose their words on their own, but read or act out what has been scripted for them, I will not take them into account for the analysis of age and sex. Although interview questions could be investigated, they are quite rare in number and only single speakers utter them. Consequently, the speaker factors will be evaluated exclusively on the basis of the subsample of on-screen interactions while the situation factors will be tested for the whole corpus of interrogatives.

The first factor examined is the **age (i)** of the speaker. Accordingly, the first question to be addressed is whether the age group of the speaker has an influence on the choice of a morphosyntactic variant. Since there were found some age-related differences in the results of the questionnaire (see chapter 4, p.112), one might expect age to be a relevant factor for the choice of a morphosyntactic variant. On the other hand, practically all speakers of the reality TV shows are working – they are usually neither students nor retired people. At least age grading is thus not to be expected. Furthermore, the age range of reality TV show participants is smaller than the one of questionnaire participants, so it will be difficult to reveal generational changes if they exist. The latter reflections are confirmed by the data: Although there were observed slight differences (see figures 39 and 40), chi-squared tests show that the subsamples do not diverge significantly.<sup>512</sup> In general, all age groups seem to use the different main morphosyntactic types to similar proportions and there is no reason to assume that these speaker groups would behave differently. If there are tendencies worth considering, they will most probably concern the position of the *wh*-word: From the current sample, one could deduce that older people are less likely to use *wh*-in-situ structures. This would support the observation from chapter 4 (see pp. 108ff.) For a solid statistic validation, one would however need much larger samples for each speaker group. Especially the sample of interrogatives produced by old speakers is too small to make any generalisations. Nonetheless, it is interesting that the trend in the small sample fits the observations made in the analysis of the questionnaire.

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<sup>512</sup> For *yes/no*-interrogatives, the *p* is 0.5361, and for *wh*-interrogative 0.5142.

Figure 39: Morphosyntactic distributions in yes/no-interrogatives in on-screen interaction across age groups

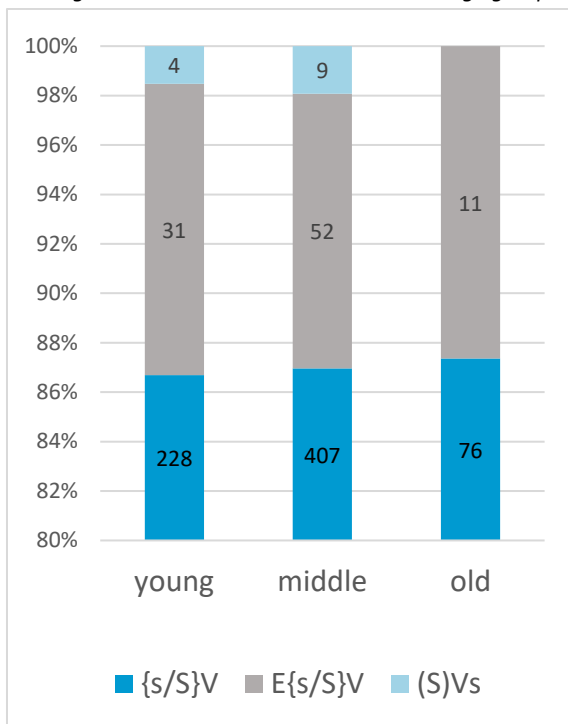
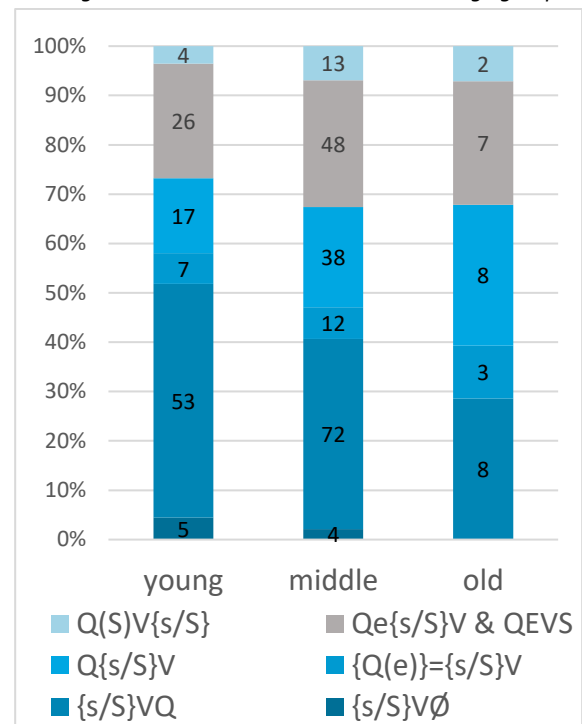


Figure 40: Morphosyntactic distributions in wh-interrogatives in on-screen interaction across age groups



The second factor examined is the **sex (ii)** of the speakers. The question here is thus whether women and men show differences in their choices of morphosyntactic variants. This could be expected because previous studies showed that male speakers use more non-standard forms than female speakers, and that linguistic change is usually introduced by women (Labov 1990). In stable as well as changing situations, there may thus be differences in use across the sexes.<sup>513</sup> In my corpus, this is though not the case. As figure 41 shows, men and women choose the morphosyntactic variants in yes/no-interrogatives to similar proportions, and as a chi-squared test reveals, the differences in wh-interrogatives (see figure 42) are not significant either.<sup>514</sup>

<sup>513</sup> As Dekhissi & Coveney (2018) observed in a corpus of 1695 wh-interrogatives taken from thirty-eight Banlieue movies, there was an interaction between age and sex. However, the age groups were substantially different (the 'intermediate' group was aged 16 to 25), and banlieue speakers are certainly a different social class (cf. the occupational groups from the reality TV shows, such as hoteliers, restaurateurs or estate agents). An interaction of sex and age in my corpus was not possible to be statistically tested because age groups were not very big anyway and especially the old age group did not produce enough interrogatives to make any further divisions.

<sup>514</sup> For yes/no-interrogatives, the p is 0.6377, and for wh-interrogatives 0.2856.

Figure 41: Morphosyntactic distributions in yes/no-interrogatives in on-screen interaction for female and male speakers

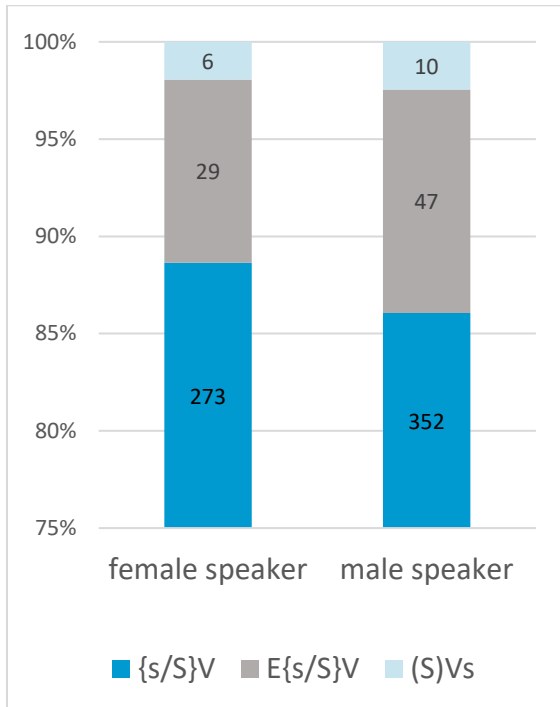
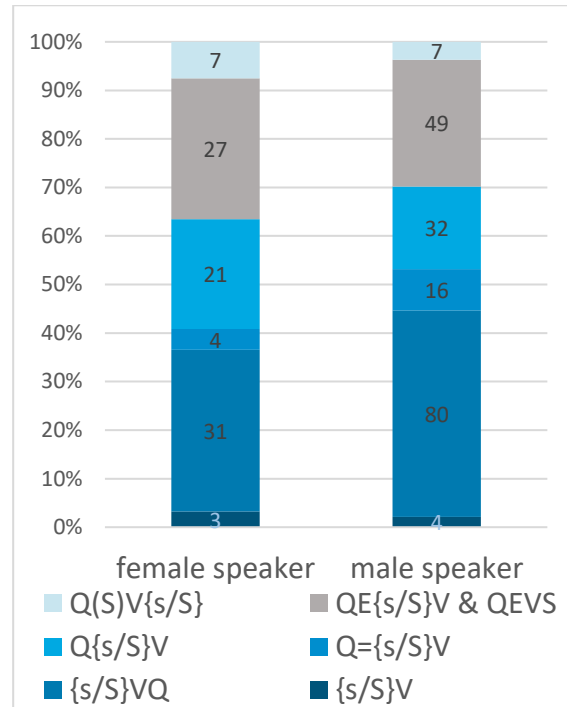


Figure 42: Morphosyntactic distributions in wh-interrogatives in on-screen interaction for female and male speakers



If there are age- or sex-related differences, they did thus not surface in my data. Of course, such differences may still exist for other corpora, but it is nonetheless interesting that such differences do at least not seem to spread to RTV. Possibly, RTV is somewhat special because the people participating usually share some characteristics, such as being rather extravert and open to public exposure, and many of them are even pursuing similar careers (e.g. bakers in *La meilleure boulangerie de France*). Hence, even the oldest and youngest participants are active participants in professional and/or public life, and may be socially very similar to their middle-aged peers. Equally, it cannot be excluded that the linguistic behaviour of fashion-interested men (as in *Les Reines/Rois du Shopping* and *Cinq salons qui décoiffent*) and a homosexual groom (as in *Quatre mariages pour une lune de miel*) may be more similar to the one of average female speakers than to the one of average male speakers.

Let us now have a look at the two remaining factors. Here, striking differences can be observed. The six **speech types (iii)** found in RTV shows (see p. 142) vary significantly in their question formulations: While on-screen interactions between candidates strongly disfavoured inverted structures, off-voice comments contained virtually always subject-verb inversion as long as the question was not about the grammatical subject (see figures 43 and 44).

Figure 43: Morphosyntactic distributions in yes/no-interrogatives across speech types

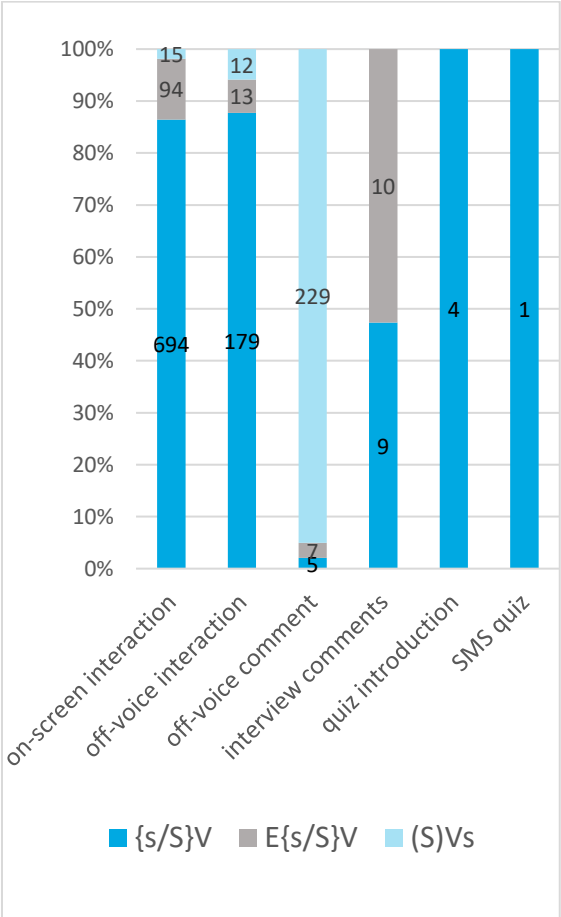
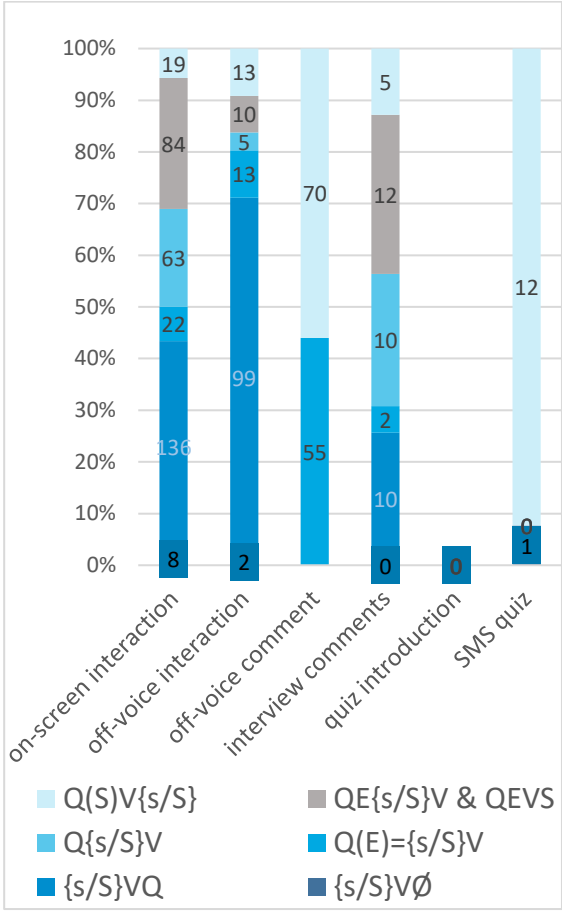


Figure 44: Morphosyntactic distributions in wh-interrogatives across speech types



Hence, in the main speech types (i.e. the three most common ones) a clear asymmetry surfaced: Interactions strongly favoured declarative structures whereas comments strongly favoured inverted structures. This supports the classic distinction between written and spoken language: Since interactions are conceptually as well as medially spoken, typically spoken forms are expected to be used. As (quasi-) spontaneous interactions and scripted pseudo-interactions showed this tendency alike, declarative forms also seem to be used to imitate truly spoken language. In contrast, off-voice comments can be considered as conceptually written (and only medially spoken), so inverted structures were anticipated and also found.

While almost 90% of the yes/no-interrogative interactions were morphosyntactically unmarked, only 0.9% of the yes/no-interrogative comments were so. Accordingly, {s/S}V-structures were the usual



form for interactions, whereas (S)Vs-structures were the usual form for comments. A chi-squared test with the counts of inverted and non-inverted structures across main speech types confirms the high significance of this asymmetry ( $p < 2.2e-16$ ). Comparing the counts of on-screen and off-voice interactions, the slight proportional differences are still very unlikely to be due to chance ( $p = 0.0002781$ ). Yet, it is obvious that the pseudo-interactions are much more similar to the real interactions than to the comments. To illustrate the prototypical forms, one characteristic example is given for each speech type (see (246) for an on-screen interaction, (247) for an off-voice pseudo-interaction, and (248) for an off-voice comment):

- (246) Tu la trouves grande ?<sup>515</sup> (sV)
- (247) Vous la trouvez mimi, notre Benjamine Laurie ?<sup>516</sup> (sV)
- (248) Mais les deux sœurs trouveront-elles ce prix vraiment justifié ?<sup>517</sup> (SVs)

The vast majority of interrogatives followed these patterns. What is more, most of the diverging structures can be explained by particular details on the situation. Correspondingly, inverted structures in on-screen interactions mostly appeared during standard(ised) procedures and were thus quasi-lexicalised constructions: They were either imitations of traditional customs, such as an invitation to dance (see (231)), ritualised actions, such as the taking of a restaurant order (see (250)), or ceremonial acts, such as an official prompt for the consent to a marriage (see (251)). Indeed, there were only three instances (given as (252) to (254)) that could not be classified into the before-mentioned categories. In these three cases, there cannot be detected any pragmatic specificity either: The questions are truly information-seeking and are all followed by an answer. Whatever the reason for the choice of subject-verb inversion, non-declarative word order is though clearly an exception in real interactions.

- (249) Yvette, m'accordez-vous une danse ?<sup>518</sup> (Vs)
- (250) Avez-vous fait vos choix ?<sup>519</sup> (Vs)
- (251) Monsieur Frédéric, voulez-vous prendre pour épouse Madame Élodie ?<sup>520</sup> (Vs)
- (252) As-tu vérifié la pression d'eau ?<sup>521</sup> (Vs)
- (253) Est-il appétissant ?<sup>522</sup> (Vs)
- (254) Connaissez-vous un peu le quartier ?<sup>523</sup> (Vs)

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<sup>515</sup> English translation: 'Do you find it [the room] big? / You find it big?' (BVAH\_3\_00\_11\_20)

<sup>516</sup> English translation: '(Do) you find her gorgeous, our youngest candidate, Laurie?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_09\_20); the utterance was preceded by *Alors c'est vrai ça, Dominique ?* ('So is this true, Dominique').

<sup>517</sup> English translation: 'But will the two sisters find this price really justified?' (BVAC\_3\_00\_13\_45)

<sup>518</sup> English translation: 'Yvette, may I have a [this] dance?' This example was already given as (231). (CHAP\_2\_00\_46\_51)

<sup>519</sup> English translation: 'Have you made your decision?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_42\_06)

<sup>520</sup> English translation: 'Do you, Frédéric, take Élodie to be your wife?' (QUAM\_1\_00\_28\_43); at least two of these questions were part of each episode of QUAM.

<sup>521</sup> English translation: 'Did you test the water pressure?' (CHAP\_1\_00\_36\_03)

<sup>522</sup> English translation: 'Is it appetizing?' (QUAM\_1\_00\_37\_55); the question was preceded by *Alors, ce buffet...* If there had not been such a clear prosodic boundary, it would have been counted as an SVs-structure.

<sup>523</sup> English translation: 'Do you know (a bit) this district?' (CHAP\_2\_00\_10\_59)

As for pseudo-interactions, this is quite similar, but here the choice of subject-verb inversion also depends on a conscious decision of the person scripting the voice-overs. Indeed, there seem to be some programmes which are less reluctant towards the use of inversion: In CSQD, SHOP, and UDPP (all broadcast by M6 and W9), inverted structures are occasionally used not only for comments but also when the off-voice is pretending to interact with the candidates or experts (see (255) to (259)).

- (255) Ou devrait-on dire votre institut capivert ?<sup>524</sup> (Vs)
- (256) D’ailleurs, Fabien Provost, y-a-t-il une règle pour positionner un bandeau ?<sup>525</sup> (Vs)
- (257) Euh, Silvain, est-ce vraiment le moment de faire la vaisselle ?<sup>526</sup> (Vs)
- (258) Et l’ensemble très moulant, est-il chic ?<sup>527</sup> (SVs)
- (259) (Alors, Stéphane.) Notre fan de mode, JS, a-t-il réussi sa mission ?<sup>528</sup> (SVs)

Likewise, off-voice comments sometimes occurred with non-inverted word order. Since all voice-overs have been scripted, it is reasonable to presume that the decision for a deviation from the usual pattern has been made consciously. In fact, the rare cases of morphosyntactically unmarked comment interrogatives were utterances between comments and pseudo-interactions: They were not directly addressed at somebody on screen, but they generally appeared more “direct” than usual comments. They were more direct in several aspects: They were direct inferences from what had just been said (see (260)), they used a demonstrative pronoun as a direct reference (see (261) and (262); as observed on p. 169, the use of *ça* as subject may have an influence itself), or they could be interpreted as direct instructions for the audience to observe the following in order to get an answer (see (263) and (264)).

- (260) Elle pourrait donc être la jumelle de Claudia ?<sup>529</sup> (sV)
- (261) (Et en face,) ça se met en place ?<sup>530</sup> (sV)
- (262) Et chez la concurrence, ça avance ?<sup>531</sup> (sV)
- (263) (Alors, au fait...) Il fait bon vivre et travailler dans ce salon que Mikael gère tout seul ?<sup>532</sup> (sV)
- (264) Tout va bien ?<sup>533</sup> (SV)

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<sup>524</sup> English translation: ‘Or should we say your *institut capivert*?’ (CSQD\_1\_00\_11\_37); example already given as (228).

<sup>525</sup> English translation: ‘Fabien Provost, is there a rule for positioning the head band?’ (CSQD\_1\_00\_28\_35)

<sup>526</sup> English translation: ‘Uh, Silvain, is this really the moment to do the dishes?’ (UDPP\_1\_01\_04\_34)

<sup>527</sup> English translation: ‘And is the tight-fitting combination chic?’ (SHOP\_1\_00\_33\_08)

<sup>528</sup> English translation: ‘Has our fashion fan JS accomplished his mission?’ (SHOP\_3\_00\_59\_38)

<sup>529</sup> English translation: ‘So could she be the twin of Claudia?’ (CSQD\_4\_00\_09\_19); *donc* marks this as an inference, which makes declarative word order much more natural, and may even restrict the question to this very form (cf. *Est-ce qu’elle pourrait donc être la jumelle de Claudia ?* / *Pourrait-elle donc être la jumelle de Claudia ?*)

<sup>530</sup> English translation: ‘Is this falling into place?’ (MBOU\_1\_00\_36\_03)

<sup>531</sup> English translation: ‘And what about the competitors – are they progressing?’ (MBOU\_3\_00\_36\_50)

<sup>532</sup> English translation: ‘Is it nice to live and work in this saloon, which Mikael runs on his own?’ (CSQD\_3\_00\_19\_48); the introduction (i.e. *Alors, au fait...*) is rather spoken and suggests a direct interaction.

<sup>533</sup> English translation: ‘Is everything all right?’ (ADDI\_3\_01\_00\_12); since ‘everything’ is a quantifier, the structure was annotated as NQO, which means that it contains a (pro)nominal quantifier as the subject (i.e. *tout*).

These questions clearly contrast with the typical comment interrogatives (see (265) to (267)), which were not directly answerable and were used to create suspense rather than to prompt the audience for an answer. If typical comment interrogatives were used as transitions to situations which immediately answered the question, the answer was given independently from the audience, i.e. there was no room for interpretation (cf. (263) and (264) vs. (265) to (267)).

(265) *Son restaurant semi-gastronomique, va-t-il séduire les juges ?*<sup>534</sup>

(266) *Cette journée inoubliable sera-t-elle comme elle l'imagine – celle qui lui fera peut-être gagner la lune de miel ?*<sup>535</sup>

(267) *Mais quelle tenue a-t-elle choisie ?*<sup>536</sup>

To put it briefly, there seemed to be a difference with regard to the directness of communication: Morphosyntactically unmarked structures were used in more direct situations of interaction while inverted structures could be attributed to more indirect interactions, such as a reflection question used as a suspension-creating comment.

The concept of indirectness is also of importance to the use of the question particle. Considering the distribution of morphosyntactic variants of yes/no-interrogatives in interview comments, it is striking that *EST-CE QUE* was used about as often as morphosyntactically unmarked structures.

(268) *Est-ce que c'est dans une maison ?*<sup>537</sup> (EsV)

(269) *Est-ce qu'on s'échappe en courant en fait ?*<sup>538</sup> (EsV)

(270) *Est-ce que qu'elle sait cuisiner ?*<sup>539</sup> (EsV)

(271) *Demain, est-ce qu'on fait encore une vente ?*<sup>540</sup> (EsV)

In these cases, the questions were thought explications and all of them could be paraphrased either by 'What I am/was asking myself is/was: ...' or 'The question is: ...'. In that sense, these interrogatives were also less direct than the ones used in on-screen interactions. After all, the expression of one's wonders is certainly more distanced than an immediate reaction. The {s/S}V-structures produced clearly differed from this interrogative usage. Declarative structures uttered in interviews were either surprise questions (see (272) to (274)), hesitant propositions/hypotheses (see (275) and (276)) or quotations (see (277)).

(272) *(Ah, putain...) Ça existe encore ?*<sup>541</sup> (sV)

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<sup>534</sup> English translation: 'Will his (semi-)gourmet restaurant seduce the jury?' (ADDI\_2\_01\_05\_09)

<sup>535</sup> English translation: 'Will this unforgettable day be how she imagines it – the one which might make her win the honeymoon?' (QUAM\_1\_00\_10\_17)

<sup>536</sup> English translation: 'But which outfit has she chosen?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_41\_58); followed by *Réponse dans quelques instants lors du défilé*. 'Answer in a few instances during the catwalk.'

<sup>537</sup> English translation: 'Is it in a house?' (ADDI\_3\_00\_08\_25)

<sup>538</sup> English translation: 'Shall we run away?' (BVAC\_1\_00\_31\_33); here *en fait* expresses something like 'the actual question is: ...'

<sup>539</sup> English translation: 'Does she know how to cook?' (CHAP\_1\_00\_28\_04)

<sup>540</sup> English translation: 'Will we manage to sell another apartment/house tomorrow?' (CHAP\_3\_00\_57\_58)

<sup>541</sup> English translation: 'This still exists? (I can't believe it!)' (ADDI\_1\_00\_11\_32)

- (273) Elle va vraiment dans une boutique d'accessoires ?<sup>542</sup> (sV)
- (274) Tu prends ?<sup>543</sup> (sV)
- (275) On bouge un peu les tables ?<sup>544</sup> (sV)
- (276) Elle voulait nous montrer qu'elle sait faire un carré plongeant ?<sup>545</sup> (sV)
- (277) On fait la chaise musicale, Madame Mareau ?<sup>546</sup> (sV)

In these cases, there was thus a certain directness which is not inherent to thought explication. In this respect, it is also interesting that emphatic questions, such as surprise questions, were formulated without any morphosyntactic marking. Since being emphatic means being less distanced and thus more direct, the most direct form of interrogatives could be regarded as somewhat expectable. All in all, interview comments clearly show the importance of the pragmatic meaning of a question. The speech type of interview comments lead thus to a higher probability of *EST-CE QUE* because it favoured reflection questions.

In wh-interrogatives, declarative structures were also more common in interactions than in comments. However, the morphosyntactic subtypes were here of even greater importance: While all interrogative off-voice comments with straight word order were Q(E)={s/S}V-structures, interrogative interactions also occurred as {s/S}V, QsV, {s/S}VQ, and QE{s/S}V. The proportionally most frequently used structure for interactions was the wh-in-situ structure, which can thus be regarded as the prototypical form of direct communication. In the following, three characteristic examples for the main speech types are given (see (278) for an on-screen interaction, (279) for an off-voice pseudo-interaction, and (280) for an off-voice comment).

- (278) T'en penses quoi ?<sup>547</sup> (sVQ)
- (279) Mais Fabien Provost, vous en pensez quoi, vous, de cette coloration ?<sup>548</sup> (sVQ+s)
- (280) Et que penseront les hôteliers de la qualité des extras ?<sup>549</sup> (QVS)

Interestingly, these very examples are though somewhat misleading because, in real interactions, 'what do you think of'-questions were even more common in the form of *Qu'est-ce que {tu/t'} en penses ? / Qu'est-ce que vous pensez ?* (see also (287)). This is interesting for two reasons: First, it

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<sup>542</sup> English translation: 'She's really going to an accessories shop? (I can't believe it!)' (SHOP\_2\_00\_48\_34)

<sup>543</sup> English translation: 'You take it? (I can't believe it!)' (SHOP\_1\_00\_44\_09); the use of a second-person subject pronoun also shows the directness of this surprise question. Although the utterer cannot really speak to the hearer (she is only watching her on a screen), it is clearly formulated as if it was pronounced in a situation of direct interaction.

<sup>544</sup> English translation: 'Are we going to move the tables? (Or how on earth will we make to have enough space?)' (ADDI\_2\_00\_25\_57); preceded by *et on se demande quand-même* ('and yet, you wonder').

<sup>545</sup> English translation: 'Did she (really) want to show us that she knows how to do a graduated bob?' (CSQD\_4\_00\_39\_33)

<sup>546</sup> English translation: '(Is it okay if) we play the game of musical chairs?' (CSQD\_3\_00\_23\_10)

<sup>547</sup> English translation: 'What do you think (of this)?' (CHAP\_2\_00\_20\_20)

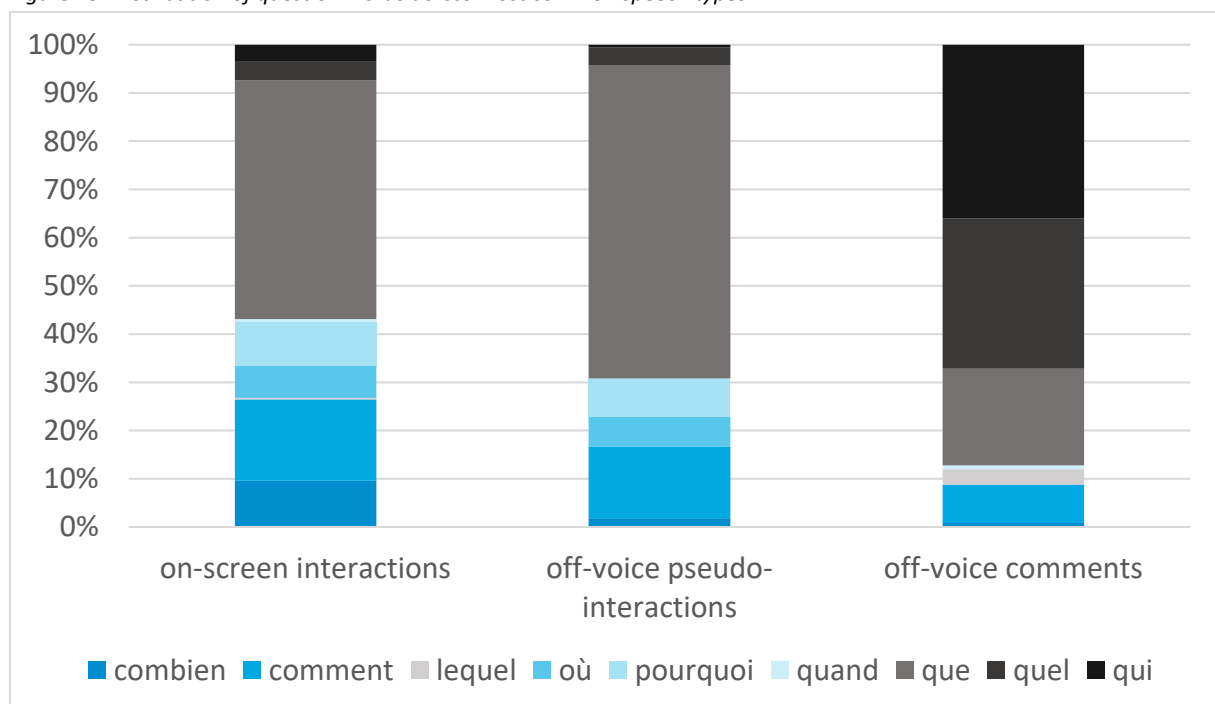
<sup>548</sup> English translation: 'But Fabien Provost, what do you think of this tinting?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_41\_23)

<sup>549</sup> English translation: 'And what will the hotelkeepers think of the quality of the additional services?' (BVAH\_1\_01\_01\_41)

shows that there are still morpholexis-dependent differences. Secondly, it contrasts nicely with the fact that the periphrastic variant of this question was not used in pseudo-interactions.

Let us first consider morpholexical dependency<sup>550</sup>. Some morpholexical constructions showed an affinity to a certain morphosyntactic variant. Correspondingly, *que* + (S)V{s/S}-structures were remarkably often (13 out of the 51 occurrences) used (in off-voice comments) with the fixed expression *qu'en {est/sera-t}-il de ...* ('What about... ?', see (112)). The latter can be explained by the semantics of this expression: It is typically used for shifting the discourse topic to an issue which is connected to the preceding one. Hence, such an expression is very helpful for connecting scenes or statements about related topics. In (112), for example, it was used to make a transition between the tasting of the meat and the tasting of the side dishes at a wedding. What is more, the choice of question word also seemed to depend on the speech type. When looking at the distribution of question words across speech types (see figure 45), it becomes obvious that off-voice comments mostly contained a pronominal wh-expression: *QUI*, *QUEL* + N or *QUE*. Apart from these three wh-words, only the adverbial *COMMENT* was recurrently used.

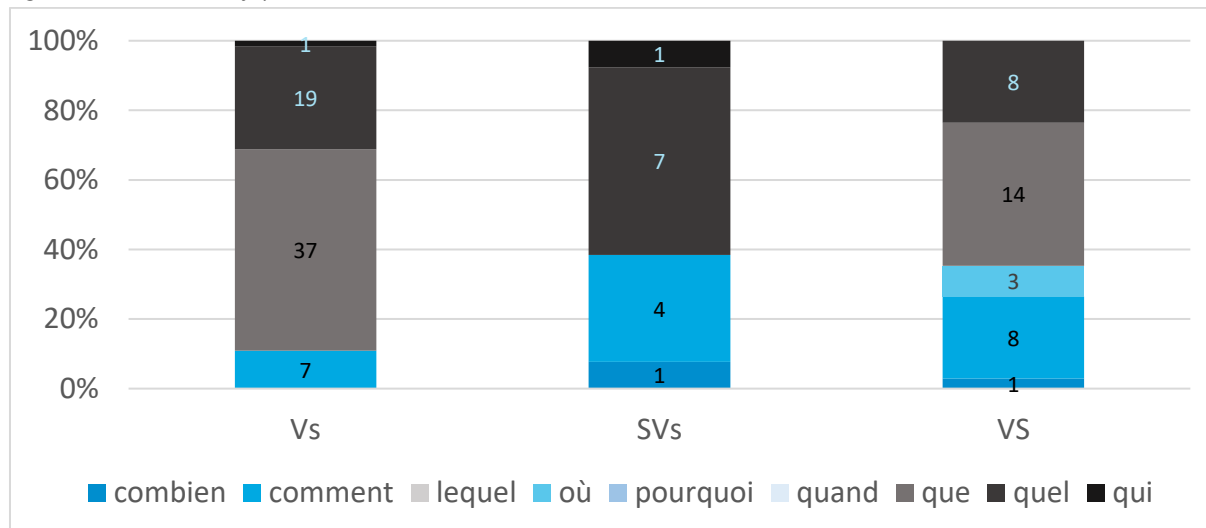
Figure 45: Distribution of question words across most common speech types



<sup>550</sup> Of course, morpholexical dependency is, strictly speaking, a linguistic factor. Since this linguistic factor is though linked to the speech type, I take the external factor to be on the ground of this observation. Nonetheless, the reason for the choice of a certain structure may be determined by extralinguistic as well as the linguistic factor.

Since inversion was mostly used in off-voice comments, it should hence have been rarely used with question words other than these four ones. To verify this, the distribution of question words in inverted structures is visualised in figure 46.

Figure 46: Distribution of question words in inverted structures



The hypothesis that *COMBIEN*, *LEQUEL*, *OÙ*, *POURQUOI*, and *QUAND* will only seldom have been used with inversion is thus confirmed. Moreover, the chart reveals that *QUE* was never used with complex inversion (which was conform with expectations, see p.155), and that *QUI* was used only twice in an inverted structure. The latter observation is explicable by the fact that structures can only vary with *QUI* in object or subject-attribute function, which were both rare. In most of the *qui*-structures of my corpus, the question word functioned as the grammatical subject. Hence, they occurred in the form of  $Q=\{s/S\}V$ , which was especially common during the ritualised beginning or end of an episode, in which the question of who will be the winner is explicated as an off-voice comment (see (281)).

(281) *Qui remportera le titre de meilleur coiffeur de la semaine ?*<sup>551</sup> ( $Q=\{s/S\}V$ )

Since structures with subject-*QUI* and a conjugated verb form which is not a form of *être* are excluded from being inverted, *QUI* was rare with inversion although it was mostly used in off-voice comments. The other three most recurrent question words in off-voice comments, i.e. *QUE*, *QUEL*, and *COMMENT*, were indeed also the most recurrent question words in inverted structures. Here, it should be added that *QUEL* did surface in virtually all speech types, but that it was much more common in off-voice comments. One reason for this will certainly be the tendency to avoid inverted structures in spontaneous interactions. For attributive-*QUEL* structures, *c'est quoi* + NP seems to be a structural alternative, which can be used synonymously, as examples (282) to (286) illustrate.

<sup>551</sup> English translation: 'Who will win the title of best hairdresser of the week?' (CSQD\_4\_00\_47\_24)

- (282) *Quel est votre verdict ?*<sup>552</sup> (QVS)  
 (283) *Alors, du coup, c'est quoi, votre verdict ?*<sup>553</sup> (sVQ+S)  
 (284) *Le prix, c'est quoi ?*<sup>554</sup> (S+sVQ)  
 (280') *Quel est le prix ?* (QVS)  
 (285) *Allez, Méhdi, c'est quoi, le secret pour gagner ?*<sup>555</sup> (sVQ+S)  
 (281') *Allez, Méhdi, quel est le secret pour gagner ?* (QVS)  
 (286) *Alors, c'est quoi, la base du pain au lait ?*<sup>556</sup> (sVQ+S)  
 (282') *Alors, quelle est la base du pain au lait ?* (QVS)

As for *QUE* and *COMMENT*, they were commonly used in all speech types. Their morphosyntactic structure typically varied according to their speech type: In interactions, *QUE* was used with *EST-CE QUE* (=> *Qu'est-ce que*) and in-situ (=> *quoi*), and *COMMENT* occurred regularly in the form of QsV as well as sVQ. Therefore, the structure depended even more on the speech type than on the question word itself – at least with regard to subject-verb inversion. Accordingly, the fact that *COMBIEN* and *POURQUOI* mostly occurred in structures with declarative word order can probably be attributed to the little off-voice use of these wh-words.

In general, the speech type was thus more important than the question word. Off-voice comments typically lead to subject-verb inversion regardless of the question word. However, the *QUI*-subject pronoun is linguistically restricted, so it was used with straight word order even in comment questions.

Let us now consider the second point, i.e. the disfavouring of periphrastic structures in pseudo-interactions. Although [*Qu'est-ce que* + second-person subject pronoun + form of *PENSER*] and [second-person subject pronoun + form of *PENSER* + *quoi*] were both used in on-screen interactions (see (287) and (288)), in pseudo-interactions 'what do you think of'-questions always surfaced as wh-in-situ structures (*{T'/Tu}en penses quoi ? / Vous pensez quoi ?*). It is thus conceivable that the prototypicality of wh-in-situ for interaction lead to an overgeneralisation in scripting pseudo-interaction interrogatives. To put it differently, the existing tendency to use wh-in-situ structures for interactions may have been artificially strengthened such that variation was reduced in favour of the form commonly associated with interaction. This artificial strengthening did though not always reduce variation. In other questions, *Qu'est-ce que* did surface in pseudo-interactions (see (289) and (290)), but the prevalence of *quoi*-in-situ was generally much stronger in off-voice pseudo-interactions than in on-screen interactions (see figure 44).

<sup>552</sup> English translation: 'What's the verdict?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_25\_50)

<sup>553</sup> English translation: 'So what's the verdict?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_58\_24)

<sup>554</sup> English translation: 'What's the price?' (CHAP\_2\_00\_47\_30)

<sup>555</sup> English translation: 'Tell us, Méhdi, what's the secret for winning?' (MBOU\_2\_00\_06\_35)

<sup>556</sup> English translation: 'So what's the base for milk bread?' (MBOU\_2\_00\_25\_34)



- (287) Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de mon établissement ?<sup>557</sup> (QEsV)
- (288) T'en penses quoi, toi ?<sup>558</sup> (sVQ+s)
- (289) Nath', Qu'est-ce que vous aimez tant dans ce sweat ?<sup>559</sup> (QEsV)
- (290) Mais Qu'est-ce que vous rajoutez à la couleur, Myrienne ?<sup>560</sup> (QEsV)

In some constructions, the overgeneralisation of *wh*-in-situ in off-voice comments was even more straightforward: Questions about how the interlocutor was feeling were always formulated as *wh*-preverbal declaratives in on-screen interactions (given as (291) to (293)) while they were always formulated as postverbal declaratives in off-voice interactions (given as (294) to (296)).

- (291) Alors, Dédé, comment tu te sens ce matin ?<sup>561</sup>
- (292) Comment tu te sens pour ce troisième jour de compétition ?<sup>562</sup>
- (293) Comment tu le sens, le plan de table ?<sup>563</sup>
- (294) Alors, Myrienne, vous vous sentez comment ?<sup>564</sup>
- (295) D'ailleurs, Mikael, vous vous sentez comment après toutes ces remarques ?<sup>565</sup>
- (296) Cristina, vous le sentez comment, vous, le défilé de Stéphanie ?<sup>566</sup>

As for inverted structures, in on-screen interactions *wh*-questions with non-straight word order were just as scarce as *yes/no*-interrogatives, but they did occur in quasi-lexicalised expressions (see (297)), in ritualised situations or standard procedures such as the visit at a clothes shop (see (298)), in particularly polite questions (see (299)), in an explicating self-directed question (300), and only in single cases also as usual information-seeking questions (301)).

- (297) Comment allez-vous ?<sup>567</sup> (QVs)
- (298) Que puis-je faire pour vous ?<sup>568</sup> (QVs)
- (299) Qu'en pensez-vous, monsieur Berrier ?<sup>569</sup> (QVs)
- (300) Que vois-je ?<sup>570</sup> (QVs)
- (301) Que nous as-tu prévu comme originalité dans ton mariage ?<sup>571</sup> (QVs)

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<sup>557</sup> English translation: 'What do you think of my establishment?' (ADDI\_3\_00\_30\_59); the utterance was preceded by *Bon, alors, les copains...* ('Well, my friends...').

<sup>558</sup> English translation: 'What do you think?' (BVAH\_2\_00\_42\_16); the utterance was preceded by *Ça c'est pas mal passé.* ('That wasn't too bad [,was it?])

<sup>559</sup> English translation: 'Nath', what do you like so much about this sweater?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_35\_36)

<sup>560</sup> English translation: 'But what do you add to the colour, Myrienne?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_39\_45)

<sup>561</sup> English translation: 'So, Dédé, how are you feeling this morning?' (BVAH\_1\_00\_21\_49); example already given as (213).

<sup>562</sup> English translation: 'How are you feeling for this third day of competition?' (BVAC\_3\_00\_07\_38)

<sup>563</sup> English translation: 'What do you think of the table plan?' (BVAH\_3\_00\_28\_02)

<sup>564</sup> English translation: 'So, Myrienne, how are you feeling?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_35\_51)

<sup>565</sup> English translation: 'By the way, Mykael, how are you feeling about all those remarks?' (CSQD\_3\_00\_44\_48)

<sup>566</sup> English translation: 'Cristina, what do you expect from the catwalk of Stéphanie?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_48\_48)

<sup>567</sup> English translation: 'How are you?' (BVAC\_2\_00\_39\_34)

<sup>568</sup> English translation: 'What can I do for you?' (QUAM\_3\_00\_11\_04)

<sup>569</sup> English translation: 'What do you think, Mister Berrier?' (UDPP\_1\_00\_26\_33)

<sup>570</sup> English translation: 'What do I see?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_14\_28) (followed by *Les enveloppes...* 'the envelopes').

<sup>571</sup> English translation: 'What have you planned for us as specialty for your wedding?' (QUAM\_1\_00\_04\_06); this interrogative appears to be premeditated. A possible (but unfortunately not verifiable) explanation could be that the producers had told the candidates to ask about the particularities of each wedding. In that case, it would be less spontaneous than other utterances.



To sum up, the speech types proved to be highly relevant for the choice of a morphosyntactic variant, but there was also formal as well as functional variation within a speech type. As could be shown, the pragmatic meaning was already of importance to explain differences between the speech types (e.g. the favouring of *EST-CE QUE* in yes/no interrogatives by the prevalence of reflection questions interview comments). In a last step, pragmatic types shall be compared to see whether morphosyntactic variation can be further systematised (also within the speech type of on-screen interaction).

When trying to capture the **pragmatic type (iv)** of an utterance, I soon had to admit that empirical research faces serious problems. If one wants to evaluate the factor of pragmatic type, there have to be defined clear criteria when to classify an utterance as which of the numerous pragmatic types. However, most possible criteria are not really objective and by no means indisputable. For example, it is difficult to differentiate between information- and confirmation-seeking questions: How could one know for sure whether the speaker had an idea about what the hearer's answer would be? And what about being more or less sure in the expected answer? One may be tempted to use linguistic rather than extralinguistic criteria for such a distinction (e.g. the use of a tag or an adverbial like *vraiment* (cf. Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 87)). However, this may lead to a circular argumentation (e.g. declarative word order is more often used in confirmation-seeking questions because tag questions only allow declarative word order), which I would rather avoid. Likewise, interrogativeness and assertiveness are not always complementary but they can rather be seen as a continuum (see also Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1991b). Here, one can operationalise this distinction by the presence or absence of an answer,<sup>572</sup> but even rhetorical questions may occasionally be answered (be it for true disbelief or mere spite). What is more, even if one manages to determine the types, they will be very unevenly distributed (cf. the general frequency of rhetorical questions vs. information-seeking ones). Additionally, RTV programmes do not show a usual conversation, but use cuts, rearrangements, and transitions, which make such a classification even harder. In the end, I have decided to rather look at concrete examples than to incorporate a variable which cannot be properly operationalised.

In the following, I will explore my data regarding two details: the presence vs. absence of the question particle and the preverbal vs. postverbal position of the *wh*-expression. As inverted sentences were extremely rare in direct interactions, and mostly used for politeness-marking or to evoke formal situations, I do not consider them of real importance. In the case of *EST-CE QUE* and the *wh*-word position, there can however be drawn some interesting conclusions. The focus will hence be on these two outcome variables, which have been in the centre of scientific interest for a long time (Terry 1967; see int. al. Chevalier 1969; Ashby 1977; Blanche-Benveniste 1997; Quillard 2000; Coveney 2002; Druetta 2002, 2003; Myers 2007; Boucher 2010; Hamlaoui 2010).

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<sup>572</sup> This was done for the study of Druetta (2009), who classified questions according to their response.

For the use of the question particle, I hypothesize that its employment is strategic in nature (and can thus not be directly linked to a certain discourse function). In general, it is used to put special emphasis on the interrogative character of the utterance. The reason for this emphasis can however be manifold.

In the RTV-corpus, there were four recurrent discourse functions which could be marked by *EST-CE QUE*:

- (i) Thought explication
- (ii) Information obtainment in guessing games
- (iii) Politeness marking
- (iv) Insistence

As we have already seen, *EST-CE QUE* was used for thought explication (i) (see p.189). In situations such as an interview, it can thus be used to mark that one is pointing out one's thoughts. Some *EST-CE QUE* questions were even preceded by an introductory co-text which made clear that the interviewee was explicating his/her thoughts: The sequence of the two *quand*-interrogatives (of which the first one is given as (302)) was preceded by *donc, en gros*, which presents the utterance as a summary of what the interviewee was thinking about, (303)) was preceded by *Je me suis dit* and (304) was preceded by *Et là je commence à me dire*, which both show that the following interrogative is the explication of a self-addressed question. In other cases, such as (305), the absence of a potential hearer makes clear that the question is addressed to the speaker himself/herself.

- (302) Est-ce que je vais passer le premier tour ?<sup>573</sup> (EsV)
- (303) Quand est-ce que je vais arrêter de pleurer ?<sup>574</sup> (QEsV)
- (304) Est-ce qu'on est vraiment à un mariage ?<sup>575</sup> (EsV)
- (305) Alors, où est-ce qu'on va mettre ça ?<sup>576</sup> (QEsV)

In guessing games, such as the one played in UDPP 5, information is obtained by asking yes/no-interrogatives. Interestingly, most questions in this game were introduced by *EST-CE QUE* (see (306) to (308)).<sup>577</sup> Since such games only allow questions, the periphrastic structure may have been used to make sure that one adheres to the rules. Also, it could be a strategy for gaining time: Since every utterance has to be a question, *EST-CE QUE* can be used to start any utterance and can be uttered before having made up one's mind what to ask next. Either way, there seems to be a tendency in guessing games to mark interrogative structures by the question particle (ii).

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<sup>573</sup> English translation: 'Will I pass the first round?' (CHAP\_3\_00\_14\_23)

<sup>574</sup> English translation: 'When will I stop crying?' (QUAM\_3\_00\_48\_09); the example was already given as (132).

<sup>575</sup> English translation: 'Are we really at a wedding?' (UDPP\_1\_01\_15\_10)

<sup>576</sup> English translation: 'So where are we going to put this?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_10\_42); the example was already mentioned as (138).

<sup>577</sup> Indeed, some declarative structures were used as well, but all of them were pronounced as assertives rather than questions (i.e. they contained a falling final contour), and could be interpreted as a mere check for their hypothesis. These structures were thus rather confirmation-seeking assertives.

- (306) Est-ce que mon dessert est une tarte ?<sup>578</sup> (ESV)  
 (307) Est-ce que j'ai du nougat ?<sup>579</sup> (EsV)  
 (308) Est-ce qu'il contient de la crème euh... de la crème ?<sup>580</sup> (EsV)

Another function of *est-ce que*, which Myers (2007: 238) also mentions as a possibility, may be politeness marking (iii). Since inversion is almost not used in usual interactions (i.e. non-official acts without special stylistic effects) and declarative structures seem to be the unmarked form for spoken interaction, periphrastic structures may have filled the paradigmatic vacancy and become structures which are associated with politeness. This means that the structures which have traditionally been considered as 'sociostylistically neutral' would have shifted in terms of politeness marking. At first sight, such a use could indeed be deduced from examples (309) to (311).

- (309) Mademoiselle, est-ce que vous auriez trois heures à nous accorder ?<sup>581</sup> (EsV)  
 (310) Madame, est-ce que vous aimez la tarte tatin ?<sup>582</sup> (EsV)  
 (311) Est-ce que vous souhaitez danser ?<sup>583</sup> (EsV)

If *EST-CE QUE* was generally associated with politeness, it could be expected that the question particle is more likely to be used with the second-person singular subject pronoun *vous* than with the informal variant *tu*.<sup>584</sup> Indeed, 15.2% of the non-inverted yes/no-interrogatives with *vous* contained the question particle whereas only 11.4% of the non-inverted yes/no-interrogatives with *tu* did so (see figure 47). This difference is though not significant ( $p = 0.3983$ ) and Cramer's V is very low (0.04836115). Also, the above-mentioned examples clearly showed that the question particle is not always linked to politeness (cf. the self-addressed questions and the questions used in guessing games, i.e. (302) to (308)).

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<sup>578</sup> English translation: 'Is my desert a pie?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_35\_44)

<sup>579</sup> English translation: 'Do I have nougat?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_35\_48) ; example first given as (204).

<sup>580</sup> English translation: 'Does it contain cream?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_35\_53)

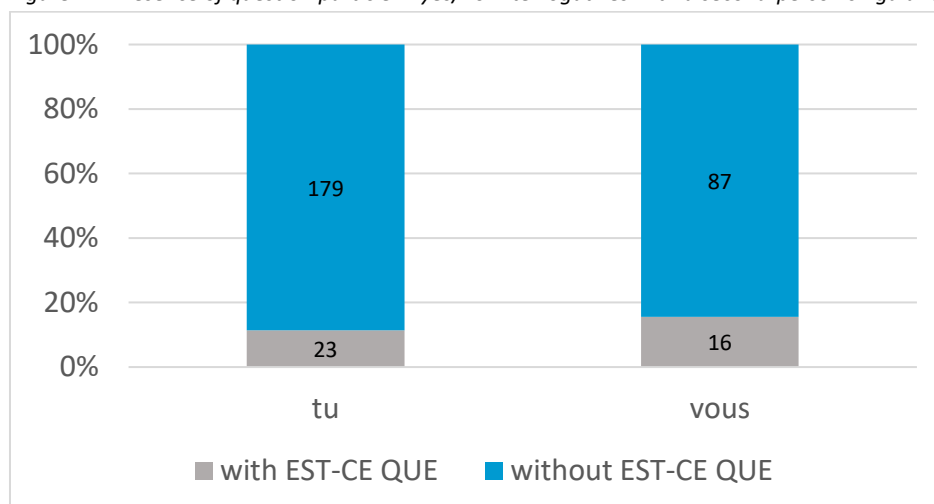
<sup>581</sup> English translation: '(Miss,) would you spare us three hours?' (CSQD\_4\_00\_01\_46)

<sup>582</sup> English translation: 'Ma'am, do you like *tarte Tatin* (apple tart with caramel topping)?' (MBOU\_2\_00\_08\_25)

<sup>583</sup> English translation: 'Would you like to dance?' (CHAP\_2\_00\_19\_41)

<sup>584</sup> Of course, utterances containing the polite form of the second-person singular pronoun are not automatically politer than utterances containing *tu* (e.g. when arguing with persons you address by *vous*, you may be very impolite). Nonetheless, *vous* is generally said to be a politeness marker, and will presumably more often be used for questions which are meant to be polite.

Figure 47: Presence of question particle in yes/no-interrogatives with a second-person singular subject pronoun<sup>585</sup>



What is more, the politeness-marking addresses *monsieur* and *madame* were not directly linked to the question particle since they also occurred with declarative question forms:

- (312) *On fait la chaise musicale, Madame Mareau ?*<sup>586</sup> (sV)
- (313) *Vous allez bien, Madame Simon ?*<sup>587</sup> (sV)
- (314) *Monsieur, qui c'est qui vous achète ça ?*<sup>588</sup> (QsV)

Consequently, one cannot say that *EST-CE QUE* is 'associated' with politeness, but that it can be used as a strategy to mark politeness. This strategy was particularly common in yes/no-interrogatives with requests for action or permission,<sup>589</sup> such as the following questions with *pouvoir* (see (315) to (321)):

- (315) *Dans la foulée, est-ce que tu peux tirer les rideaux s'il te plaît ?*<sup>590</sup> (EsV)
- (316) *Anthony, est-ce que tu peux me prêter tes lunettes s'il te plaît ?*<sup>591</sup> (EsV)
- (317) *Est-ce que je peux vous payer tout de suite ?*<sup>592</sup> (EsV)
- (318) *Est-ce que je peux continuer ma visite ?*<sup>593</sup> (EsV)
- (319) *Est-ce qu'on peut mettre un chien sur l'étagère ?*<sup>594</sup> (EsV)
- (320) *Est-ce que je pourrais savoir le prix s'il vous plaît ?*<sup>595</sup> (EsV)
- (321) *Est-ce que je pourrais goûter... l'ardoise ?*<sup>596</sup> (EsV)

<sup>585</sup> The counts were restricted to yes/no-interrogatives because in wh-interrogatives, the question particle occurred almost exclusively with *QUE*, and *qu'est-ce que* seems to be grammaticalised (cf. p.79).

<sup>586</sup> English translation: '(Is it okay if) we play the game of musical chairs?' (CSQD\_3\_00\_23\_10); example first given as (277).

<sup>587</sup> English translation: 'How are you (doing), Mrs. Simon?' (CSQD\_4\_00\_05\_36)

<sup>588</sup> English translation: 'Who buys that for you?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_28\_01)

<sup>589</sup> Interestingly, many of these interrogatives can even be seen as functionally hybrid: For instance, (320) and (321) are formulated as a request for permission, but they actually require an action, namely the telling of the price and the handing over of the pastry.

<sup>590</sup> English translation: 'In the same breath, could you close the curtains, please?' (BVCN\_3\_01\_00\_18)

<sup>591</sup> English translation: 'Anthony, can you lend me your glasses, please?' (CHAP\_3\_00\_20\_29)

<sup>592</sup> English translation: 'Can I pay you immediately?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_51\_15)

<sup>593</sup> English translation: 'Can I continue my visit?' (CHAP\_3\_00\_28\_29)

<sup>594</sup> English translation: 'Can we put a dog on the shelf?' (CHAP\_1\_00\_14\_04)

<sup>595</sup> English translation: 'Could I know the price, please?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_43\_28)

<sup>596</sup> English translation: 'Could I try the [thing on the] slate?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_13\_40)

Although *EST-CE QUE* is not obligatory in requests either, it seems to be more frequent than in other pragmatic types. Correspondingly, the question particle repeatedly co-occurred with *s'il vous/te plaît*: The 'please'-equivalent occurred in 5 out of 7 of the imperative periphrastic yes/no-questions whereas it only occurred in 6 out of 18 of the imperative declarative yes/no-questions. Putting it differently, the use of the question particle in imperative yes/no-interrogatives correlates with the use of 'please': As Cramer's V shows, the correlation between the use of *s'il vous/te plaît* and the question particle is of medial size (0.3250978).<sup>597</sup> Since the latter is a politeness marker, this correlation corroborates the claim that *EST-CE QUE* is not (always) independent from politeness.

With *VOULOIR*, such requests are also possible, especially when using the adverb *bien* (see (322) and (323)), but they were absent from this corpus.

- (322) Tu veux bien acheter un paquet de spaghettis, s'il te plaît ?<sup>598</sup>  
 (323) Est-ce que tu veux bien entrer dans le four pour le nettoyer ?<sup>599</sup>

There was though another pragmatic type which regularly surfaced with the combination of *EST-CE QUE* and a form of *VOULOIR*: offers (see (324) to (327)).

- (324) Est-ce que tu veux du beurre ?<sup>600</sup> (EsV)  
 (325) Est-ce que vous voulez goûter d'abord ?<sup>601</sup> (EsV)  
 (326) Est-ce que vous voulez goûter autre chose ?<sup>602</sup> (EsV)  
 (327) Est-ce que tu veux qu'on vienne t'aider, Silvain ?<sup>603</sup> (EsV)

Apart from those rather precise functions, *EST-CE QUE* can be used to make the question less trivial, showing one's interest or the relevance of the question. This leads to a certain *insistence (iv)* (cf. questionnaire answers in chapter 4, p.124) and can be used to repeat a declarative question with more emphasis.<sup>604</sup> Accordingly, (328) to (331) were never used incidentally and they always elicited an answer.

- (328) Est-ce que tu penses qu'on va gagner ?<sup>605</sup> (EsV)  
 (329) Est-ce que vous avez passé un bon séjour ?<sup>606</sup> (EsV)

<sup>597</sup> However, it should be added that numbers of observances were rather low: There were 7 periphrastic and 24 declarative imperatives yes/no-interrogatives. For this reason, the observed correlation only approaches significance ( $p = 0.07029$ ).

<sup>598</sup> Teaching materials, *À plus 1*, p.217.

<sup>599</sup> French version of the horror movie 'The visit'. The question which was translated is *Would you mind getting inside the oven to clean it ?*.

<sup>600</sup> English translation: 'Do you want butter?' (BVCN\_3\_00\_49\_06)

<sup>601</sup> English translation: 'Do you want to try first?' (BVCN\_3\_00\_47\_24)

<sup>602</sup> English translation: 'Do you want to try something else?' (QUAM\_1\_00\_38\_58)

<sup>603</sup> English translation: 'Do you want us to come to your help?' (UDPP\_1\_01\_09\_52)

<sup>604</sup> Although my corpus lacks a concrete example, this notion is substantiated by my personal experience. At an event in Tours, the presenter on stage first simply asked *Ça va ?*, and – after only a few people answered – repeated his question as *Est-ce que ça va ?*.

<sup>605</sup> English translation: 'Do you think that we'll win?' (BVAC\_3\_00\_03\_51)

<sup>606</sup> English translation: 'Did you enjoy your stay?' (BVAC\_3\_00\_44\_53)

- (330) Est-ce que t'as passé une bonne journée ?<sup>607</sup> (EsV)  
(331) Est-ce que tu aimes les courgettes ?<sup>608</sup> (EsV)

Also, there were found periphrastic interrogatives with an almost rhetorical meaning. Even though the following questions (see (332) to (334)) are not fully assertive, they are highly suggestive such that their meaning is somewhere between an assertion and a question. They do not express the assertion of their negated proposition, but they are enquiries which are strongly biased towards an answer confirming their negated proposition. Accordingly, all of them were used in contexts where the speaker was clearly predisposed towards an answer.

- (332) Est-ce que tu peux bosser comme ça, même avec sa carte ?<sup>609</sup> (EsV)  
(333) Est-ce que ça fait pas mal au cœur de laisser ça ?<sup>610</sup> (EsV)  
(334) Est-ce que tu viendrais en vacances ici, toi, par exemple ?<sup>611</sup> (EsV)

These questions are also insisting considering the fact that the speaker calls for a confirmation, which he expresses by an explicitly interrogative structure (i.e. a structure which is marked morphologically as a question form). Such interrogatives may also be regarded as emphatic questions because they are insisting on a confirmation of the suggested answer.

However, there were also found some comparable interrogatives which occurred with and without question particle although they were used in very similar situations and did not necessarily differ in their emphaticness. For example, (335) and (336) were used in sequence to ask each other whether the interlocutor had slept well. Likewise, the interrogatives (337) to (340) are used as introductory questions which guide the hearer's thought to a new topic. In all four cases, this is done by asking him/her whether (s)he knows X. The questions are thus directly addressed at an interlocutor, and they do not diverge in their communicative situations. Only in (337), the speaker continued without getting an answer, and even here, the speaker paused to give her interlocutor the chance to respond. Although one may not be able to disprove the possibility that the morphosyntactically marked questions were meant to be less trivial than the other ones, it is obvious that there is at least no difference in terms of discourse function.

- (335) Tu as bien dormi ?<sup>612</sup> (sV)  
(336) Et toi, est-ce que tu as bien dormi ?<sup>613</sup> (EsV)  
(337) Tu sais pourquoi ?<sup>614</sup> (sV)

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<sup>607</sup> English translation: 'Did you have a nice day?' (SHOP\_3\_00\_55\_21)

<sup>608</sup> English translation: 'Do you like courgettes?' (QUAM\_1\_00\_39\_08)

<sup>609</sup> English translation: 'Can you work like this, even with his (reduced) menu?' (ADDI\_1\_00\_32\_02)

<sup>610</sup> English translation: 'Doesn't it make you sick to leave all this (food)?' (ADDI\_1\_00\_58\_12)

<sup>611</sup> English translation: 'Would you come for a holiday, for example?' (BVAC\_3\_00\_04\_57)

<sup>612</sup> English translation: 'Did you sleep well?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_13\_00)

<sup>613</sup> English translation: 'Did you sleep well?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_13\_01); example first given as (200).

<sup>614</sup> English translation: 'Do you know why?' (BVAH\_1\_00\_56\_17)

- (338) Est-ce que tu sais où on se situe ?<sup>615</sup> (EsV)
- (339) Mais tu sais ce que ça veut dire quand c'est trop salé ?<sup>616</sup> (sV)
- (340) Est-ce que tu sais ce que c'est, la Cale de la Savatte ?<sup>617</sup> (EsV+S)

As for wh-interrogatives, the question-particle was though clearly less often used for posing a more emphatic or less direct question. In the case of *QUE*, which was the most frequent question word in periphrastic structures by far (see figure 24 on p. 159), there were numerous occurrences of neutral information-seeking questions, such as (341) to (346).

- (341) Qu'est-ce qu'ils ont dit ?<sup>618</sup> (QEsV)
- (342) Qu'est-ce que vous pensez du camping ?<sup>619</sup> (QEsV)
- (343) Alors, Qu'est-ce qu'on décide ?<sup>620</sup> (QEsV)
- (344) Qu'est-ce que vous voulez boire, Sep ?<sup>621</sup> (QEsV)
- (345) Euh, Qu'est-ce qu'il reste ?<sup>622</sup> (QEsV)
- (346) Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ?<sup>623</sup> ({QE}={s/S}V)

Interestingly, all cases of periphrastic interrogatives with another question word than *QUE* (i.e. (347) to (351)) were though mentioned in situations of thought explication. Hence, the question particle always functioned as a marker of indirectness or self-address, which was a use also observed in yes/no-interrogatives. This corroborates the hypothesis that *Qu'est-ce qu{e/'}* has become a grammaticalised form which is no longer of equal status to other forms containing a question word followed by the question particle. As there does not exist any *QUE*-variant which can be fronted without triggering subject-verb inversion, it is axiomatic that the two-part form has taken the vacancy in the *QUE*-paradigm. Furthermore, *Qu'est-ce qui* has been known to be a grammaticalised form because it is the only possible form for asking about the grammatical subject. If one assumes *Qu'est-ce qu{e/'}* to be a grammaticalised form as well, this shows the analogy of the two structures, and explains why the question particle is much less common with other question words (the 5 occurrences are given as (347) to (351)).

- (347) Comment est-ce qu'ils vont faire ?<sup>624</sup> (QEsV)
- (348) Où est-ce que je'arrive ?<sup>625</sup> (QEsV)
- (349) Alors, où est-ce qu'on va mettre ça ?<sup>626</sup> (QEsV)

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<sup>615</sup> English translation: 'Do you know where we are?' (MBOU\_1\_00\_10\_34)

<sup>616</sup> English translation: 'Do you know what it means when it's too salty?' (QUAM\_2\_00\_09\_21)

<sup>617</sup> English translation: 'Do you know what the *Cale de la Savatte* is?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_03\_09)

<sup>618</sup> English translation: 'What did they say?' (ADDI\_3\_00\_42\_46)

<sup>619</sup> English translation: 'What do you think of the camping site?' (BVAC\_3\_00\_27\_44)

<sup>620</sup> English translation: 'So what shall we go for?' (BVAH\_2\_01\_07\_48)

<sup>621</sup> English translation: 'What do you want to drink, Sep?' (BVAH\_1\_00\_37\_49)

<sup>622</sup> English translation: 'Uh, what is left?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_24\_58); example first given as (110).

<sup>623</sup> English translation: 'What happened?' (BVAC\_3\_00\_38\_59); example first given as (109).

<sup>624</sup> English translation: 'How will they manage?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_25\_59); the example was first given as (146).

<sup>625</sup> English translation: 'Where am I coming?' (ADDI\_3\_00\_08\_22); example was already given as (137).

<sup>626</sup> English translation: 'So where are we going to put this?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_10\_42); the example was already mentioned as (138) and (305).

- (350) *Quand est-ce que je vais arrêter de pleurer ?*<sup>627</sup> (QEsV)  
 (351) *Quand est-ce que... ?*<sup>628</sup> (QE)

In summary, *EST-CE QUE* can – but does not have to – be used to stress the interrogativeness of an utterance either to explicate the questioning act (for structural marking in guessing games or to simply pose a more emphatic and insisting question) or to make the structure less direct (for thought explication or politeness marking). This function appears to exist for interrogatives with and without *wh*-expression, but with ‘what’-questions, the question particle cannot be considered separately from the question word. Rather, *Qu’est-ce que* can be considered as the fronted variant of *QUE<sub>object</sub>*.<sup>629</sup>

Let us now turn to the influence of the pragmatic function of a question on the *wh*-position. As there are two major *wh*-positions – *wh*-preverbal (i.e. *wh-ex-situ*) and *wh*-postverbal (i.e. *wh-in-situ*) – the question arises whether there is a difference in meaning between the two declarative *wh*-interrogatives. As will be shown, the two morphosyntactic variants may differ in terms of information structure. However, such a discourse-functional difference cannot be directly mapped on the form of a question. Rather, this difference in usage may be a tendency caused by the question forms’ information-structural implications, which may thus be considered a strategy instead of a rule.

Of course, there are cases in which morphosyntactic forms are clearly not in free variation. One of the best-known cases are echo questions. Strictly speaking, these question types are not particular pragmatic types, since they can be information-seeking (e.g. when some noise covered a piece of information), confirmation-seeking (e.g. when somebody is not sure whether (s)he heard the information correctly or when (s)he is doubtful about it), as well as surprise questions (i.e. the speaker expresses his counter-expectation or disbelief of the information), but they are rather special regarding their context-embeddedness: The information gap was already closed before asking the question, i.e. the answer to the question is considered to already be part of the common ground (see p.56). In these cases, only elliptical or declarative interrogatives with a *wh*-expression *in-situ* (see (V))<sup>630</sup> or without any explicit *wh*-element (see (VI)) are possible.

<sup>627</sup> English translation: ‘When will I stop crying?’ (QUAM\_3\_00\_48\_09); the example was already given as (132) and (303).

<sup>628</sup> English translation: ‘When...?’ (QUAM\_3\_00\_48\_10)

<sup>629</sup> In structural linguistics, such a variant has become known as an *allomorph* (see e.g. Schpak-Dolt 2016: 13). *Qu’est-ce qu{e/’}* is thus a form of the lexeme *QUE*, and its use is conditioned morphosyntactically (cf. Schpak-Dolt 2016: 16f.).

<sup>630</sup> In the present corpus, all echo *wh*-interrogatives were elliptical.



(V) (The baker is carrying a cotton bag for packing up some bread loafs. The experts had first not recognised what he was carrying, but at a second glance, they did.)

- Ah, c'est un sac, un sac torchon ! On dirait un torchon comme ça !
- Une couche [...] !
- Une quoi ?<sup>631</sup> Une couche ?

Source: *La meilleure boulangerie de France*, broadcast the 03/10/2016 from 17.30 on M6

(VI) (One of the candidates has discovered blood stains on the bed linen. He is calling the reception for expressing his complaint.)

- J'ai des draps qui sont un peu sales en fait juste.
- Des draps qui sont... ?<sup>632</sup>

Source: *Bienvenue à l'hôtel*, broadcast the 03/10/2016 from 17.30 on TF1

In both situations, non-elliptical wh-in-situ constructions would, apart from their redundancy, have been acceptable (i.e. *On dirait que c'est quoi ? / Vous avez des draps qui sont quoi ?*), but wh-fronted variants (i.e. <sup>(?)</sup>*Qu'est-ce qu'on dirait ? / ?Que dirait-on ? / ?Qu'est-ce que les draps que vous avez sont ? / ?Que sont les draps que vous avez ?*) would be plainly unacceptable or at least much less intuitive.<sup>633</sup>

Similarly, questions which are strongly contextually grounded, such as those ones with contrastive focus (see (VII)) seem to be restricted to wh-in-situ. Also here, any wh-fronted variant (i.e. *Qu'est-ce que c'est ? / Qu'est-ce ?*) would be unacceptable.

(VII) (The candidate shows the experts his method of putting bread crumbs on the pastry in order to prevent the dough from blowing up.)

- Ça s'appelle du [miguRi]. (Philippe, the candidate)
- Du ? (Bruno and Norbert, the experts)
- Du [miguRi]. (Philippe)
- Du [migoRi]. (Bruno)
- Du [miguRi]. (Philippe)
- Alors, c'est quoi ? C'est le patois de chez vous ? Non ? C'est quoi ?<sup>634</sup> (Bruno)

Source : *La meilleure boulangerie de France*, broadcast the 21/09/2016 from 17.30 on M6<sup>635</sup>

Yet, not all questions are restricted to one form only. There were several questions which occurred in different forms although they were used in the same or very similar situations. Hence, there were also cases in which question forms could be in free variation, and for which the term *alloquestion* (cf. Boucher 2010: 104) would indeed be justified.

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<sup>631</sup> English translation: 'A what?' (MBOU\_1\_00\_15\_53)

<sup>632</sup> English translation: 'Sheets that are...?' (BVAH\_1\_01\_07\_43)

<sup>633</sup> This hypothesis has been checked with several native speakers of hexagonal French. Most people agreed on my intuitions, but *Qu'est-ce qu'on dirait* seemed to be less unacceptable. As far as I am concerned, this can be explained by the fact that *On dirait* was not uttered immediately before the echo question: The repetition of what had been said in the non-immediate context may thus be perceived as not unimportant. Hence, one might be inclined to not defocalise the non-wh part.

<sup>634</sup> English translation: 'What is that?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_18\_09)

<sup>635</sup> The same scene was already given as (IV).

Although questions about how much time was left were more often produced as wh-in-situ interrogatives (of which one is given as (352)), there could also be found a wh-fronted declarative structure (given as (353)):

- (352) Il me reste combien de temps là ?<sup>636</sup> (sVQ)  
 (353) Combien il me reste de temps, s'il vous plaît ?<sup>637</sup> (QsV)

Both questions were used for an on-screen interaction (the candidate asking the camera team), and both questions were truly information-seeking. Hence, there is no situational variance which could straightforwardly explain the use of different structures.

Likewise, as we have already seen, information-seeking 'what do you think of it/that'-questions were used in on-screen interactions both with *Qu'est-ce que* and with *quoi*. As the following examples illustrate, the situations are indistinguishable regarding their pragmatic meaning (see (VIII) to (XV)).

- (VIII) (The two house agents who are currently not involved in the visit are watching their colleague's tries to convince the potential buyers of his object. The house agent Céline is dancing with the potential seller Michel.)

- Bon danseur, Michel ! T'en penses quoi ?<sup>638</sup>
- Ouais, bon danseur, Michel. Par contre, la Céline... Faut qu'elle passe des cours, non ?

Source : *Chasseurs d'appart'*, broadcast the 19/04/2016 from 18.40 on M6

- (IX) (The bride of the day is trying on a dress. She has brought along a good friend of hers and shows her the dress.)

- Ah oui ! (friend)
- Alors ? (bride)
- Sympa ! (friend)
- T'en penses quoi ?<sup>639</sup> (bride)
- Ah oui, sympa. (friend)
- T'aimes bien ? (bride)

Source : *Quatres mariages pour une lune de miel*, broadcast the 06/04/2016 from 17.00 on TF1

- (X) (The candidates are going to bed. They are reflecting the day.)

- Après le passage par la salle de bain, c'est le lit qui attend les hôteliers. (off-voice)
- Alors, cette journée ? Qu'est-ce (que) t'en penses ?<sup>640</sup> (candidate 1)
- Ben, je me suis bien amusé moi, je trouve que c'était une bonne journée... (candidate 2)

Source : *Bienvenue à l'hôtel*, broadcast the 19/04/2016 from 18.00 on TF1

<sup>636</sup> English translation: 'How much time have I left?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_51\_32)

<sup>637</sup> English translation: 'How much time have I left, please?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_45\_48)

<sup>638</sup> English translation: 'What do you think?' (CHAP\_2\_00\_20\_20)

<sup>639</sup> English translation: 'What do you think?' (QUAM\_3\_00\_11\_46)

<sup>640</sup> English translation: 'What do you think?' (BVAH\_2\_00\_59\_19)

(XI) (A candidate couple has been attributed a room in which everything is decorated according to the theme of love and erotics. Since they are both not very fond of the decoration, the woman changes the letters LOVE to VELO.)

- Qu'est-ce t'en penses ? (the woman)
- Ah oui, ça, c'est mieux, ça. (the man)

Source : *Bienvenue chez nous*, broadcast the 08/03/2016 from 18.00 on TF1

(XII) (The three restaurateurs are reflecting on the presentation of their main courses, which have been placed in front of them.)

- Voyons maintenant si la présentation des plats concoctés par notre jeune chef de vingt-cinq ans tient ses promesses. (off-voice)
- Ça me plaît, ça me donne envie, j'en veux goûter. C'est ce que j'attendais avec son explication. (candidate 1)
- Et toi, la déco de ton foie gras, Qu'est-ce que tu en penses ? (candidate 2)
- Ouais... Euh, c'est un bon foie gras... C'est une présentation classique quoi. (candidate 3)

Source : *L'addition, s'il vous plaît*, broadcast the 23/03/2016 from 17.00 on TF1

(XIII) (The three brides are eating. While they do so, they share their thoughts on the quality of the meal.)

- L'asperge, elle est croquante ! (candidate 1)
- Elle est bien cuite alors. Elle est bien cuite ? (candidate 2)
- Non, elle est croquante. (candidate 1)
- Et au niveau de la pomme de terre ? Là, vous en pensez quoi ?<sup>641</sup> (candidate 2)
- Eh ben, j'ai pas aimé le beurre... (candidate 3)
- C'est un peu fade. (candidate 1)

Source : *Bienvenue chez nous*, broadcast the 19/04/2016 from 17.00 on TF1

(XIV) (The candidate of the day is trying on blue high heels. The off-voice is used to introduce several interview comments.)

- Julie, et vous. C'est votre truc, ces chaussures ? (off-voice)
- Ouff... Non, c'est trop mastoc, j'aime pas du tout. (Julie)
- Ouais... Vous n'êtes pas à bloc sur le côté mastoc... Et vous, Cristina, vous en pensez quoi ?<sup>642</sup> (off-voice)
- Moi, je suis pas fan. [...] (Cristina)

Source : *Les reines du shopping*, broadcast the 05/04/2016 from 17.25 on M6

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<sup>641</sup> English translation: 'What do you think of that?' (QUAM\_2\_00\_44\_32); it is possible that instead of *Là*, the utterance contained *La* + noun (which rephrases *la pomme de terre* 'the potatoe'). However, there are many background noises which make the decoding rather difficult. At any rate, the morphosyntactic structure would though be the same (i.e. sVQ).

<sup>642</sup> English translation: 'And you, Cristina, what do you think?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_43\_15)

(XV) (One of the house agents is showing a couple the property he would like to sell them.)

- La partie cuisine... (the house agent opening the door to the kitchen)
- Oui... (Véronique)
- [Oj]... (Véronique's husband showing his disapproval)
- Cuisine... (Véronique)
- Avec les placards à aménager, comme ça, vous pouvez la faire à votre goût. (house agent)
- Ah, mais ça, c'est clair. Le carrelage aussi, on pourra le faire à notre goût, hein ? (Véronique)
- Véronique ! (house agent)
- [...] (entretien inséré)
- Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez ?<sup>643</sup> (house agent)
- Oui, ben... Si on ouvre... (Véronique)
- On peut, on peut. (house agent)
- Voilà. Donc, on peut imaginer... (Véronique)

Source : *Chasseurs d'appart'*, broadcast the 13/04/2016 from 18.40 on M6

All questions were clearly meant to elicit an answer, and so they did. In some cases, the speaker of the question may already have taken in some knowledge about the opinion of the hearer (see (IX) and (XV)), in others the context does not give away anything about the hearer's thoughts (see (VIII), (X), (XII), (XIII) and (XIV)).<sup>644</sup> The preknowledge of the speaker does hence not seem to have an influence on the choice of *Qu'est-ce que* vs. *quoi*.

However, at least in some cases there appears to be a difference with respect to information structure: Shifting from one sub-topic to another seems to make the use of a *wh-in-situ* structure more likely. The two interrogatives in (XIII) and (XIV) both contain a shift in the focus of interest without changing it completely. In (XIV), the object (O) of interest is changed, and in (XIII), the speaker is turning to a different hearer (H). In both situations, the question under discussion remains 'What is H's opinion on O?', but one value of the two topic variables is changed. Indeed, considering the whole corpus, *quoi-in-situ* structures are often used in situations of sub-topic shifting while *Qu'est-ce que* was typically used when 'What is H's opinion on O?' was not yet under discussion. Although the contexts of a house visit or of the testing of a meal may somewhat prime a question on opinions, *Qu'est-ce que* was often used when opinions had not been shared previously (e.g. after entering a new room). However, there could also be found an apparent counter-example for the use of *quoi-in-situ* structures for sub-topic changes (see (XII)). Since in this situation, the three candidates are already talking about 'What does H think of the presentation of H's meal?', one might have expected a *quoi-in-situ* structure to be used. However, the variable H is used twice in this question and 'the presentation of H's meal' is rephrased as *la déco de ton foie gras* ('the decoration of your foie gras'). Hence, the speaker does not assume 'What does H think of the presentation of H's meal?' to be the question under discussion, but rather

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<sup>643</sup> English translation: 'What do you think?' (CHAP\_3\_00\_17\_39)

<sup>644</sup> Example (XI) is difficult to classify. The (female) speaker has the preknowledge that the (male) hearer did not like the previous decoration, but she has no concrete information on whether he likes her changed decoration. Therefore, one could assume that the speaker has the expectation that the hearer will like the changed decoration, but strictly speaking, the direct context has not given away anything about the hearer's opinion.

'What does H think of the presentation of O?'. Hence, there is a double shift, which may explain the left dislocation of the object as well as the use of a periphrastic structure.

Let us now consider examples with *QUE + ÊTRE*. There are certainly cases in which *Qu'est-ce que c'est* and *c'est quoi* are both possible, but there are also some cases in which the exchange of the two forms is barely acceptable. For instance, the periphrastic variant for a situation like (XXIII) and the *quoi*-in-situ variant in a situation like (XXII) seem at best less natural. As Blanche-Benveniste (1997) observed, *Qu'est-ce que c'est ?* is normally used to elicit a general definition whereas *c'est quoi ?* usually refers to a term already specified in the context. This is at least partly true for my corpus of reality TV shows, as the following examples illustrate:

(XVI) (The two experts are looking at the displayed bakery products.)

- Elles sont sympas, vos couronnes. Qu'est-ce <<sup>645</sup>que c'est ?<sup>646</sup> Vous avez...> (Norbert, one of the experts)
- <C'est la fagotine.> (seller)
- La... ? (Norbert)
- La fagotine. (seller)

Source : *La meilleure boulangerie de France*, broadcast the 27/09/2016 from 17.30 on M6

(XVII) (All candidates are at the hotel's restaurant. The starter is being served.)

- Qu'est-ce que c'est ?<sup>647</sup> (one of the candidates is thinking loud; she addresses this question half to herself half to the person sitting next to her)
- Alors... Pour l'entrée, j'ai choisi des cuisses de grenouille cuites meunière avec des pommes de terre Délicatesse, crème à l'ail doux et persil. (the host of the day)

Source : *Bienvenue à l'hôtel*, broadcast the 19/04/2016 from 18.00 on TF1

(XVIII) (All candidates are at the camping site's restaurant. The main course is being served.)

- Bon, mais voyons si les assiettes les valent bien. (off-voice)
- Qu'est-ce que c'est alors ?<sup>648</sup> (one of the candidates, absent from screen, the plate is shown)
- Alors... Du l'émincé (de) poulet sauce Maroilles. (the host of the day)

Source : *Bienvenue au camping*, broadcast the 09/05/2016 from 18.00 on TF1

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<sup>645</sup> The symbol < marks the beginning of an overlap, and the symbol > the end of an overlap.

<sup>646</sup> English translation: 'What's that?' (MBOU\_2\_00\_15\_33)

<sup>647</sup> English translation: 'What's that?' (BVAH\_2\_00\_55\_16)

<sup>648</sup> English translation: 'So what's that?' (BVAC\_1\_00\_39\_06)

- (XIX) (The candidate of the day shows the daily procedure and which care products she uses.)
- On passe à la coiffure ? (off-voice)
  - J'utilise une pâte gomme... (candidate of the day)
  - "Une pâte gomme", Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça ?<sup>649</sup> (one of the candidates commenting the candidate of the day's actions in an interview)
  - Eh ben, Dominique, vous y serez pas pour rien décidément cette semaine... Vous en apprenez des trucs avec vos copines du showroom (off-voice)
- [flashback of Dominique's comments in which she says that something was new to her]
- Et donc, la pâte gomme, Nathalie, c'est pour... ?
  - ...pour structurer un petit peu mes cheveux...
- Source: *Les reines du shopping*, broadcast the 05/04/2016 from 17.25 on M6
- (XX) (Each of the candidates is being interviewed on their way to the restaurant of the day. They are given the menu and they are supposed to comment on what they think of the layout, selection of meals, and the expectations that are raised.)
- Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça ?<sup>650</sup> (one of the candidates, taking the menu out of its envelope and making a sceptical grimace when looking at the menu, which reminds of an LP sleeve.)
  - [...] (other candidate)
  - En tout cas, c'est très vintage. Je pense qu'il va y avoir de la super déco...
- Source: *L'addition s'il vous plaît*, broadcast the 23/03/2016 from 17.00 on TF1
- (XXI) (The two experts, Bruno and Norbert, are looking at the creative bakery products of the two teams. They are making their decision with which one they will start.)
- Alors, Norbert, tu veux commencer par quoi ? (Bruno)
  - J'ai envie d'essayer ça. Vraiment, ce... celui-ci... « Rillot des îles ». (Norbert)
  - « Rillot des îles ». Bon, c'est quoi ?<sup>651</sup> Fruits exotiques... (Bruno)
  - Fruits exotiques, des épices peut-être ? (Norbert)
- Source : *La meilleure boulangerie de France*, broadcast the 21/09/2016 from 17.30 on M6
- (XXII) (The four candidates are waiting for the main course. They are trying to remember what was indicated on the menu.)
- Le plat aujourd'hui, c'est quoi, euh, Dominique ?<sup>652</sup> Tu te ra... Ça revient ? (Réjane, one of the candidates)
  - Je n'ai pas du tout... (Dominique, one of the candidates)
  - Ah si, c'est un filet mignon ! (Réjane, one of the candidates)
- Source : *Un dîner presque parfait*, broadcast the 02/05/2016 from 16.50 on W9
- (XXIII) (The candidates are inspecting their rooms. One of them finds a hair under the mattress.)
- C'est quoi, ça ?<sup>653</sup> (the candidate, holding the hair between his thumb and index, and showing it to his partner) Ça, c'est un poil mais c'est pas... C'est un poil de chien.
  - Je sais pas... (his partner)
- Source : *Bienvenue à l'hôtel*, broadcast the 19/04/2016 from 18.00 on TF1

Although Blanche-Benveniste's (1997: 143) phrasing ("demandes de définitions générales") may be somewhat misleading,<sup>654</sup> the hypothesized difference between the uses of *Qu'est-ce que* and *c'est quoi*

<sup>649</sup> English translation: 'What (on earth) is a *pâte gommée*?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_24\_56)

<sup>650</sup> English translation: 'What (on earth) is that?' (ADDI\_3\_00\_06\_08)

<sup>651</sup> English translation: 'Okay, what's that?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_44\_04)

<sup>652</sup> English translation: 'What's today's meal, Dominique?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_45\_32)

<sup>653</sup> English translation: 'What 's that?' (BVAH\_2\_00\_31\_18)

<sup>654</sup> In (XVI) for example, there is given the name of the product instead of a general definition.

can thus be substantiated by my data. On the whole, *Qu'est-ce que c'est* is used when the speaker does not have any details on the entity in question while *c'est quoi* is used to either prompt more details or to introduce own assumptions. In other words, the periphrastic structure signals that the speaker does not really have an idea what the entity is while the *quoi-in-situ* structure encodes that the speaker is wondering about some precisions on the entity. Consequently, only *Qu'est-ce que c'est* can be used to express blank incomprehension (see e.g. (XIX)) and can thus take on a somewhat rhetorical meaning (see e.g. (XX)<sup>655</sup>). In contrast, *c'est quoi* seems to be the only possible form for introductory or precision questions.

This may also explain the questionnaire answers on the difference between *Qu'est-ce que c'est* and *c'est quoi*: The *quoi-in-situ* variant of item series 5.5 ('And what's this?', see p. 103) was said to be more pushing, and the periphrastic variant to be more curious. The insisting character of the *quoi-in-situ* form may be due to the asking for details as opposed to a question which merely marks one's ignorance. Also, the mentioned difference elucidates why a speaker would typically use *c'est quoi* when showing the hearer an object (s)he was desperately looking for: Of course, the speaker knows what the thing is, so he cannot use a form encoding his unknowingness. In return, the periphrastic variant may be perceived as a more curious or interest-signalling question since *Qu'est-ce que c'est* presents the speaker as unknowing.

There is, however, also another way of looking at this. With Hamlaoui (2010), one can assume that *wh-in-situ* structures present the subject and verb as defocalised whereas periphrastic structures do not. From this perspective, the openness and less insisting character of *Qu'est-ce que c'est* can be explained by the fact that *c'est* is not encoded as being out of the centre of interest. In other words, the non-predominance of QUE in the periphrastic variant may make a general information-seekingness more likely whereas the emphasis on the question word in *c'est quoi* may be typical of asking for details. As any information already given is prone to be defocalised, terms that were already mentioned can be expected to favour *quoi-in-situ*. As a result, I do not consider the approaches of Blanche-Benveniste (1997) and Hamlaoui (2010) as incompatible, but rather as two different ways of looking at things which may though very well converge.

Furthermore, this approach can help to explain why the two straight-word-order interrogative forms (i.e. sVQ and Q(E)sV) are often, though not always, interchangeable: In some cases, an explicit defocalisation of the non-wh part makes a difference, in others it does not. To prove the potential of

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<sup>655</sup> In this example, the meaning is not rhetorical in the sense that the negated proposition of the question is asserted, but it is rhetorical in the sense that incomprehension or surprise is asserted. The meaning could be paraphrased as 'That menu is very unusual, so one cannot immediately understand what it is'.

this reasoning, wh-interrogatives with further question words, namely *où* and *quel*, will be examined in the following.

In the case of *où* ('where'), there is a clear prevalence of wh-in-situ forms, but wh-fronting is not an exception either – at least not if one considers morphosyntactically marked interrogatives as well: There were 32 *où*-in-situ (of which 3 are presented in (XXVII) to (XXIX)) and 9 *où*-fronted structures (see also figure23, on p. 159). Looking at declarative structures only, the number of *où*-fronted structures comes down to 4 (which are presented in (XXIV) to (XXVIII)), so Myer's (2007: 128) observation that *où* favours an in-situ position is clearly confirmed.

(XXIV) (One of the candidates is explicating the thoughts she had when approaching the restaurant of the day.)

- Oh là... Où est-ce que j'arrive ? Est-ce que c'est dans une brocante ? Est-ce que c'est dans une maison ? Est-ce que c'est dans un restaurant ? Où on est ?<sup>656</sup> quoi.

Source : *L'addition s'il vous plaît*, broadcast the 23/03/2016 from 17.00 on TF1

(XXV) (The candidate of the day meets the three other candidates after their inspection of his restaurant.)

- Vous avez découvert mon univers de pirate(s)... Dites-moi tout ! (the candidate of the day)
- Bon... Euh je voulais donc te féliciter parce que je trouve que ton restaurant il est vraiment original... Tu as pris beaucoup de soin pour la décoration... (one of the other candidates)
- C'est super, ben, ça me fait plaisir parce que voilà c'est ces chose qui vont me faire avancer.
- Alors moi, je vais te parler un peu de la cuisine. J'ai pas trouvé de patates. J'ai pas trouvé de légumes. J'ai pas trouvé de bœuf dans tes frigos. Et ça... du coup, je me dis : Mince ! Zut alors ! Où c'est ?<sup>657</sup> [...] (another one of the other candidates)

Source : *L'addition s'il vous plaît*, broadcast the 07/03/2016 from 17.00 on TF1

(XXVI) (The candidates have just discussed the fact that the portions were so big that a lot of the food will have to be thrown away.)

- Et la barrique arrive à point nommé pour voir le navire chavirer. (off-voice)
- Alors, où nous sommes, nous ?<sup>658</sup> (the waiter)

Source : *L'addition s'il vous plaît*, broadcast the 07/03/2016 from 17.00 on TF1

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<sup>656</sup> English translation: 'Where are we?' (ADDI\_3\_00\_08\_30)

<sup>657</sup> English translation: 'Where is it?' (ADDI\_1\_00\_35\_43)

<sup>658</sup> English translation: 'Where are we? (Are we done?)' (ADDI\_1\_00\_58\_25)



(XXVII) (The three candidates who are inspecting the kitchen of the restaurant of the day, are looking for the ingredients. They are opening cupboards and boxes.)

- On va lui vider le frigo de tout manière... (male candidate 1)
- Ça, c'est de la mozza... (female candidate)
- Ça, c'est (de la) mozza... (male candidate 2)
- Je sais pas d'où il l'a, mais elle est jolie... (male candidate 1)
- Salade, ça, c'est la salade. (female candidate)
- Il l'a caché où, le caviar ?<sup>659</sup> (male candidate 1)
- Où c'est qu'il a caché le caviar ?<sup>660</sup> (male candidate 2)
- On va chercher le caviar ! (male candidate 1)

Source : *L'addition s'il vous plaît*, broadcast the 15/03/2016 from 17.00 on TF1

(XXVIII) (One candidate couple is getting out of their car.)

- Alors, on dort où ?<sup>661</sup> (one of the candidates, directly after getting out)
- Et voilà. (the woman of the candidate couple of the day)
- Et voilà, l'emplacement. (the other one of the candidates, after getting out)

Source : *Bienvenue au camping*, broadcast the 09/05/2016 from 18.00 on TF1

(XXIX) (The candidates are having breakfast.)

- Vous voulez un café ?
- Euh, moi, je veux bien.
- Moi aussi, volontiers.
- Mais l'eau, elle est pas très chaude.
- Elle est où, la gazinière ?<sup>662</sup>
- Au voisin.

Source : *Bienvenue au camping*, broadcast the 17/05/2016 from 18.00 on TF1

It is thus true that *où* seems to inherently favour an in-situ position, as was suggested by Myer's (2007) account of answerability. However, I do not fully agree on the explanation that the fronted structures are used for less answerable questions. At least in (XXVI), the question is incontestably answer-eliciting. Rather, I think the semantic emptiness of the verb ÊTRE minimizes the potential difference between a defocalised and a non-defocalised (subject and) verb. Indeed, in all four situations where wh-fronted structures were used, wh-in-situ structures would have been possible as well. In (XXVII), an *où*-ex-situ structure is even preceded by an *où*-in-situ one. Differences in meaning can thus be considered as negligible when it comes to verbs like 'to be'. In other words, whether a semantically empty element is defocalised or not remains without – or with extremely little – consequences for its meaning.

On the other hand, the fact that 3 out of the 4 *où*-ex-situ declarative structures were explications of thoughts, i.e. reflection questions, should be taken into account. As far as I am concerned, this fact suggests that the default position for *où* is indeed in-situ. In reflection questions, which are strictly speaking (self-)quoted interrogatives, this default is though reversed. One could argue that an

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<sup>659</sup> English translation: 'Where has he hidden the caviar?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_32\_28)

<sup>660</sup> English translation: 'Where has he hidden the caviar?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_32\_29)

<sup>661</sup> English translation: 'So where are we going to sleep?' (BVAC\_1\_00\_22\_49)

<sup>662</sup> English translation: 'Where is the gas cooker?' (BVAC\_2\_00\_39\_59)

introductory phrase such as *Ce que je me demandais, c'était...* ('What I wondered about was: ...') is implicated in this kind of question. Similarly, the discourse particle *quoi* (see (XXIV)) reveals that the question is uttered in an implicit frame of 'This is the question': As only assertions can be strengthened by *quoi*, the particle makes the implicit embeddedness of the interrogative explicit. Such constructions may thus be interpreted as being indirect and hence only allow wh-fronted structures.

Also for *quel*, the concept of answerability is not capable of systematising the wh-phrase position. In general, *quel* was used more often ex-situ: Next to the 6 + 14 occurrences of *quel* in subject and attribute function, in which it was categorically fronted, it was fronted in 37 out of 44 cases (see also figure 22, p. 158). However, this may be due to its strong tendency to be used with inversion. Indeed, most of the *QUEL*<sub>Object</sub>-questions were uttered as comment or quiz questions by off-voices. Considering exclusively straight word-order structures, there are only 4 occurrences of *QUEL*-fronting (presented as (354) to (357)). Interestingly, the 7 occurrences of *QUEL*-in-situ comprise 4 occurrences of 'How old are you?' (see (358) to (361)) and 2 occurrences of *BE* + 'on which floor'. There were no instances of the wh-fronted declarative variant for these questions. *QUEL*-in-situ may therefore be typical of asking for the interlocutor's age or on which floor something or someone is, but, as opposed to *où*, one cannot speak of a general default in-situ-position of the wh-determiner.

- (354) Dans quelle galère je me suis lancé ?<sup>663</sup>
- (355) A quelle heure elle remonte, la marée ?<sup>664</sup>
- (356) Avec quelle tu veux commencer ?<sup>665</sup>
- (357) Quel genre vous cherchez ?<sup>666</sup>
- (358) Tu as quel âge, Charle ?<sup>667</sup>
- (359) Vous avez quel âge ?<sup>668</sup>
- (360) T(u) as quel âge ?<sup>669</sup>
- (361) Tu as quel âge, si c'est pas trop indiscreète ?<sup>670</sup>
- (362) C'est à quel étage ?<sup>671</sup>
- (363) T'es en quel étage ?<sup>672</sup>
- (364) On est sur quelle catégorie là ?<sup>673</sup>

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<sup>663</sup> English translation: 'In what trouble have I put myself?' (BVCN\_1\_00\_36\_28)

<sup>664</sup> English translation: 'At what time does the sea rise again?' (BVCN\_2\_00\_27\_39)

<sup>665</sup> English translation: 'With which [one] would you like to start?' (MBOU\_2\_00\_43\_56); the utterance was preceded by *Deux bases pâte à chou...* ('Two choux pastry bases...'). The use of *quel* here is non-standard. Since there is no noun accompanying the question word, the interrogative pronoun *lequel* would have been expected.

<sup>666</sup> English translation: 'What kind [of shoes] are you looking for?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_41\_18)

<sup>667</sup> English translation: 'How old are you<sub>informal</sub>, Charle?' (ADDI\_3\_00\_11\_22)

<sup>668</sup> English translation: 'How old are you<sub>formal</sub>?' (MBOU\_3\_00\_21\_35)

<sup>669</sup> English translation: 'How old are you<sub>informal</sub>?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_08\_00)

<sup>670</sup> English translation: 'How old are you<sub>informal</sub> – if that isn't too indiscrete?' (SHOP\_1\_00\_09\_08)

<sup>671</sup> English translation: 'On which floor is it?' (CHAP\_1\_00\_09\_10)

<sup>672</sup> English translation: 'On which floor are you?' (CHAP\_2\_00\_08\_20)

<sup>673</sup> English translation: 'What is this?' (CHAP\_1\_00\_22\_09); the utterance was preceded by *Mais enfin, c'est une visite ou un concours canin ?* ('But well, is this a visit or a dog exposition?')

Instead, one could argue for a default ex-situ position: It is certainly striking that only semantically empty verbs occurred with a *quel*-in-situ phrase. On the one hand, this supports what has been claimed as a linguistic factor (see *semantic content of verb*, p. 176). On the other hand, it may be interpreted as a further piece of evidence for the defocalisation of the non-wh part in structures with postverbal question phrases: Since combinations of pronouns with semantically empty verbs do not provide any information, it is sensible that they are prone to being defocalised. Indeed, interrogatives like *Quel âge tu as ?* and *À quel étage c'est ?* seem very unlikely to be encountered in authentic language use.

One last piece of evidence comes from assertive questions. In rhetorical (see (365)) and reproachful (see (366)) questions, the whole proposition is typically of importance.

(365) *Comment... comment on peut travailler avec ça ?*<sup>674</sup>

(366) *Comment tu as pu faire ça ?*<sup>675</sup>

Accordingly, the assertive meaning comprises the whole proposition contained - a rhetorical question expressing its negation (here: 'One cannot work with that. '), and a reproachful question expressing its non-comprehension or non-appreciation (here: 'I cannot understand how you could do this. '). Hence, a wh-in-situ construction would falsely suggest that the wh-part would be more important for the encoded message than the rest of the sentence (cf. the readings 'One can work with that, but how?' and 'I can understand that you could do this, but how?'). This explains why Coveney (2002) observed that rhetorical wh-in-situ questions are rather scarce. It may though also account for the rhetorical wh-in-situ structures observed in Dekhissi & Coveney (2018): sVQ are not generally pragmatically inadequate for assertive questions, but the rhetorical or reproachful meaning must allow an emphasis of the wh-phrase as in the constructed example (281).

(281) *Ah bon ? Tu te débrouillerais tout seul ? Tu ferais quoi alors ?*<sup>676</sup>

In summary, I assume with Hamlaoui (2010) that in wh-in-situ questions, the non-wh-part is presented as defocalised. Since the rest of the sentence is encoded to not be in the centre of interest, the wh-phrase can be interpreted as emphasised. Consequently, a wh-in-situ structure may stress the importance of the missing constituent. Yet, such a difference does not always surface, and there are – as we have seen – certainly also other factors determining morphosyntactic variation.

### Logistic regression models

Finally, the most promising factors shall be inserted into statistical models, calculated by means of R (version 3.3.3). By doing so, the significance, effect size, and the interplay of the different factors shall

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<sup>674</sup> 'How... how can you work with that?' (ADDI\_1\_00\_31\_25)

<sup>675</sup> English translation: 'How could you do that?'

<sup>676</sup> English translation: 'So what do you think?'

be revealed. Unfortunately, not all factors could be reliably operationalised: Especially pragmatic types will therefore not be taken into account although we have seen that they have very well an influence.

As morphosyntactic variation comprises three different aspects, there will also be calculated three different models: One to predict the word order (i) (i.e. straight vs. inverted), one to predict the use of the question particle (ii) (i.e. with vs. without *est-ce que*), and one to predict the position of the wh-element (iii) (i.e. pre- vs. postverbal). While the first two models will apply to all interrogatives, the last one will be limited to interrogatives containing a wh-word. In all cases, the variables are binary categorical classifications, so the regression models to be chosen are binomial logistic ones.

The first model to be calculated will evaluate the influence of different factors (i.e. the independent variables) on the outcome (i.e. the dependent variable) of **word order (i)**. In other words, several linguistic and extralinguistic categorisations will be tested on their impact on the likeliness of subject-verb inversion. As we have seen, the semantic type (3 levels: yes/no, wh, and alternative), the subject type (11 levels: WHO, pronominal only, reduplicated pronominal, null subject, simple short noun phrase, noun phrase with a clitic, quantifier, proper noun, proper noun with a clitic, long noun phrase, long noun phrase with a clitic), the speech type (6 levels: on-screen interaction, off-voice interaction, audience interaction, interview question, off-voice comment, quiz question), and the presence of negation (2 levels: with vs. without) seem to have an impact on the placement of the subject and the verb.

Since a model with too many factors and levels of factors will however not converge, the factors had to be boiled down to binary variables. For the subject type, the distinction between pronominal and non-pronominal was used. Such a division was justified by previous research: For example, Mathieu (2016: 275) claimed that wh-in-situ structures “in French are much better with pronouns than with full noun phrases”. If that is true, one may expect a positive correlation between pronominal subjects and straight word order since in French a wh-postverbal position is not possible with subject-verb inversion. In the case of the speech type, only the types which could be easily attributed to conceptually written vs. spoken language were used: On-screen and off-voice interaction were coded as ‘spoken’ and off-voice comments and quiz questions as ‘written’.

Hence, a logistic regression model with all factors including interactions was calculated, and then reduced according to the adjusted models’ AIC<sup>677</sup>. The latter was done by the step() function, which eliminates factors that do not bring any gain regarding the prediction of the outcome.

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<sup>677</sup> The Akaike information criterion estimates the relative quality of two or more statistical models. Therefore, it can be used to determine the best regression model.

```
model.wordorder = glm(WordOrder ~ SemanticType * SpeechType_binary * SubjectType_binary *  
Negation, family = "binomial", data=data)  
step(model.wordorder)
```

For the intercept, I decided to use the most common values of the variables. For one thing, this makes the model more intuitive. For another, models with non-recurrent reference levels do often not converge. At any rate, it would be unnecessarily complicated to use a combination of reference levels for which barely any measurements exist. If one took the alpha-numerical standard, which is 'disjunctive question' / 'spoken' / 'non-pronominal subject' / 'negated' as a reference level, there would be literally zero measurements. Hence, such a reference level would be purely theoretical and not very useful. In contrast, the observances of word order in interrogatives with the value combination of 'yes/no-question' / 'spoken' / 'pronominal subject' / 'non-negated' amount to almost nine hundred, and offer thus a solid base for the base line of our model.

According to the AIC, the best model was the one which did not take into account negation nor the interaction between the semantic and the speech type:

```
WordOrder ~ SemanticType + SpeechType_binary + SubjectType_binary +  
SemanticType:SubjectType_binary + SpeechType_binary:SubjectType_binary
```

This means that there were used three isolated factors (semantic type, speech type, and subject type) and two interactions (between the semantic type and the subject type, as well as between the speech type and the subject type). The model summary (see table 22) reveals several interesting facts about the significance and the effect sizes of the different factors:

Table 22: Logistic regression model for word order

	Probability <sup>678</sup>	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z )
(Intercept) YNI / spoken / pronominal subject / non-negated => <b>straight</b>	97.2%	3.5392	0.1908	18.548	< 2e-16 ***
SemanticTypeDSI	97.7%	0.2213	0.9858	0.224	0.822
SemanticTypeWHI	97.0%	-0.0773	0.3177	-0.243	0.808
SpeechType_binarywritten	3.7%	-6.7885	0.3489	-19.458	< 2e-16 ***
SubjectType_binarynon- pronominal	97.8%	0.2487	1.2415	0.200	0.841
SemanticType_adjustedDSI: SubjectType_binarynon- pronominal	100.0%	11.2686	535.4134	0.021	0.983
SemanticType_adjustedWHI: SubjectType_binarynon- pronominal	11.6%	-5.7382	1.3092	-4.383	1.17e-05 ***
SpeechType_binarywritten: SubjectType_binarynon- pronominal	88.9%	5.0767	1.2744	3.984	6.78e-05 ***

First of all, from the table it can be gathered that straight word order is very likely for the set of variables in the intercept. This is to say that yes/no-interrogatives which are produced during interactions and which contain a pronominal subject but no negation are quite unlikely to show subject-verb inversion. More precisely, less than 3 out of 100 cases are expected to contain subject-verb inversion. Also, it can be deduced that the probability of inversion in disjunctive and wh-interrogatives (with the same set of values for the other variables) does not differ significantly. Likewise, the use of a non-pronominal subject does not change the probability of inverted word order significantly. By contrast, the speech type has a great influence. For comment and quiz questions, the probability of straight word order (with the same set of values for the other variables) is reduced by over 93%, i.e. less than 4 out of 100 interrogatives are predicted to be non-inverted. Regarding interactions, one can say that wh-interrogatives with non-pronominal subjects are much less likely to contain straight word order than the mere adding of the two factors would suggest (11.4% instead of 97.6%). In the case of conceptually written interrogatives, non-pronominal subjects make the probability of non-inversion much more likely than the adding of the two factors would suggest: 88.9% (instead of 4.9%) of these interrogatives are expected to contain straight word order.

<sup>678</sup> The probability calculation was obtained by using the `plogis()`-function with the output's estimates (intercept + relevant factors).

Such a model is particularly helpful because factorial distributions are by no means equal. Hence, one might think a factor to be decisive although the factor is merely coincidental with one or several other factors. For this reason, one does not immediately come to the same conclusions when considering simple contingency tables. In the case of negation, for example, there seemed to be an influence at first sight: Negation was much less common in inverted structures than in straight ones (see table 23, as well as p. 180). However, there was only 1 occurrence of a negated written interrogative. Therefore, the proportional difference in subject-verb inversion might be due to the smaller proportion of written interrogatives (cf. the low proportion of spoken inverted interrogatives in table 24), and the factor of negation cannot be proven to be significant.

*Table 23: Word order in negated and non-negated interrogatives*

	negated	non-negated
inverted	2 (2.4%)	385 (20.2%)
straight	83 (97.6%)	1524 (79.8%)

*Table 24: Word order in spoken and written interrogatives*

	spoken	written
inverted	60 (3.9%)	321 (81.7%)
straight	1466 (96.1%)	72 (18.3%)

The second model concerns the outcome of the presence of the **question particle (ii)**. For this model, the same independent variables as in the first model, as well as the additional factor of the presence of a modal verb will be investigated with respect to their influence on the use of *est-ce que*. As we have seen, the question particle can have different statuses: It can be a lexical entity marking an interrogative morphosyntactically (i.e. in disjunctive and yes/no-interrogatives as well as in wh-interrogatives with a question word other than *QUE*) and it can be part of a grammaticalised form of *QUE* (i.e. in *Qu'est-ce qu{i/e/}*}, see p. 201). Accordingly, one has three options: *qu'* + question particle can be subsumed into the category 'with question particle' (surface interpretation), it can be subsumed into the category 'without question particle' (reinterpretation as grammaticalised form), or it can be excluded (avoidance strategy). The different treatments of *QUE* have advantages and disadvantages, so I decided to calculate models for all three options and to compare them in order to gain insight into the consequences of the interpretation of *Qu'est-ce qu{i/e/}*}. Consequently, the following models were calculated:

```
model.esk_QESKincluded = glm(QuestionParticle_QESKincluded ~ SemanticType * SpeechType_binary *
SubjectType_binary * Negation_adjusted * Modal, family = "binomial", data = data)
step(model.esk_QESKincluded)
model.esk_QESKreinterpreted = glm(QuestionParticle_QESKreinterpreted ~ SemanticType *
SpeechType_binary * SubjectType_binary * Negation * Modal, family = "binomial", data = data)
step(model.esk_QESKreinterpreted)
model.esk_QESKexcluded = glm(QuestionParticle_QESKexcluded ~ SemanticType * SpeechType_binary *
SubjectType_binary * Negation * Modal, family = "binomial", data = data)
step(model.esk_QESKexcluded)
```



Table 25: Logistic regression model for the use of 'est-ce que' – 'Qu'est-ce que' included as wh-word + question particle

	Probability	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z )
(Intercept) YNI / spoken / pronominal subject / non-negated / without modal => <b>without ESK</b>	91.1%	2.3221	0.1151	20.176	< 2e-16***
SemanticTypeDSI	91.3%	0.1685	0.5386	0.313	0.754365
SemanticTypeWHI	79.8%	-0.9469	0.1645	-5.757	8.59e-09***
SpeechType_binarywritten	98.8%	2.0726	0.5919	3.501	0.000463***
SubjectType_binarynonpronominal	77.0%	-1.1120	0.5206	-2.136	0.032685*
Negationnegated	96.9%	1.1246	0.5996	1.875	0.060730.
Modalwith_modal	74.1%	-1.2698	0.2502	-5.074	3.89e-07***
SemantictypeDSI: SpeechType_binarywritten	100.0%	12.0029	2399.5449	0.005	0.996009
SemantictypeWHI: SpeechType_binarywritten	98.5%	0.7634	1.1755	0.649	0.516037
SemantictypeDSI: SubjectType_binarynonpronominal	99.8%	4.8001	3393.4689	0.001	0.998871
SemantictypeWHI: SubjectType_binarynonpronominal	91.3%	2.0882	0.9125	2.289	0.022107*
SpeechType_binarywritten SubjectType_binarynonpronominal	96.4%	-3.6881	1.2006	-3.072	0.002128**
SemantictypeDSI: SpeechType_binarywritten: SubjectType_binarynonpronominal		NA	NA	NA	NA
SemantictypeWHI: SpeechType_binarywritten: SubjectType_binarynonpronominal	100.0%	15.2240	472.9572	0.032	0.974322

Table 26: Logistic regression model for the use of 'est-ce que' – 'qu'est-ce que' reinterpreted as wh-word only

	Probability	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z )
(Intercept) YNI / spoken / pronominal subject / non-negated / without modal => <b>without ESK</b>	91.2%	2.3358	0.1177	19.839	< 2e-16***
SemanticTypeDSI	93.3%	0.2983	0.5474	0.545	0.58787
SemanticTypeWHI	99.9%	4.3751	1.0378	4.206	2.60e-05***
SpeechType_binarywritten	98.8%	2.0823	0.5921	3.517	0.000437***
SubjectType_binarynon-pronominal	77.2%	-1.1144	0.5198	-2.144	0.032052*
Negationnegated	97.7%	1.4233	0.7288	1.953	0.050809.
Modalwith_modal	70.5%	-1.4626	0.2815	-5.196	2.04e-07***
SpeechType_binarywritten: SubjectType_binarynon-pronominal	54.3%	-3.1306	1.0948	-2.859	0.004244**

Table 27: Logistic regression model for the use of 'est-ce que' – 'qu'est-ce que' excluded

	Probability	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z )
(Intercept) YNI / spoken / pronominal subject / non-negated / without modal => <b>without ESK</b>	91.2%	2.3352	0.1177	19.839	< 2e-16***
SemanticTypeDSI	93.3%	0.2967	0.5471	0.542	0.587530
SemanticTypeWHI	99.9%	4.2054	1.0479	4.013	5.99e-05***
SpeechType_binarywritten	98.8%	2.0834	0.5921	3.519	0.000434***
SubjectType_binarynon-pronominal	77.3%	-1.1123	0.5197	-2.140	0.032344*
Negationnegated	97.7%	1.4237	0.7288	1.954	0.050748.
Modalwith_modal	70.5%	-1.4627	0.2815	-5.196	2.04e-07***
SpeechType_binarywritten: SubjectType_binarynonpronominal	55.1%	-3.1026	1.0927	-2.839	0.004519**

When looking at the models (see tables 25 to 27 above), it becomes clear that there are several factors which have an influence on the use of *est-ce que* no matter whether *Qu'est-ce qu{e/i/'}* is counted as containing a question particle, reinterpreted as an isolated wh-word or excluded from the counts. In

general, the use of the question particle is more likely in spoken language, with non-pronominal subjects, with modal verbs, and with negation.<sup>679</sup>

Furthermore, there is one interaction which is significant in all three models: Written interrogatives containing a non-pronominal subject are much more likely to be produced with a question particle than the mere adding of the factors would suggest (44.9% as opposed to 3.5%). At first sight, this may be surprising, but this prediction may be put down to the fact that the proportion of *EST-CE QUE* in written interrogatives with a non-pronominal subject was much higher than the one in written interrogatives with a pronominal subject (3 out of 31 as opposed to 3 out of 299)). However, when looking more closely, it becomes clear that not all observances were usual written interrogatives:

(282) *Est-ce que notre coiffeuse à l'américaine va le remarquer ?*<sup>680</sup> (ESV)

(283) *Mais est-ce que cette idée de coupe va plaire au studio ?*<sup>681</sup> (ESV)

(284) *Est-ce que ce pari a été payant ?*<sup>682</sup> (ESV)

In at least two of the three occurrences, a somewhat spoken character of the utterances cannot be denied.<sup>683</sup> This spokenness manifests itself in the use of a possessive determiner, which establishes a direct link to the audience in (282), and in the insertion of a linking word as well as the use of the *future composé*, which establish a link with the directly preceding and following speech in (283). Even in (284), one might want to see a certain immediacy because the question is directly followed by the precision question *quelle note pour JS?* and the self-given answer to the latter. Hence, the interaction detected by the statistical models should be taken with a pinch of salt. At any rate, it is remarkable that the use of the question particle seems to frequently co-occur with a certain degree of spokenness.

This observation is though only true for yes/no-interrogatives. After all, the use of *EST-CE QUE* in wh-interrogatives is as good as restricted to 'what'-questions. Therefore, the use of the question particle in wh-interrogatives is extremely unlikely when *Qu'est-ce qu{e/i}'* is excluded or reinterpreted, whereas it is quite common when it is included in the counts. In other words, the interpretation of *Qu'est-ce QUE* determines whether the use of the question particle is more likely in yes/no- or in wh-interrogatives: Since structures with [*QUE* + question particle] were very frequent, interpreting these structures according to their surface structure made the use of the question particle in constituent

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<sup>679</sup> For the latter, one must add that the factor of negation only approaches but does not reach significance. As for the factor of speech type, the prediction that conceptually written interrogatives will be less often marked by *est-ce que* is only significant if *qu'est-ce qu{e/i}'* is reinterpreted or excluded.

<sup>680</sup> English translation: 'Will our French-style hairdresser notice that?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_21\_50)

<sup>681</sup> English translation: 'But will the people in the studio like that idea for a hair cut?' (CSQD\_1\_00\_37\_42)

<sup>682</sup> English translation: 'Did that bet pay off?' (SHOP\_3\_01\_06\_03)

<sup>683</sup> Nonetheless, the classification as a comment question was certainly justified: In all three cases, there is no direct interaction in so far as the questions were not posed to elicit a reaction but rather to guide the thoughts of the audience.

questions more likely than in polar ones.<sup>684</sup> When these structures were reinterpreted or excluded, the use of the question particle became more likely in polar than in constituent interrogatives.

The first model seems to be the less precise one. According to the AIC (used by the step()-function), there are several interactions which have to be included in the model although they are not significant. This makes the model not only less transparent but also less stringent.<sup>685</sup> As a consequence, the exclusion of [QUE + question particle] improves statistical evaluations. Interestingly, though, the reinterpretation of this structure does so as well. Indeed, the model counting *Qu'est-ce qu{e/i/'}* as not containing a question particle turns out to be very similar to the one excluding it. Considering this similarity, the statistical tests offer further evidence for the reinterpretation of *Qu'est-ce qu{e/i/'}* as a simple variant of the question word QUE. Although this form is structurally complex on the surface, there is thus empirical evidence that it should be interpreted as a structural simplex. Judging by the similarity between the last two models, *Qu'est-ce qu{e/i/'}* is hence a grammaticalised structure.

In the last model, the **position of the wh-element (iii)** will be predicted. For this purpose, the two major possibilities, i.e. pre- and postverbal position, will be compared. Based on previous observations, it shall be tested how the question word, the subject type, the speech type, and the presence of a preposition influence the place of the interrogative phrase. For the subject and the speech type, the same binary distinctions as above were used. For the question word, it was decided to use its major function as a criterion: *qui, que, quel, lequel* and *combien* were classified as 'pronominal', and *où, quand, comment, pourquoi* as 'adverbial'. Accordingly, the following model was calculated:

```
model.whposition = glm(QuestionWordPosition ~ QuestionWord_binary * SpeechType_binary *
SubjectType_binary * Preposition, data=data, family="binomial")
step(model.whposition)
```

Table 28: Logistic regression model for wh-position

	Probability	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z )
(Intercept) Pronominal wh / spoken / pronominal subject / non-prepositional => <b>ex-situ</b>	41.2%	-0.3543	0.125	2.831	0.00464**
QuestionWord_binaryadverbial	52.9%	0.4686	0.2310	-2.029	0.04247*
SpeechType_binarywritten	100.0%	18.6202	637.1142	-0.029	0.97668
SubjectType_binarynon-pronominal	94.7%	3.2353	1.0312	-3.138	0.00170**
Prepositionprepositional	7.7%	-2.1329	0.7465	2.857	0.00427**

<sup>684</sup> Here, it should be noted that there could not be found any statistical evidence for a difference between yes/no-interrogatives and disjunctive interrogatives. On the one hand, this might reflect the semantic similarity between these two types. On the other, this may simply reflect the fact that disjunctive interrogatives are too scarce to include them in statistical evaluations.

<sup>685</sup> If every factor interacts with almost every other factor, none of the factors is independent from the other ones. Therefore, one may legitimately wonder whether the factors have been chosen appropriately.

At first sight, one may be surprised to see that the dichotomy of spoken vs. written language is not shown to be significant. This is particularly remarkable because the probability for an ex-situ wh-position is estimated 100%, which reflects the fact that written interrogatives were produced with wh-fronting (for an example, see (126) and (131), repeated hereafter as (85) and (86) for convenience).

(85) *Alors quelle influence l'addition aura-t-elle sur leurs jugements ?*<sup>686</sup> (QSVs)

(86) *Alors, combien Guillaume va-t-il obtenir pour sa salle ?*<sup>687</sup> (QSVs)

Although this is thus the factor that is most clearly perceivable, the model cannot prove its influence. However, this does (at least in this case) not mean that perception is deceptive, but that there is a general problem with logistic regression: It is not possible with categorical observations. Indeed, when looking at the countings (see table 29), it becomes clear that 'written' language is simply too rigid for the calculations of odds: As a division by 0 is not allowed, the odds for wh-positions in 'written' language cannot be determined.

Table 29: Counts of wh-position across binary speech types

	spoken	written
wh-ex-situ	230 (48.6%)	149 (100%)
wh-in-situ	243 (51.4%)	0 (0%)

While in spoken language (i.e. in interactions), wh-ex-situ and wh-in-situ co-occurred, in written language (i.e. in comments and quizzes) only wh-ex-situ constructions were used. In other words, the speech type did very well have an impact on the position of the wh-phrase: Whenever the interrogative was a comment or a quiz question, the wh-word was fronted, but when it was an interaction, wh-fronting was only a possibility. In interactions, about 51% of the interrogatives with a wh-element contained an ex-situ question word whereas comments and quizzes did so in 100% of the cases. Hence, one can definitely say that wh-in-situ is more likely in 'spoken' (49%) than in 'written' (0%) speech – and categorical observations with more than a hundred observations are certainly enough for an empirical prove even though logistic regression does not work here.

As for the influence of the question word, the model shows that an adverbial wh-expression increases the probability of a wh-ex-situ structure. Although the effect size is rather moderate (the probability is increased by 11.7%, see table 28), this effect is very interesting: As pronominal wh-phrases (i.e. *qui*, *Qu'est-ce qui*, *QUEL* + noun, *LEQUEL* and *combien DE* + noun) sometimes – or, strictly speaking, quite

<sup>686</sup> English translation: 'So what influence will the bill have on their judgements?' (ADDI\_2\_01\_03\_41)

<sup>687</sup> English translation: 'So how many points will Guillaume obtain for his room?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_26\_59)

frequently – function as the grammatical subject<sup>688</sup> of a sentence, one would rather expect pronominal wh-phrases to promote the wh-ex-situ position. Indeed, by subdividing the pronominal function of the wh-phrase into ‘complement’ and ‘subject’, it can be shown that subject wh-phrases occurred categorically in preverbal position (see table 31). Yet, complement wh-phrases were still slightly more often pre- than postverbal. The question arises thus why simple frequency distribution (cf. tables 30 and 31) suggest a trend which is opposed to the model output. It is only when also considering the factor of speech type that the model output starts to make sense (see tables 32 and 33).

Table 30: Counts of wh-position across binary question-word types

	adverbial	pronominal
wh-ex-situ	86 (59.7%)	312 (62.4%)
wh-in-situ	58 (40.3%)	188 (37.6%)

Table 31: Counts of wh-position across tertiary question-word types

	adverbial	complement	subject
Wh-ex-situ	86 (59.7%)	219 (53.8%)	93 (100%)
Wh-in-situ	58 (40.3%)	188 (46.2%)	0 (0%)

Table 32: Counts of wh-position in spoken interrogatives across tertiary question-word types

	adverbial	complement	subject
wh-ex-situ	62 (53.9%)	128 (41.4%)	34 (100%)
wh-in-situ	53 (46.1%)	181 (58.2%)	0 (0%)

Table 33: Counts of wh-position in written interrogatives across tertiary question-word types

	adverbial	complement	subject
wh-ex-situ	14 (100%)	75 (100%)	57 (100%)
wh-in-situ	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

As becomes evident, almost half of the pronominal wh-phrases were produced in written interrogatives. Since written interrogatives were categorically produced with an ex-situ wh-phrase, the impact of the wh-phrase function can only concern spoken interrogatives. In spoken interrogatives, complement wh-phrases were indeed produced slightly more often in-situ than ex-situ. Hence, in spoken language a wh-pronominal object moderately decreases the probability of wh-ex-situ while a wh-pronominal subject extremely increases the probability of wh-ex-situ. The splitting of the category of pronominal wh-words may thus indeed help predicting the position of the wh-element.

However, as we have already seen, the wh-positional tendencies also differ within these three categories. For instance, the adverbial wh-word *où* was far more often in-situ than the adverbial wh-word *pourquoi* (see figure 23 on p. 159). Hence, one must admit that, although the categorisation of question words according to their functions can be proven to be statistically significant, it will cover a

<sup>688</sup> N.B.: The grammatical subject is different from the semantic subject because subject attributes are grammatical complements instead of subjects.

lot of variation within these categories. Unfortunately, our data set is simply not big enough to calculate statistical models with a 9- or 14-level variable<sup>689</sup>. Consequently, it remains an open question to what extent the wh-phrase function has an influence and to what extent the observed influence lies in the different question word itself. At any rate, wh-phrases differ greatly according to their wh-lexeme (see figures 22 and 23, on pp. 158f.), but for including all of them in a statistically reliable regression model a huge data set would be necessary. Such a huge data set can be obtained by an automatised analysis as will be conducted in the course of my study on audio books. Therefore, I postpone the statistical proof of this factor to the next chapter.

As for the other two factors, they could straightforwardly be proven to be helpful for the prediction of the wh-position. Pronominal subjects and the presence of a preposition in the wh-phrase make a wh-in-situ structure much more likely (see tables 34 and 35, as well as figure 25 on p. 161).

Table 34: Counts of wh-position across binary subject types

	Non-pronominal subject	Pronominal subject
Wh-ex-situ	47 (94.0%)	270 (51.7%)
Wh-in-situ	3 (6.0%)	252 (48.3%)

Table 35: Counts of wh-position with(out) preposition

	Non-prepositional wh-phrase	Prepositional wh-phrase
Wh-ex-situ	395 (63.9%)	6 (20.0%)
Wh-in-situ	223 (36.1)	24 (80.0%)

In both cases, there was one clearly predominant type (i.e. pronominal subject / non-prepositional wh-phrase). Nonetheless, the distributional differences between the prevalent and the non-prevalent types were sufficiently pronounced to be statistically significant. While a pronominal subject occurred only in about half of the cases with a wh-ex-situ construction, a non-pronominal subject did so in less than 1 out of 10 cases. Putting it differently, pronominal subjects did not show a clear preference for wh-ex-situ or wh-in-situ, but non-pronominal subjects clearly disfavoured wh-in-situ. In contrast, the presence of a preposition made the use of a wh-in-situ construction much more likely: While non-prepositional wh-phrases occurred almost double as often in wh-ex-situ structures than in wh-in-situ ones, prepositional wh-phrases occurred four times as often in wh-in-situ than in wh-ex-situ structures. Hence, there is empirical evidence that the use of a pronominal subject and a prepositional wh-phrase both strongly increase the probability of a wh-in-situ structure.

<sup>689</sup> A 9-level variable would have one level for each wh-lexeme. Since for pronominal wh-expressions, the grammatical function has an impact on word-order limitations, it would even be necessary to use a 14-level variable, which has (at least) two levels for each pronominal wh-lexeme (=> *où*, *quand*, *comment*, *pourquoi*, *qui*<sub>subject</sub>, *qui*<sub>object</sub>, *que*<sub>subject</sub>, *que*<sub>object</sub>, *quel*<sub>subject</sub>, *quel*<sub>object</sub>, *lequel*<sub>subject</sub>, *lequel*<sub>object</sub>, *combien*<sub>subject</sub>, *combien*<sub>object</sub>).

**To conclude**, linguistic as well as extralinguistic factors could be statistically proven to be of major importance. As for the order of the subject and the verb, only the semantic and the speech type have an influence: Wh-interrogatives and written language increase the probability of inversion. Regarding the use of the question particle, these two factors also have an impact: wh-interrogatives (other than *Qu'est-ce qu{i/e/'}*) and written language decrease the probability of *est-ce que*. However, there are more factors that come into play: While non-pronominal subjects and modal verbs make the presence of *est-ce que* more likely, the presence of a negated element makes it less so. For the latter, statistical significance is though not quite reached. With regard to the place of the wh-word, it could be empirically shown that written language is rigid in wh-preverbal positioning. What is more, in spoken language, non-pronominal subjects strongly favour the wh-ex-situ position while prepositional wh-phrases strongly favour the wh-in-situ position. The question word could also be shown to have an impact, but the empirical evidence offered by the model was restricted to its function. Pronominal wh-words increased the probability of the wh-ex-situ position because *qui*<sub>subject</sub>-questions were categorically produced with a preverbal wh-phrase. There is though reason to believe that the wh-lexeme has an impact on its own (see figures 22 and 23 on pp.158f.).

On the next page, the results of all morphosyntactic analyses are summarised. The linguistic factors are ranked according to their significance and effect size for my data (see table 36). Factors were classified as 'good predictors' if they showed a great impact on morphosyntactic distribution and could be substantiated statistically by the regression models. The category 'decent predictor' was assigned to factors which too had a great impact and could be supported statistically (e.g. by chi-squared tests), but which were not proven by the final models. As for 'moderate predictors', there was either an apparent effect which was not statistically significant or a very small (and thus barely visible) effect which could be substantiated statistically. These predictors were thus either statistically significant or they had an apparently big effect size, but not both. An 'uncertain predictor' simply did not seem to be of general importance for the choice of a morphosyntactic form as neither a statistical significance could be shown nor was there any considerable effect observable.



## Conclusive overview

Table 36: Evaluation of linguistic and extralinguistic predictors for the choice of a morphosyntactic variant

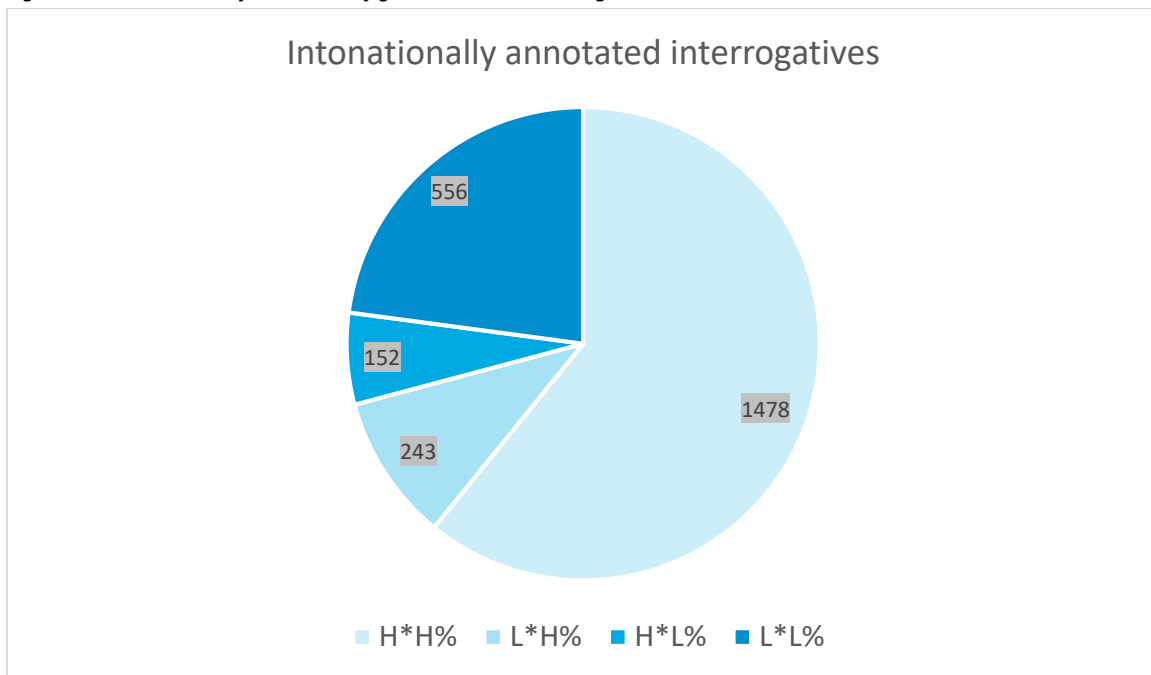
Good predictors	Wh-phrase: function and components	Wh-phrases functioning as the <b>grammatical subject</b> are placed preverbally.
		<b>Adverbial</b> wh-phrases are slightly more likely to appear preverbally, <b>complement</b> wh-phrase are slightly more likely to appear postverbally.
		If the wh-phrase contains a <b>preposition</b> , it is more likely to be placed postverbally.
	Semantic type	<b>Wh-interrogatives</b> are much less likely to contain a question particle (if the grammaticalized <i>QU'EST-CE QUE</i> is excluded from the countings).
		<b>Disjunctive interrogatives</b> show a stronger preference for {s/S}V-structures than other interrogatives.
	Subject type	If <b>ÇA</b> is the subject, the use of straight word order is predicted.
<b>Non-pronominal subjects</b> (without reduplication) are most likely in inverted wh-interrogatives. If the interrogative contains a dislocated subject, it is most likely a wh-in-situ structure.		
Speech type	<b>Off-voice comments</b> and <b>SMS quiz questions</b> usually contain subject-verb inversions while interactions do not do so.	
Modal verb	The <b>presence of a modal</b> in a yes/no-interrogative increases the probability of the use of the question particle.	
Decent predictors	Wh-phrase: <b>lexeme</b>	While all <b>question words</b> were mostly used with declarative structures, <i>pourquoi</i> and <i>comment</i> rather predict a preverbal position of the wh-expression whereas <i>où</i> and <i>combien</i> rather predict a postverbal position of the wh-expression. All wh-words but <i>que</i> make the use of a periphrastic structure less likely.
	<b>Negation</b>	The <b>presence of a negated element</b> predicts straight word order. More precisely, it predicts the use of an {s/S}V-structure for a yes/no-interrogative, the use of QEsV for an interrogative with <i>QUE</i> and Q{s/S}V for <i>pourquoi</i> .
	<b>Ne-realisation</b> (if negated)	The <b>retention of ne</b> predicts the use of a periphrastic or inverted structure.
	<b>Pragmatic function</b>	Questions in <b>thought explication or guessing games</b> , as well as <b>more insisting or emphatic questions</b> are more likely to occur with the question particle.
When the <b>non-wh part of the proposition is of little importance</b> , the wh-word is predicted to appear postverbally. Therefore, wh-in-situ structures are often used for sub-topic changes.		
Moderate predictors	Choice of <b>2<sup>nd</sup> person subject pronoun</b>	The pronouns <i>tu</i> and <i>vous</i> both rather predict straight word order, but the choice of the formal variant does so to a significantly lesser extent.
	<b>Sociostylistic marking</b>	The use of a <b>sociostylistically high verb</b> makes the use of an inverted structure more likely.
	<b>Verbal complements</b>	The <b>presence of a verbal complement</b> makes the use of an {s/S}V-structure more likely.
	The <b>semantic content of the verb</b>	The use of a <b>semantically empty verb</b> predicts the choice of an {s/S}V-structure.
Uncertain predictors	<b>Compound verb</b>	It is not clear whether <b>the compositionality of a verb form</b> is of importance for the choice of a morphosyntactic variant.
	Biological characteristics of <b>speaker</b>	There does not seem to be any influence of a speaker's <b>sex</b> .
		If there are differences regarding the <b>age</b> of a speaker, they will mainly concern the wh-word position.

### 5.3.2 Intonation

#### General results

Most of the interrogatives contained in the RTV-corpus were also analysed intonationally. As predicted by the F\_ToBI-inventory (Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015), all four theoretically possible nuclear configurations were found. Hence, overgeneralizing statements as found in Dubois (2007: s.v. "interrogation"), which claim that direct interrogatives would always be rising, could be refuted. However, it still seems to be true that the majority of questions has a final rise.

Figure 48: Distribution of nuclear configurations in all interrogatives



The question arises thus whether this distribution can be systematised by linguistic and/or extralinguistic factors, as was the case for morphosyntactic variation.

#### Factorial analysis

##### Linguistic factors

In this study, I will focus on three potential factors.<sup>690</sup> While the first two factors (i.e. (i) and (ii)) apply to all interrogatives, the third one (i.e. (iii)) only applies to interrogatives with a question word:

- (i) Type of information gap (yes/no vs. wh vs. disjunctive; aka semantic type)
- (ii) Morphosyntactic marking (marked vs. unmarked)

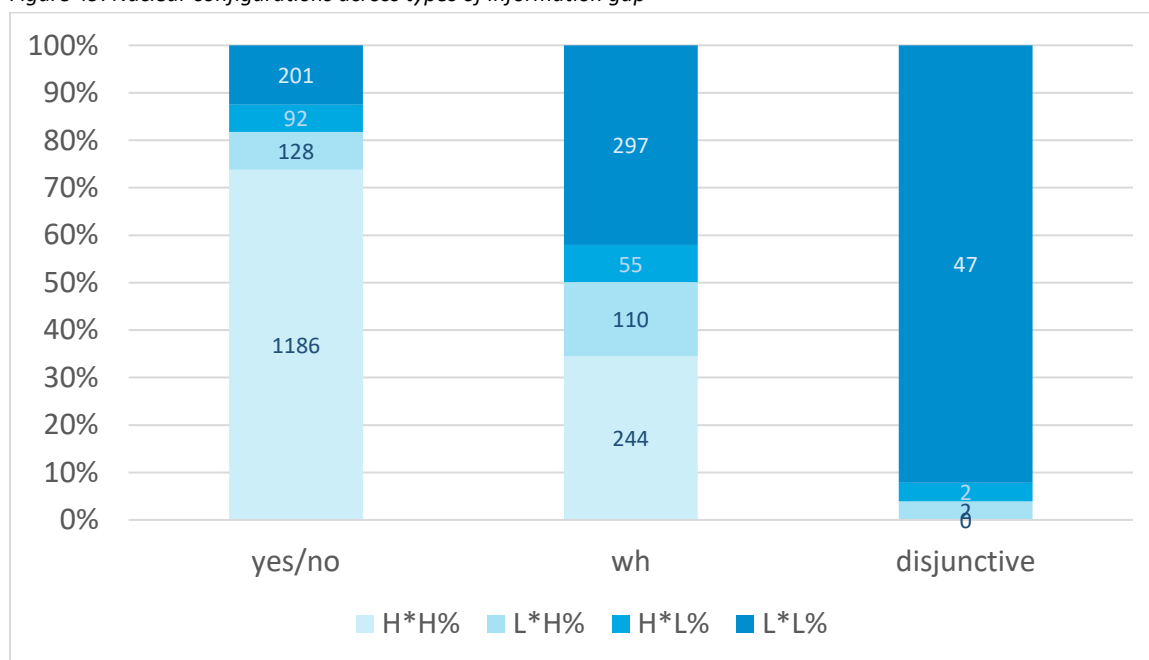
<sup>690</sup> I leave other factors, such as sentence/utterance-length, question word, or negation, open for future research.

(iii) Relative question-word position (preverbal/wh-ex-situ vs. postverbal/wh-in-situ)<sup>691</sup>

In a first step, the data set shall be explored, considering each of the factors on its own. Such a procedure will provide information on overall distributions and give a first impression on which factors seem to have an influence on the choice of the nuclear configuration. Differences in the counts can also be tested statistically by means of the chi-squared test. Knowing that the factors are though by no means equally distributed, bar charts and contingency tables should though be taken as no more than a first indicator. Such a preliminary examination thus cannot replace the calculation of a regression model, which will follow the factorial analysis (see p. 245). Also, concrete examples will be consulted to retrace the model and to illustrate the suggested tendencies.

Let us first consider the **semantic type (i)**. As the bar chart below shows (see figure 49), yes/no-interrogatives were more often rising than wh-interrogatives, which were still more often rising than disjunctive interrogatives.

Figure 49: Nuclear configurations across types of information gap



Hence, Delattre (1966) was to some extent right and to some extent wrong: Wh-interrogatives were indeed more often falling than yes/no ones, but there was no systematic association of a falling contour to wh-interrogatives. In this respect, my data confirm the work of Wunderli (1990), who observed that the (semantic) type of question does not assign a certain contour type. While there was

<sup>691</sup> Strictly speaking, the terms *postverbal* and *wh-ex-situ* are not synonymous because the former is purely descriptive, considering only the surface structure, and the latter is theory-dependent because it implies that the question word is base-generated in a certain position and moved from there. Still, I use the terms interchangeably without going into detail about syntactical theory. For one thing, most linguists seem to agree on wh-movement, so I do not think that this terminology is too risky, and for another, these terms are the ones commonly used nowadays.

a clear preference for a simple rise in yes/no-interrogatives (almost 74%), there was no absolute and only a slight relative preference for simple falls in wh ones (42%). Therefore, the inventory of Delais-Roussarie et al. (2015), which predicts that H\*H%, L\*H%, and L\*H% occur in both yes/no- and wh-interrogatives, could be confirmed. However, the inventory could not be confirmed regarding the predicted absence of L\*L% in yes/no-interrogatives.

To illustrate these findings, two examples for each semantic type are given hereafter. The first three pictures exemplify interrogatives with rather typical intonation contours: two yes/no (50), a wh (51), and a wh as well as a disjunctive question (52). The other examples (i.e. (53) and (54)) have been selected such that the two less common nuclear configurations are also illustrated.

Figure 50: Praat picture of SHOP\_3\_00\_25\_46

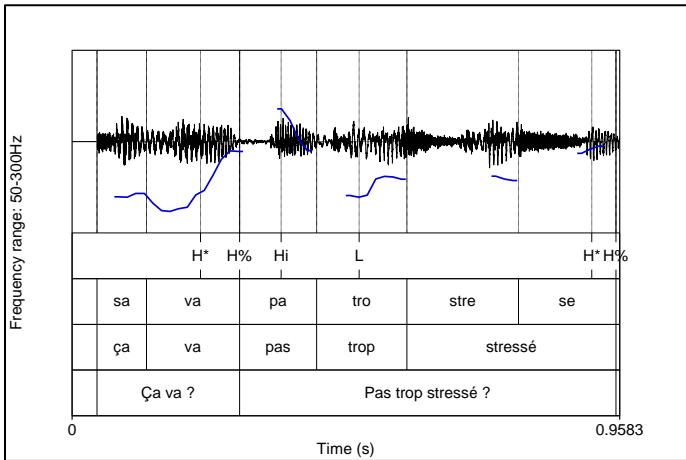


Figure 51: Praat picture of UDPP\_5\_01\_03\_17

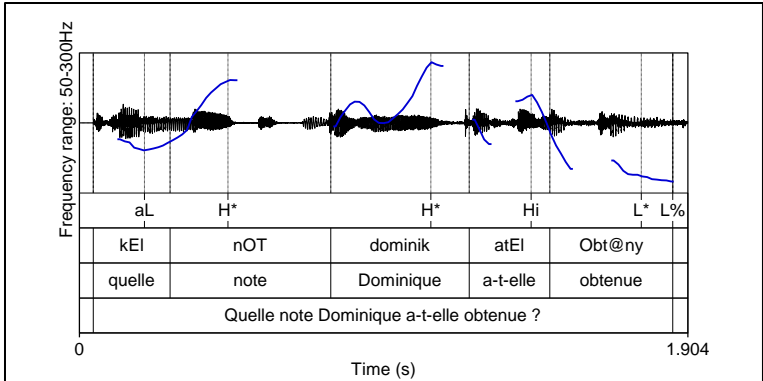


Figure 52: Praat picture of BVCN\_3\_1\_09\_30

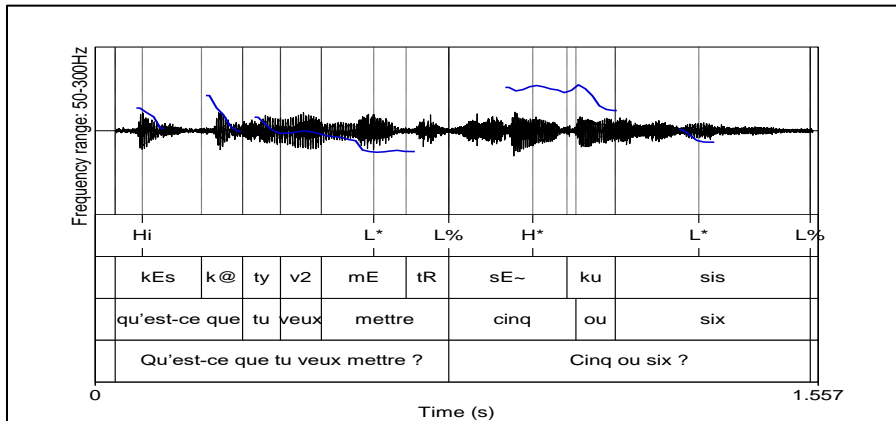


Figure 53: Praat picture of CSQD\_1\_00\_40\_02

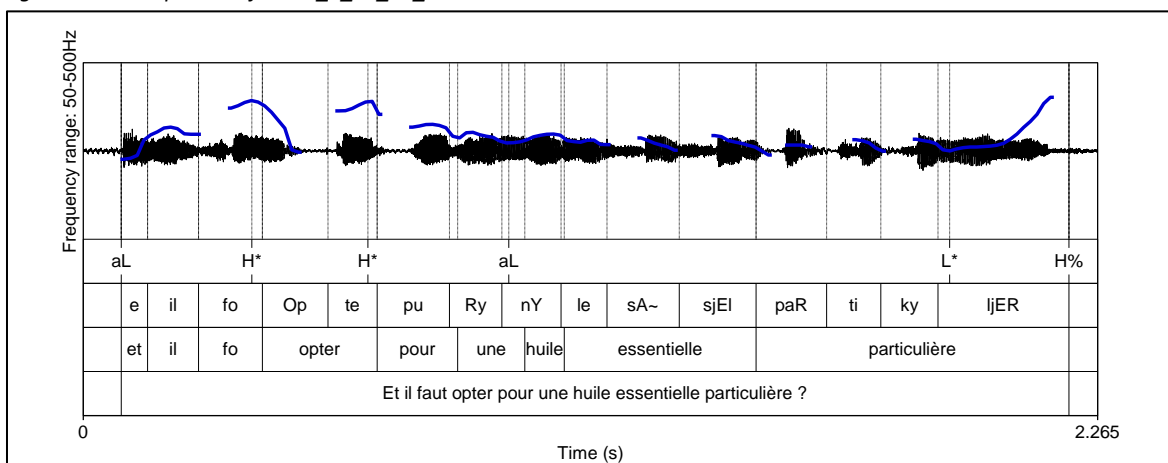
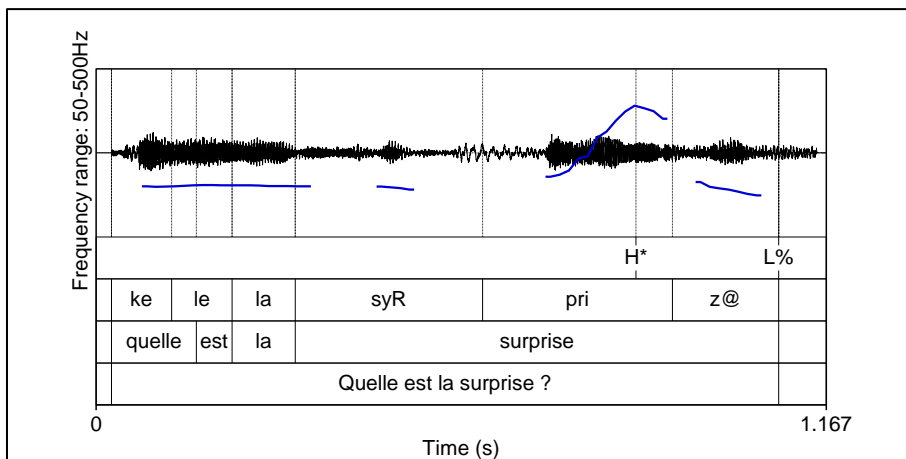


Figure 54: Praat picture of CHAP\_2\_00\_18\_21



The statistical significance of the differences in the counts can easily be tested when splitting the nuclear configurations into their two components. By converting the single four-level variable into two binary variables, the interpretation of the results is simplified. Another advantage is the reduction of error-proneness. Since pitch accents are more difficult to determine than boundary tones (in many cases of L\*H%, it is unclear whether a distinction from H\*H% is even linguistically relevant, an evaluation of the counts of boundary tones is certainly more reliable than an evaluation of the counts

of pitch accents. What is more, if intonational meaning is compositional, it is certainly the boundary tone and not the pitch accent which encodes interrogativity. A chi-squared test of independence confirms that the differences in the counts of boundary tones across semantic types is highly significant ( $p < 2.2e-16$ ). The observed difference between the samples is thus practically impossible to be due to chance. If the samples differed in nothing but the semantic type, this test would prove the relevance of this factor. As samples taken from authentic corpora will though never differ in only one aspect, the samples should be explored regarding further differences.

In the case of yes/no and wh-interrogatives, the most obvious difference concerns their morphosyntactic marking: While almost all wh-interrogatives were morphosyntactically marked by a question word, only a fifth of the yes/no-interrogatives contained *est-ce que* or subject-verb inversion (94.0% vs. 20.8%).<sup>692</sup> The question arises thus whether intonational movement is rather linked to **morphosyntactic markedness (ii)** than to semantic types. Indeed, both semantic types vary similarly when taking into account morphosyntactic markedness (see figures 55 and 56).<sup>693</sup>

Figure 55: Distribution of NC in morphosyntactically marked and unmarked yes/no-interrogatives

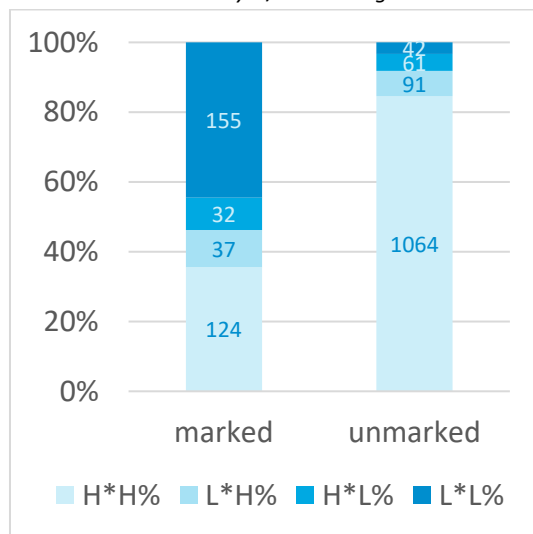
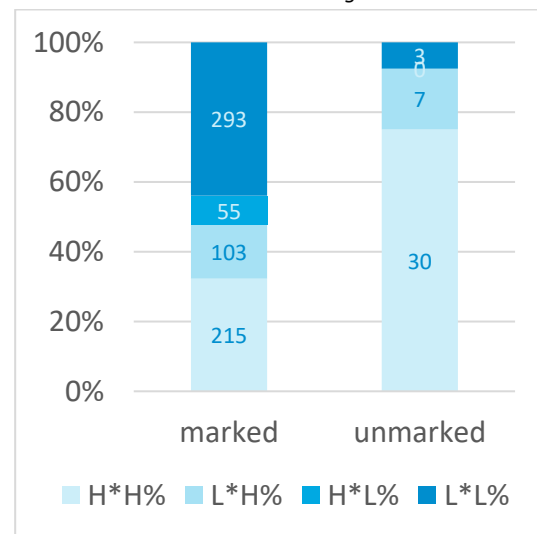


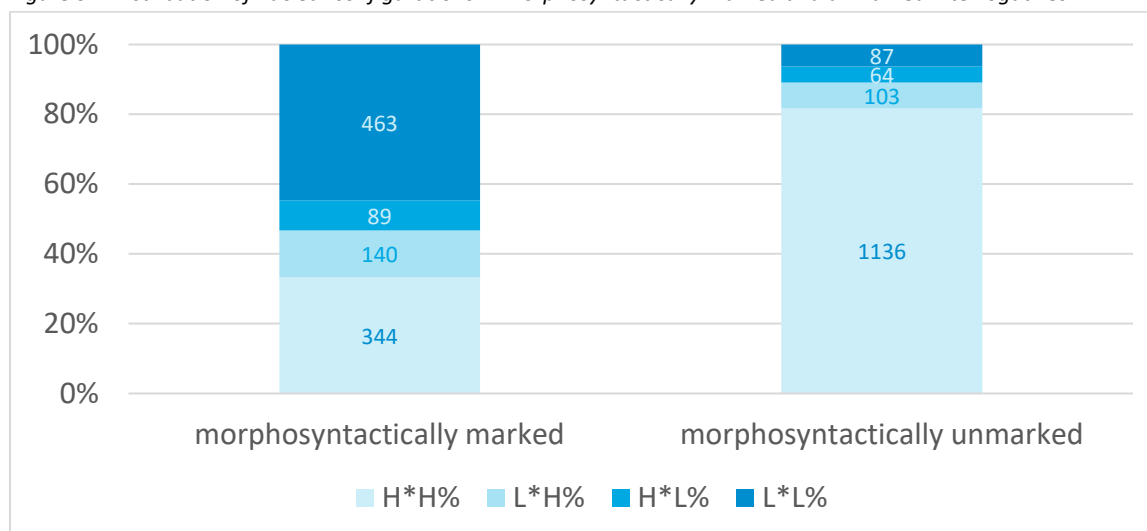
Figure 56: Distribution of NC in morphosyntactically marked and unmarked wh-interrogatives



<sup>692</sup> Wh-interrogatives that do not contain a question word cannot be marked by *est-ce que* or inversion. Hence, the only morphosyntactically unmarked wh-questions are elliptical questions (such as complementary questions like *Vous désirez ? / \*Est-ce que vous désirez ? / \*Desirez-vous ?* 'What do you wish?').

<sup>693</sup> As already mentioned, a chi-squared test of independence cannot prove this factor to be statistically significant because the sample do not vary in this factor only. Nonetheless, it can be taken as a hint that the difference in the counts of figure 57 are extremely unlikely to be due to chance ( $p < 2.2e-16$ ).

Figure 57: Distribution of nuclear configurations in morphosyntactically marked and unmarked interrogatives



While there is a clear prevalence of final rises in unmarked interrogatives, in marked interrogatives tonal movement is hard to predict. Hence, the mere fact that an interrogative is morphosyntactically unmarked predicts that the utterance's end will be rising (in 4 out of 5 cases), whereas no conclusions can be drawn from the fact that an interrogative is morphosyntactically marked (rising and falling patterns are about equally probable). Morphosyntactic markedness gives thus rise to more variability. One might wonder whether there are any morphosyntactic differences which have the potential to systematise this variability, but neither the type of marker (i.e. question word vs. *est-ce que* vs. inversion) nor word order (e.g. QsV vs. QVs) show a clear influence on sentence melody. Since the same variants can be realised with different intonation patterns, final contours can certainly not be directly mapped onto morphosyntactic structures. As a matter of fact, even string-identical interrogatives occurred with rising as well as falling intonation:

- (367) *Quel restaurant laissera tout le monde bouche bée* ?<sup>694</sup> L\*L%  
 (368) *Quel restaurant laissera tout le monde bouche bée* ?<sup>695</sup> H\*H%

Therefore, it seems very unlikely that the intonational variation in morphosyntactically marked interrogatives can be predicted (nor explained) by linguistic factors. What can be put down to linguistic factors is the fact that morphosyntactically unmarked interrogatives are majoritarily marked by a rise. In the latter case, interrogative meaning is not encoded by word order nor choice of words, so intonation takes over morphosyntax' role. Hence, it is the final rise which distinguishes the question from an assertion (see int.al. Faure 1973). To illustrate the morphosyntactically unmarked cases, three further yes/no-interrogatives ((369) to (371); see also figures 50 and 53) and wh-interrogatives ((372) to (374)) with final rises are presented hereafter.

<sup>694</sup> English translation: 'Which restaurant will make everybody gaping?' (ADDI\_1\_00\_05\_40)

<sup>695</sup> English translation: 'Which restaurant will make everybody gaping?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_04\_54)

- (369) Julie, et vous, c'est votre style, ces chaussures ?<sup>696</sup> H\*H%  
 (370) Ah bon ?<sup>697</sup> H\*H%  
 (371) Vous ne seriez pas un peu de mauvaise foi, Nicolas ?<sup>698</sup> L\*H%  
 (372) Ce qui veut dire [quoi] ?<sup>699</sup> H\*H%  
 (373) J'en avais demandé [combien] ?<sup>700</sup> H\*H%  
 (374) Allez, on continue la visite [quelle] direction ?<sup>701</sup> L\*H%

Since in morphosyntactically unmarked interrogatives intonation is the only means to encode sentence-type meaning, one may assume that a final rise is obligatory. Nonetheless, there were also a few morphosyntactically unmarked interrogatives with a final fall (a selection of them is given as examples (375) to (386)).

- (375) Vous êtes hôtelier(s) ou vous êtes pas hôtelier(s) ?<sup>702</sup> L\*L%  
 (376) (Un petit glaçon ?) Ou ça ira ?<sup>703</sup> L\*L%  
 (377) Bio ?<sup>704</sup> L\*L%  
 (378) Tu as connu ça, toi ?<sup>705</sup> L\*L%  
 (379) Ça va, Jamie ?<sup>706</sup> L\*L%  
 (380) Il a raison d'être confiant, JC ?<sup>707</sup> L\*L%  
 (381) Et vous, les garçons ?<sup>708</sup> L\*L%  
 (382) Et toi ?<sup>709</sup> L\*L%  
 (383) (Pour Samir, c'est un carton.) Et pour vous, Cristina ?<sup>710</sup> L\*L%  
 (384) (Donc, haut validé.) Et le bas ?<sup>711</sup> L\*L%  
 (385) Après le boudin qui fait rire, si on passait au dessert ?<sup>712</sup> L\*L%  
 (386) Si on parlait du thème ?<sup>713</sup> H\*L%

On closer examination, all of these occurrences are, however, particular in nature: They were disjunctives (see (375) and (376)), tentative declarations of assumptions (see (377) and (378)), explicit calls on the addressee ((379) to (383)), and/or contextually disambiguated prompts (see (381) to (386)). Let me briefly elaborate on these notions.

In the first case, the utterances are alternative questions, i.e. interrogatives which offer two or more choices – usually in the form of a disjunction (cf. Beck & Kim 2006). In such disjunctives, the end of the

<sup>696</sup> English translation: 'Julie, what about you: Are these shoes a style for you?' (SHOP\_2\_00\_42\_08)

<sup>697</sup> English translation: 'Oh really?' (UDPP\_5\_00\_58\_26)

<sup>698</sup> English translation: 'Aren't you a bit morally dishonest, Nicolas?' (CSQD\_4\_43\_47)

<sup>699</sup> English translation: 'Which means...?' (BVAC\_3\_00\_38\_28)

<sup>700</sup> English translation: 'And I had asked for...?' (CHAP\_1\_00\_29\_41)

<sup>701</sup> English translation: 'Let's go on – where shall we continue?' (UDPP\_1\_00\_16\_49)

<sup>702</sup> English translation: 'Are you a hotelier, or aren't you a hotelier?' (BVAH\_3\_00\_48\_20)

<sup>703</sup> English translation: 'Or will that be okay like this?' (BVAH\_1\_00\_37\_57)

<sup>704</sup> English translation: 'Organic?' (MBOU\_2\_00\_28\_38)

<sup>705</sup> English translation: 'You have come across that?' (MBOU\_2\_00\_29\_58)

<sup>706</sup> English translation: 'How are you doing, Jamie?' (BVAC\_2\_00\_12)

<sup>707</sup> English translation: 'Is JC right about being confident?' (SHOP\_3\_00\_27\_54)

<sup>708</sup> English translation: 'What about you, boys?' (SHOP\_3\_00\_48\_16)

<sup>709</sup> English translation: 'And you?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_13\_03)

<sup>710</sup> English translation: '(For Samir, it's a box.) And for you, Cristina?' (SHOP\_3\_00\_37\_35)

<sup>711</sup> English translation: '(So, the top is okay.) And what about the bottom part?' (SHOP\_3\_00\_58\_49)

<sup>712</sup> English translation: 'Shall we pass from the sausage that makes laugh to the dessert?' (BVAC\_2\_31\_34)

<sup>713</sup> English translation: 'Let's talk about the theme.' (SHOP\_1\_00\_14\_01)



last alternative is usually pronounced with a final fall (see p.229 and Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 97).<sup>714</sup> If the question is an alternative question (see (375)) or a last alternative which is provided subsequently (see (376)), a final fall is hence not surprising. As opposed to the difference between yes/no and wh-interrogatives, the semantic type of alternative questions does thus make a difference for the prediction of final tonal movement. Disjunctive questions are though not very frequent in reality TV shows, so their inclusion in the counts does not noticeably influence proportions (see figure 57).

In the second case, the structures are used to point out an assumption of the speakers which is to be questioned. The questioning has a confirmation-seeking character, but the difference to a usual confirmation-seeking question is that the form is clearly declarative. It is declarative with regard to the speaker's apparent commitment to the content of the utterance. In (377), the speaker utters this interrogative as an echo question, reconsidering what has already been declared by the interlocutor.<sup>715</sup> In (378), the speaker infers something from what has been said by the interlocutor.<sup>716</sup> In both cases, the context shows thus that the speaker assumes what (s)he points out, but (s)he cannot be sure about it. Therefore, the speaker presents him-/herself as committed to the assumption, but he does not make a typical assertion either. In other words, the question form is over-laid by matter-of-fact speaking, such as 'you said that...' / 'so what you mean is...'. Strictly speaking, this utterance type is thus somewhere between an assertive and an interrogative.

In the third case, the interlocutor is directly addressed. Therefore, the interrogatives contain vocatives such as a name (see (379), (380), and (383)) or a second-person pronoun (see (381) to (383)). Technically speaking, the end of the utterance is thus not a question, but an explicit call on the addressee. As a consequence, the final fall can be interpreted as an explicitation of the turn-taking request. Again, this utterance type is not a pure interrogative, but rather between an injunctive and an interrogative.

In the last case, the structures are used to lead the centre of interest to a new though connected topic. The interrogative in (382) shifts the focus from the speaker of the utterance to its hearer, (383) shifts the focus from *Samir* to *Cristina*, (384) shifts the focus from the top to the trousers, (385) shifts the focus from the main course to the desert, and (386) shifts the focus from the candidates' opinions on each other to the theme of the shopping tour. These structures are thus no canonical interrogatives. Rather, they are indirect instructions which are nonetheless uncontroversially questioning: They clearly encode an information gap and they are conventionally transcribed with a question mark. As the previous examples of direct address, these utterances are unequivocal prompts for turn taking.

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<sup>714</sup> This does though not mean that a disjunctive interrogative is not distinguishable from a disjunctive assertion.

<sup>715</sup> In this precise case, the speaker wants to make sure that all ingredients (even the flour) are organic.

<sup>716</sup> The interlocutor has mentioned Maya l'Abeille. As he did so, one can assume that he will have watched this programme.

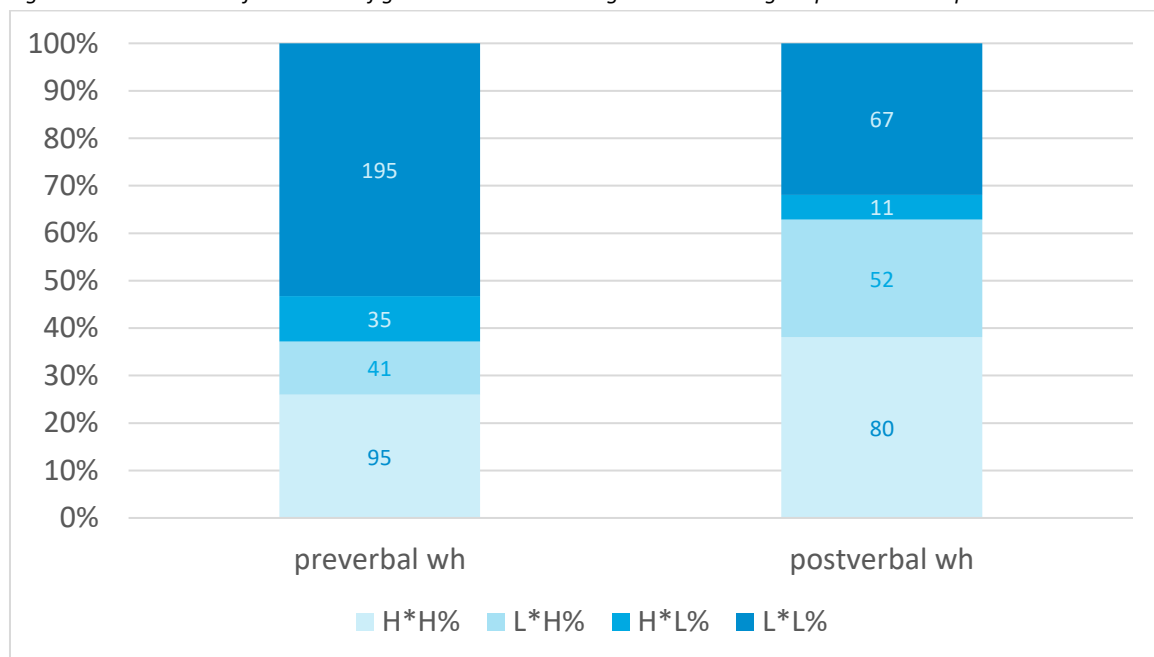
Their meaning may be paraphrased as ‘Let’s turn to X. What about that?’. These structures are thus follow-up questions which are also somewhat hybrid – interrogative and injunctive at the same time.

In summary, morphosyntactically unmarked interrogatives with final falls were different in meaning: They were either disjunctives (i.e. different in semantics) or connected to a non-interrogative speech type (i.e. different in pragmatics). Based on these observations, I hypothesize that an interrogative {s/S}V-structure can have a falling final contour if and only if it is...

- either an offer of alternative(s)
- or hybrid in terms of its speech act.

Finally, the influence of the **wh-word position (iii)** shall be explored. Since it has been claimed that wh-in-situ structures would be rising, whereas wh-ex-situ structures would be falling (Cheng & Rooryk 2000), one may expect a positive correlation between a postverbal wh-position and high tones, and a preverbal wh-position and low tones.<sup>717</sup>

Figure 58: Distribution of nuclear configurations in wh-interrogatives according to question-word position



As figure 58 shows, postverbal wh-expressions do indeed promote final rises and preverbal wh-expressions do indeed promote final falls. Nonetheless, this correlation is by no means categorical. In both cases, all four theoretically possible nuclear configurations were observed. A chi-squared test of independence proves though that the difference in the counts of boundary tones is significant ( $p = 4.498e-09$ ). To exemplify more as well as less typical intonation contours, the praat pictures of two

<sup>717</sup> Such a mapping of intonation to syntax even occurs in some teaching materials (see p.271)

wh-preverbal and two wh-postverbal interrogatives are given hereafter. While the examples in figure 59 and 61 illustrate the prototypical cases, the ones in 60 and 62 illustrate the less common types.

Figure 59: Praat picture of MBOU\_3\_00\_39\_32

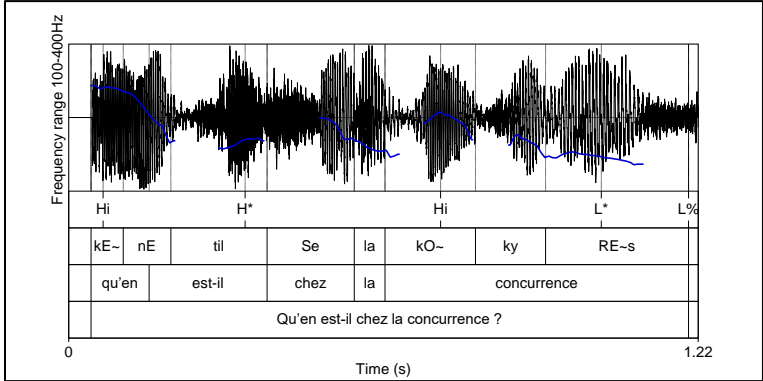


Figure 60: Praat picture of BVAC\_2\_00\_47\_34

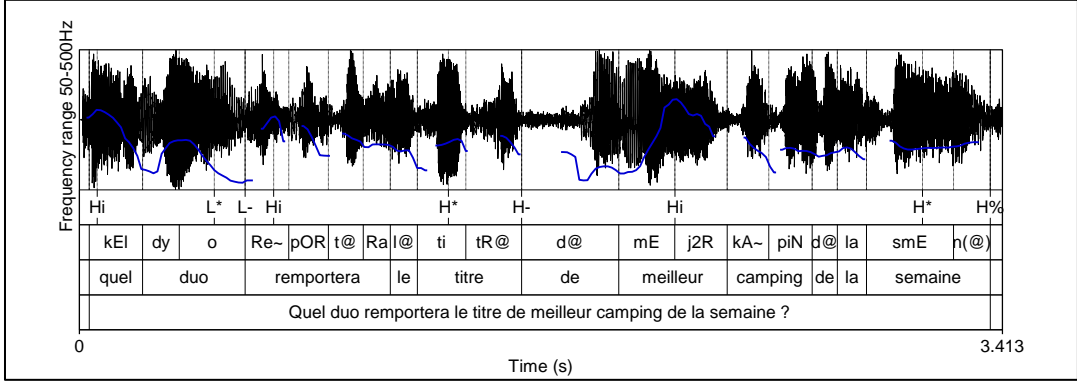


Figure 61: Praat picture of CSQD\_1\_00\_44\_31

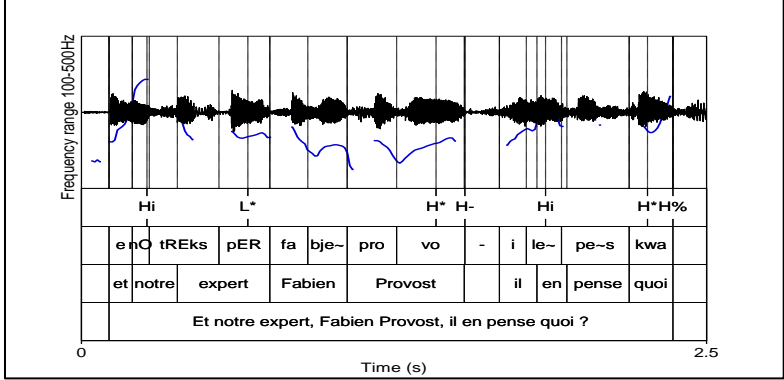
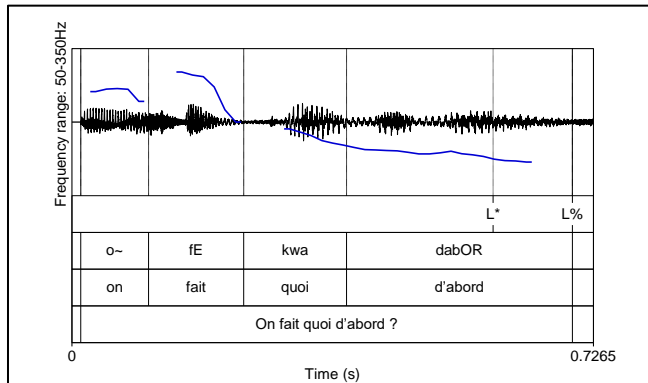


Figure 62: Praat picture of UDPP\_5\_00\_09\_00



As it has been suggested that question words are pronounced with a high tone (cf. Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015: 89), one may be tempted to take this to be the reason for the prevalence of rises. If the question word itself is of any importance, the prevalence should though only occur when the question word is in absolutely final position. Although the two examples presented in figures 61 and 62 support this hypothesis, there were numerous counterexamples. To get further insight, I decided to have a closer look at a well-delimited subsample. For this purpose, I needed a structure which was frequent in *wh*-in-situ structures in absolutely final as well as non-final position. Also, a monosyllabic structure was preferable because it did not raise the question whether the high tone was to be aligned with the beginning, the middle or the end of the question word. Finally, the structure should not complicate matters by variation in itself (to illustrate, *combien* allows a simple use as ‘how much / to what extent’ as well as a complex use as *combien de* with noun phrases as ‘how many’). For these reasons, I chose *c’est quoi* for further examination. I extracted all examples containing *c’est quoi*, and annotated what came after the question word. There were found 51 occurrences that were analysable intonationally (i.e. that were not broken off, interrupted, or part of a bigger IP). As it turned out, variation was not reduced by the categorisation according to the question words absolute position (see table). Final as well as non-final occurrences were pronounced with rises and falls. There was only a slight preference for a final rise (55.5%) even when *c’est quoi* was in absolutely final position. This preference was the same for non-final *quoi*. Hence, there does not seem to be a link between the absolute position of the question word and final tonal movement.

Table 37: Counts of nuclear configurations in “c’est quoi” structures

	H*H%	H*L%	L*H%	L*L%	Total
(...) <i>c’est quoi</i> ?	4 (22.2%)	-	6 (33.3%)	8 (44.4%)	18
(...) <i>c’est quoi comme...</i> ?	1 (100%)	-	-	-	1
(...) <i>c’est quoi, ça</i> ?	1 (12.5%)	-	3 (37.5%)	4 (50.0%)	8
(...) <i>c’est quoi</i> + noun phrase ?	6 (33.3%)	4 (22.2%)	6 (33.3%)	2 (11.1%)	18
(...) <i>c’est quoi</i> (+NP) + vocative ?	-	-	2 (66.6%)	1 (33.3%)	3
(...) <i>c’est quoi</i> + relative clause ?	-	-	-	1 (100%)	1
(...) <i>c’est quoi</i> (+NP) + adverb ?	1 (50%)	-	-	1 (50%)	2
	13 (25.5%)	4 (7.8%)	17 (33%)	17 (33.3%)	51

**To conclude**, the absolute position of the question word does not seem to have an influence on intonation. Likewise, the apparent influence of the semantic type of wh-questions is questionable because it seems to be attributable to the usual presence of question words in wh-interrogatives. The factors that seemed to have an influence were thus the semantic type of alternative questions, morphosyntactic marking and, for wh-interrogatives, the relative position of the question word.

#### Extralinguistic factors

As for language-external factors, the same ones as in morphosyntactic variation were tested, i.e. age of speaker (i), sex of speaker (ii), pragmatic type (iii) and speech type (iv). The two speaker-dependent factors of age and sex seemed to be of little importance for the choice of the final intonation contour, whereas the situation-dependent factors clearly had an influence.

Since yes/no- and wh-interrogatives are distributionally different with regard to nuclear configurations, comparisons were two-fold. In other words, not the complete set of interrogatives was taken for tests of speaker-related factors, but the subsamples of the same information gap (truth value vs. missing constituent). Disjunctive questions were not taken into account due to their low number and general homogeneity in nuclear configurations.

With regard to the first factor, i.e. **age of speaker (i)**, one can see a tendency for older people to use less frequently high tones in wh-interrogatives when looking at figures 63 and 64. At the same time, it is however striking how low the numbers of interrogatives produced by people over sixty is, and it may be presumed that a tendency would have to be more pronounced to turn out significant.

Figure 63: Distribution of nuclear configurations in yes/no-interrogatives in on-screen interactions across age-groups

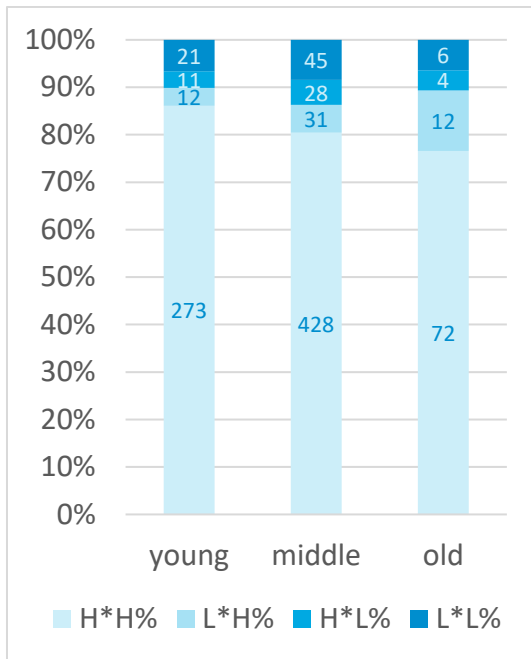
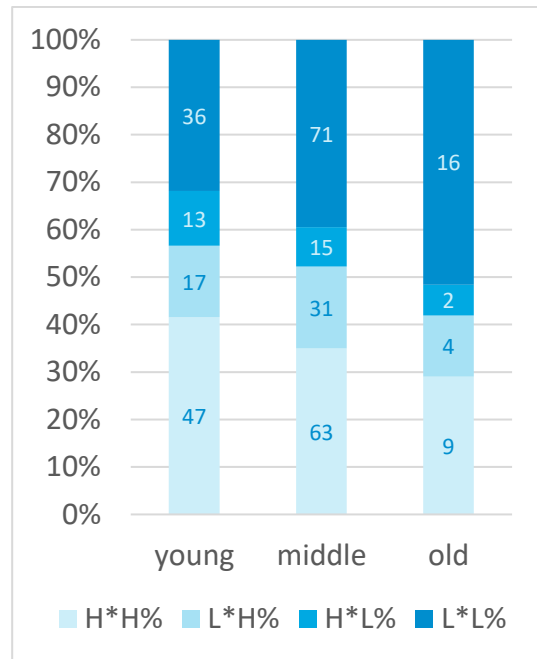


Figure 64: Distribution of nuclear configurations in wh-interrogatives in on-screen interactions across age-groups



As chi-squared tests show, the differences in the counts of boundary tones are indeed not significant ( $p = 0.5567$  for yes/no interrogatives,  $p = 0.6226$  for wh-interrogatives). The divergences between age groups may thus very well be due to chance.

Similarly, there can be observed slight divergences in the distribution of nuclear configurations across **sexes (ii)** (see figures 65 and 66).

Figure 65: Distribution of nuclear configurations in yes/no-interrogatives produced by female and male speakers

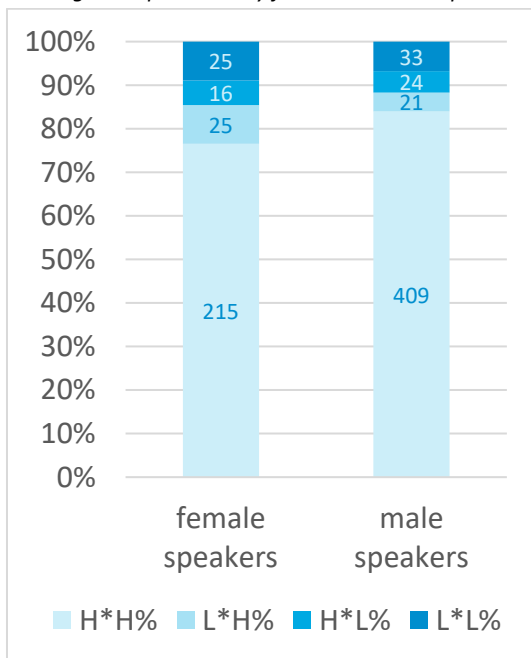
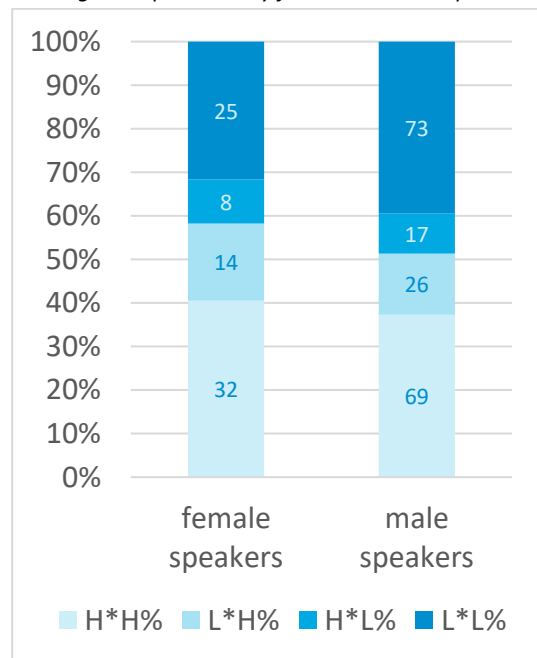


Figure 66: Distribution of nuclear configurations in wh-interrogatives produced by female and male speakers



As chi-squared tests show here as well, the differences in the counts of boundary tones are not significant ( $p = 0.2972$  for yes/no interrogatives,  $p = 0.373$  for wh-interrogatives). Since the divergences observed may thus very well be due to chance, one would have to consider larger amounts of data to find out more about this factor.

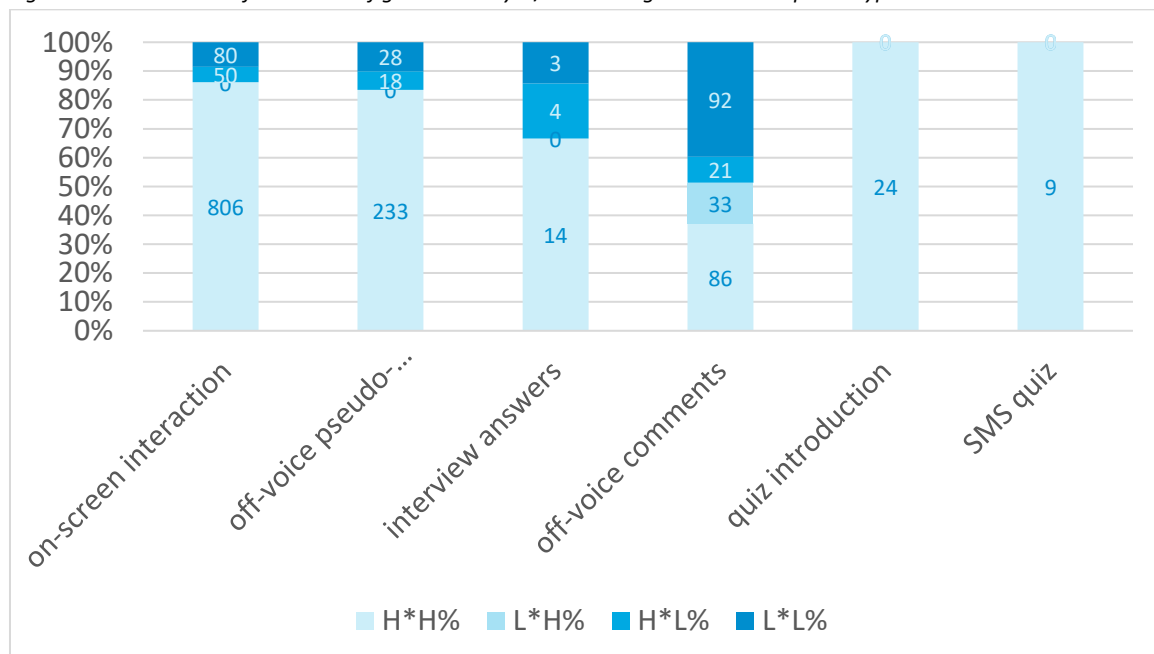
Similarly, statistical tests cannot be applied to the factor of **pragmatic type (iii)**. This is because it is extremely hard to find ways to capture pragmatics in clear categories. What is more, some pragmatic types may be not very frequent in the situations observed, so the subsamples will not be sufficient in size anyway. As a consequence, the factor of pragmatic type will only be briefly explored in terms of examples. As the following examples show, non-interrogative questions may be prone to be pronounced with a final fall (see examples (387) to (389)).

- (387) *Quel est l'intérêt de déménager pour prendre ça ?*<sup>718</sup> (QVS, L\*L%)
- (388) *Qu'est-ce que c'est que ces mecs avec une boutique chez eux quoi ?*<sup>719</sup> (QEsV, L\*L%)
- (389) *Et quoi de mieux qu'un canard dans sa mare en guise de centre de table ?*<sup>720</sup> (QX, H\*L%)

If one wants to test the concrete phonetic effect of pragmatic differences, experiments will though be necessary, especially if one wants to obtain statistically sound data.

For the present corpus study, there is though one situational factor that can be examined in detail: **speech type (iv)**. As countings reveal, the kind of interaction/communication most certainly plays a role (cf. figures 67 and 68).

Figure 67: Distribution of nuclear configurations in yes/no-interrogatives across speech types

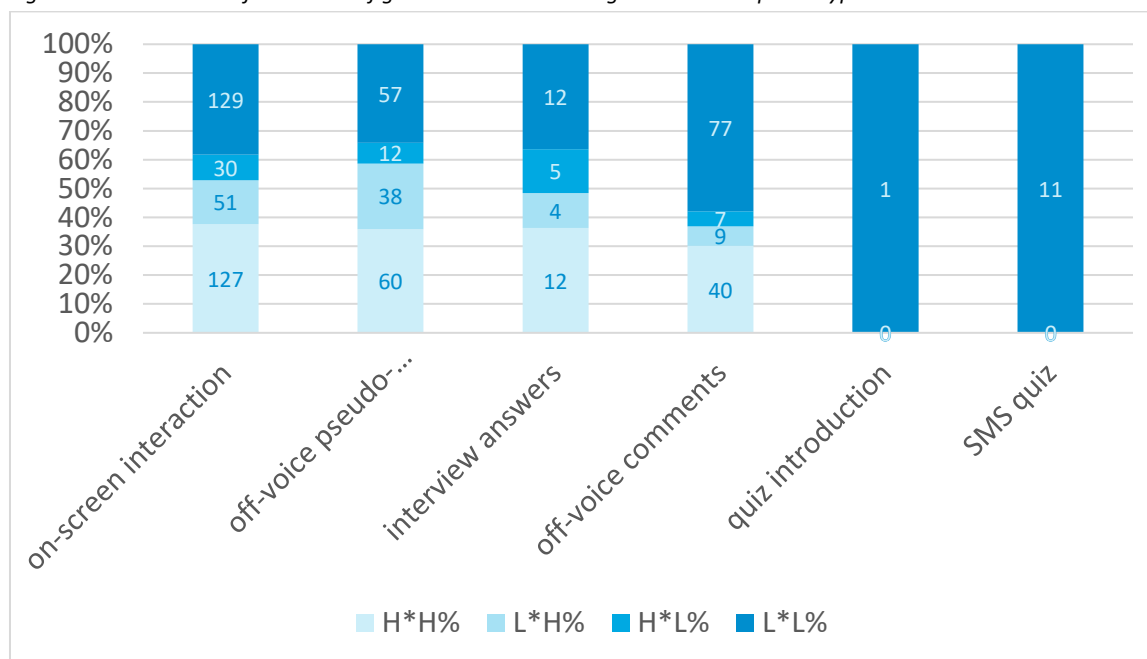


<sup>718</sup> English translation: 'What's the point in moving if it is for taking this?!' (CHAP\_1\_00\_31\_28)

<sup>719</sup> English translation: 'What kind of man has a whole boutique in his house?!' (SHOP\_3\_00\_15\_25)

<sup>720</sup> English translation 'And what (could there be any) better than a duck in its pond as a table decoration?!' (UDPP\_1\_00\_37\_35)

Figure 68: Distribution of nuclear configurations in *wh*-interrogatives across speech types



It is certainly striking that the quiz-introduction and SMS-quiz questions were categorically pronounced with a simple rise when they were yes/no-interrogatives while they were pronounced with a simple fall when they were *wh*-interrogatives. Although the number of observances is quite low, such a different behaviour is as good as excluded from being due to chance (Fisher's Exact Test for Count data:  $p = 3.477e-11$ ).

Let us thus have a closer look at the structure of (sequences of) quiz questions. Three typical SMS quizzes are given as (390) to (397).

- (390) Que trouve-t-on à l'intérieur du restaurant d'Odile ? ↓<sup>721</sup>  
 (391) (1) Un lit [?] ↑<sup>722</sup>  
 (392) (2) Un jacuzzi [?] ↑<sup>723</sup>  
 (393) Élodie fait son entrée dans la mairie au bras...<sup>724</sup>  
 (394) (1) de son père [?] ↑<sup>725</sup>  
 (395) (2) de son oncle [?] ↑<sup>726</sup>  
 (396) Quel premier sweat a-t-il proposé à Nathalie ? ↓<sup>727</sup>  
 (397) (1) Un sweat japonais, (2) un sweat mexicain. ↓<sup>728</sup>

<sup>721</sup> English translation: 'What do you find in the restaurant of Odile?'

<sup>722</sup> English translation: '(1) A bed?'

<sup>723</sup> English translation: '(2) A jacuzzi?'

<sup>724</sup> English translation: 'Élodie is entering the hall holding the arm...'

<sup>725</sup> English translation: '(1) of her father?'

<sup>726</sup> English translation: '(2) of her uncle?'

<sup>727</sup> English translation: 'What kind of sweat-shirt did he first present to Nathalie?'

<sup>728</sup> English translation: '(1) A Japanese sweat-shirt [or] (2) a Mexican sweat-shirt?'



Each quiz question is structured in the same way: The first question is a wh-interrogative (see (390), (393), and (396)), and the following one or two utterances are constituents potentially filling the information gap of the before-mentioned partial question (see (391) & (392), (394) & (395), and (397)). Hence, for answering the wh-interrogative, one of the two alternatives is to be selected. Due to this semantic construction, there are – at least theoretically – two possibilities for reading the alternatives as answer-offering questions (cf. p.59): The two alternatives can be interpreted either as two separate yes/no-interrogatives (as in (391) and (392)) or as the two alternatives of a single disjunctive interrogative. In other words, in the first case it is consecutively asked whether (1) and whether (2) is true while in the second case, it is simply asked at once which of the two alternatives is correct. The utterance meanings are thus slightly different: ‘Is it true that X? Is it true that Y?’ vs. ‘Is it true that X or Y?’. The first version of presenting the answer alternatives does thus not explicate that these are the only two alternatives available whereas the second version does. In the first case, both utterances are marked as an interrogative by producing two rising final contours. In the second case, there would have been expected the typical intonation pattern for disjunctives<sup>729</sup>. The latter was though never chosen. Instead, the two alternatives were sometimes pronounced as an assertion of a two-element list (as in (397)). In this case, the offering of the two alternatives is thus not considered as an act of questioning, but rather as an act of asserting the two alternatives. The utterance meaning is thus rather ‘The first alternative is X, the second one is Y.’. In my opinion, (397) is thus different in nature although all quiz answer alternatives have certainly been conceived as analogous constructions by the corresponding editorial boards. The 3 occurrences of forms like (397) were thus excluded from the counts. If I had taken a different definition of the term question, these three cases might have surfaced as ‘questions with a falling final contour’. This fact stresses the importance of a clear definition of what is assumed to be a question and what is not (for such a definition see p.22).

On the one hand, the observed non-variation of the final contours in (either yes/no- or wh-) quiz questions is thus partially due to the selection of utterances. On the other, it remains remarkable that the selected ones are all pronounced with the same (or, phonetically speaking, a similar) final contour. This observation could be explained by several reasons. First of all, off-voice speakers may be instructed to read questions in a standardized way. It is not unlikely that they are told to read yes/no-questions with a final rise, and wh-questions with a final fall. However, they do not do so in all comments they read out.

There are thus two possibilities: Either standardization is simply stronger in this speech type, or the selection of interrogatives for quiz questions limit variation. As far as I am concerned, both

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<sup>729</sup> The intonation of disjunctive questions is rather complex if one wants to account for perceptual differences between assertive and interrogative disjunctives, but for my thesis, it will suffice to state that such differences do exist. In terms of nuclear configurations, I would argue for L\*L% for assertives and L\*H% for interrogatives.

explanations can probably be brought together: Since answer-offering in the form of alternative constituents seems to be prototypically encoded with a rise, this will also be the standardized form off-voice speakers are trained to produce. In contrast, the *wh*-interrogative may favour low tones because it is a simple explication of a (morphosyntactically marked) question. Additionally, the traditional description of *wh*-interrogatives as being pronounced with a final fall (see e.g. Delattre 1966) may have led to the consolidation of this pattern. Putting it differently, the high degree of ritualization of SMS questions may very well strengthen tendencies which naturally exist as well as linguistic prescriptions.

Off-voice comments could have shown this kind of systematic intonation as well, but they did not (cf. examples (398) to (401)). In fact, off-voice comments varied a lot, and there was no clear division between YNQ and WHQ. In other words, off-voice comments did not show any obvious standardisation. Rather, they seemed to favour falling structures in comparison with interactions, but they did not show a clear preference for falling structures in general.

(398) *Agathe, va-t-elle en plus faire entrer le soleil* ?<sup>730</sup> (SVs, H\*H%)

(399) *Alors, l'auberge écologique et son ambiance familiale, va-t-elle donner le vertige aux clients hôteliers* ?<sup>731</sup> (SVs, L\*L%)

(400) *Quel duo remportera le titre de meilleur camping de la semaine* ?<sup>732</sup> (Q=SV, H\*H%)

(401) *Qui gagnera son ticket pour la finale de vendredi* ?<sup>733</sup> (Q={s/S}V, L\*L%)

As the vast majority of off-voice comments was morphosyntactically marked while most of the interrogatives used in interactions were not, this might be at least partly attributed to the factor of morphosyntactic marking. On the other hand, it should also be stressed that even string-identical interrogatives in the same situation occurred with final rises as well as final falls (cf. examples (402) and (403)).

(402) *Quel restaurant laissera tout le monde bouche bée* ?<sup>734</sup> (Q=SV, L\*L%)

(403) *Quel restaurant laissera tout le monde bouche bée* ?<sup>735</sup> (Q=SV, H\*H%)

The question arises thus whether – at least in these cases – differences are purely phonetic in nature. However, on a perceptual base, there does seem to be a difference between such minimal pairs: While a falling structure gives the impression of stating what the question is, a rising structure stresses the openness of the proposition. For examples (402) and (403) one can thus claim a pragmatic difference: While the speaker in (402) presents the question as something that is merely pointed out, i.e. a

<sup>730</sup> English translation: 'Will Agathe also make the sun enter this place?' (CHAP\_1\_00\_15\_32)

<sup>731</sup> English translation: 'So, will the eco-inn and its cosy atmosphere make the clients (who are hoteliers) dizzy?' (BVAH\_1\_00\_06\_16)

<sup>732</sup> English translation: 'Which of the pairs is going to get the title of "best camping site of the week?' (BVAC\_1\_01\_07\_21)

<sup>733</sup> English translation: 'Who is going to win their ticket for the finals on Friday?'

<sup>734</sup> English translation: 'Which of the restaurants will be (the most) overwhelming (one)?' (ADDI\_1\_00\_05\_40)

<sup>735</sup> English translation: 'Which of the restaurants will be (the most) overwhelming (one)?' (ADDI\_2\_00\_04\_54)

comment in the stricter sense of the word, the speaker in (403) may be trying to create suspense by explicitly leaving something (namely the winner of the competition) open. Putting it differently, off-voice comments may very well produce different effects by using different intonation contours.

To conclude, intonational realisations are not entirely systematic. Nonetheless, there could be found some regularities in the choice of boundary tones: the questions read in the SMS quizzes can be mapped according to their semantic type (YNQ => H\*H%, WHQ => L\*L%) and for the other speech types, there is at least a tendency that the more interactive a question is, the more likely it will be produced with a final rise (see also Reinhardt 2019). In the following, these factors shall be used to calculate a logistic regression model.

### Logistic regression model

As in the subsection on morphosyntax, interrogative variation shall finally be modelled by means of logistic regression in R (version 3.3.3). For this purpose, binary outcome variables had to be chosen. Using nuclear configurations (cf. Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015), the final contour was already operationalised as two binary dependent variables: the pitch accent (T\*; levels: H\* and L\*) and the boundary tone (T%; levels: H% vs. L%). Regarding the independent variables to be inserted, four easily operationalisable factors had been detected: semantic type (levels: yes/no-interrogative, wh-interrogative, disjunctive interrogative), morphosyntactic marking (levels: unmarked, marked), binary speech type (levels: conceptually spoken (i.e. direct interactions and off-voice interactions), conceptually written (i.e. comments and quiz questions)), and position of wh-phrase (levels: preverbal/ex-situ, postverbal/in-situ). The last of these four factors could though not be applied to all interrogatives because wh-phrases only occur in wh-interrogatives. What is more, the presence of a question word marks an interrogative morphosyntactically, such that the factor concerning morphosyntactic markedness was irrelevant to the vast majority of wh-interrogatives. For these reasons, I decided to calculate a model for the general prediction of the boundary tone as well as more a more specific one for wh-interrogatives only. Hence, I calculated two models for statistically testing the interplay of the influence factors discussed above.<sup>736</sup>

```
model_boundarytone = glm(formula = BoundaryTone ~ SemanticType + MorphosyntacticMarking +  
  SpeechType_binary + SemanticType:SpeechType_binary, family = "binomial", data = data)  
model_boundarytone_whi = glm(formula = PitchAccent ~ QuestionWordPosition + SpeechType_binary,  
  family="binomial", data=data)
```

As the output of the different models suggests (see tables 38 and 39), all chosen factors contribute to the correct prediction of frequency distributions. While the semantic type, the morphosyntactic

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<sup>736</sup> As previously, the models chosen were the ones obtained by means of the step()-function, which reduced each maximal model (i.e. considering all theoretically possible interactions) to the one with the best AIC-value.

marking, and the question-word position have a main effect, the speech type mostly interacts with the semantic type (see table 38).

Table 38: Logistic regression model for boundary tones

	Probability	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z )
(Intercept) Yes/no-interrogative / morphosyntactically unmarked / spoken => H%	91.4%	2.369	0.1014	23.330	< 2e-16***
SemanticTypeDSI	5.2%	-5.2768	0.7326	-7.203	5.88e-13***
SemanticTypeWHI	94.4%	0.4527	0.1963	2.307	0.0211*
MorphosyntacticMarkingmarked	40.8%	-2.7396	0.1967	-13.931	< 2e-16***
SpeechType_binarywritten	94.1%	0.3972	0.2148	1.849	0.0645.
SemanticTypeDSI: SpeechType_binarywritten	0.0%	-7.3128	324.7445	-0.023	0.9820
SemanticTypeWHI: SpeechType_binarywritten	84.3%	-1.1370	0.2878	-3.951	7.77e-05***

Table 39: Logistic regression model for boundary tones in interrogatives with a question word

	Probability	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z )
(Intercept) Ex-situ / spoken => H%	39.5%	-0.4258	0.1429	2.981	0.00288**
QuestionWordPositionIN_SITU	62.7%	0.9471	0.2034	-4.656	3.22e-06***
SpeechType_binarywritten	34.5%	-0.2149	0.2271	0.947	0.34389

As the first model reveals, disjunctive interrogatives are very unlikely to be pronounced with a final rise whereas (morphosyntactically unmarked!) yes/no- and wh-interrogatives mostly occur with a final rise. Morphosyntactic marking makes this clear preference disappear. As most wh-interrogatives contain a question word, wh-interrogatives do thus generally not show a clear preference for a high boundary tone. For wh-interrogatives, it is also interesting that they are even less likely to contain a final rise in conceptually written situations. Also, the position of the wh-expression is significant: Wh-in-situ structures are more likely to be rising than wh-ex-situ ones. Nonetheless, it should be stressed, that this does not mean that wh-in-situ structures are generally realised with a high boundary tone.

To conclude, the four influence factors investigated could all be proven statistically. As opposed to previous assumptions, yes/no-interrogatives are not more often rising than wh-interrogatives. In fact, my data can even prove that constituent questions without a question word (i.e. complementary questions, such as *Ce qui veut dire... ?* (BVAC\_3\_00\_38\_28)) are significantly more often realised with a high boundary tone than morphosyntactically unmarked yes/no-interrogatives. In other words, it is most likely that the preference for high tones previously attributed to wh-interrogatives is actually caused by their morphosyntactic markedness. Since the vast majority of wh-interrogatives contains a question word, which entails morphosyntactic marking, comparing a sample of wh-interrogatives with a sample of yes/no-interrogatives will most certainly lead to the misleading observation that wh-

interrogatives are less often rising than yes/no ones. In other words, wh-interrogatives do not generally more frequently contain low boundary tones, but they are more frequently morphosyntactically marked, which leads to a higher probability of low boundary tones.

Morphosyntactic marking clearly led to less final rises. Accordingly, interrogatives containing *EST-CE QUE*, subject-verb inversion and/or a wh-expression were less likely to contain high boundary tones. More precisely, morphosyntactically unmarked interrogatives showed a very high probability for H%, whereas morphosyntactically marked interrogatives even showed a slight preference for L%.

The speech type of an interrogative too was shown to have an impact on the likelihood of final rises. Here, the factor was though not relevant as a main effect but as an interaction with the semantic type: While YNQ showed a slightly stronger tendency for H% (which approaches, but does not reach significance), WHQ showed a significantly weaker tendency for H% in general. Therefore, simple contingency tables (cf. Reinhardt 2019) may lead to the misleading observation that written interrogatives would be generally less often rising than spoken ones. In reality, this tendency is valid for wh-interrogatives only.

As for interrogatives with a question word, it could be shown that wh-in-situ structures are more likely to contain a high boundary tone than wh-in-situ ones. At the same time, it could also be shown that there is no restriction to a final rising contour for wh-in-situ. Indeed, both types of structures allow H% and L%, but wh-in-situ can be shown to have a slight statistical preference for a rise, and wh-ex-situ a slight statistical preference for a fall.

### Conclusive overview

Table 40: Evaluation of linguistic and extralinguistic predictors for the choice of the final tones

<b>Good predictors</b>	<b>Semantic type</b>	Compared to yes/no-interrogatives, <b>wh-interrogatives without question words</b> have a <b>weaker tendency for high pitch accents</b> and a <b>stronger tendency for high boundary tones</b> . <sup>737</sup>
		In contrast to yes/no-interrogatives, <b>disjunctive interrogatives</b> are extremely likely to contain a <b>low boundary tone</b> .
	<b>Morphosyntactic marking</b>	Morphosyntactically <b>marked</b> structures are not only significantly less often pronounced with high final tones, they even show a slight tendency for <b>low final tones</b> .
	<b>Speech type</b>	Statistically, <b>wh-interrogatives in comments or SMS-quizzes</b> show a <b>less pronounced tendency for high final tones</b> .
<b>Uncertain predictors</b>	<b>Wh-position</b>	<b>Wh-in-situ</b> structures are significantly more often pronounced with a <b>high boundary tone</b> than wh-ex-situ ones.
		People of a more advanced <b>age</b> might produce more falls in wh-interrogatives.
	<b>Biological characteristics of speaker</b>	Speakers of the male <b>sex</b> might produce more falls in wh-interrogatives.

<sup>737</sup> For wh-interrogatives with a question word, see *morphosyntactically marked structures*.

## 5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the interrogative structures used in reality TV range from truly spoken (=> candidate interactions) to oralised written (=> off-voice comments) language, but they are (at least partly) predictable by the factors of semantic type, morpholexical content (=> e.g. type of question word or presence/absence of a modal), pragmatic meaning (=> truly interrogative vs. assertive meaning) and directness (=>speech type). Consequently, several hypotheses from previous studies could be checked and Koch & Oesterreicher's (2011) proximity-distance continuum could be supported by further empirical data. All in all, the morphosyntactic and intonational diversity so-often mentioned for French interrogatives could be exemplified and variation was shown to be not entirely systematic, but to follow certain tendencies.

## 6. ?-sentences in contemporary detective novels:

### *Comment ces interrogatives varient-elles?*<sup>738</sup>

In this chapter, the French interrogatives appearing in ten detective novels are examined. As in chapter 5, I try to establish links between morpholexis (i.e. choice of words), grammatical structure (e.g. subject type or verbal complexity), prosodic realisation (i.e. nuclear configuration or frequency measurements) and communicative situation (e.g. information-seekingness and contextual embeddedness). As opposed to the previous study, an automated analysis as well as frequency measurements are included into the analysis. By exploring some of the data in detail and calculating logistic and linear regression models, it is shown that

- i. yes/no-interrogatives are less likely to contain subject-verb inversion, but more likely to be realised with the question particle and final rises,
- ii. *QUE* strongly promotes the use of *EST-CE QUE*
- iii. verbal complexity reduces the probability of inversion in structures without question particle and increases the probability in structures with question particle
- iv. direct speech and B-events favour declarative structures and final rises,
- v. final question words correlate positively with an increase in pitch,
- vi. at least some of the structures can be used as equivalentents although they are different in morphosyntactic and/or intonational form.

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the morphosyntactic and intonational variation of French interrogatives is examined by means of a corpus of contemporary novels. More precisely, I will analyse the interrogatives of ten detective novels whose audio version was published in the second decade of the 21<sup>th</sup> century:

1. *Total Khéops* (written by J.-C. Izzo, 1995 ; read by A. M. Mancels, 2013) [TOKE]
2. *Et si c'était vrai ?* (M. Lévy, 2000 ; M. Lévy / J.-H. Anglade / E. Lefébure, 2015) [ESCV]<sup>739</sup>
3. *Travail soigné* (P. Lemaitre, 2006 ; J. Frantz, 2015) [TRAV]
4. *Terminus Elicius* (Karine Giébel, 2008 ; M. Sébastien, 2016) [TEEL]
5. *Alex* (P. Lemaitre, 2011 ; P. Résimont, 2011) [ALEX]
6. *Si c'était à refaire* (M. Lévy, 2012 ; M. Marchese, 2012) [SCAR]
7. *Maman a tort* (M. Bussi, 2015 ; C. Klaus, 2015) [MMAT]
8. *Le temps est assassin* (M. Bussi, 2016 ; J. Basecqz, 2016) [LTEA]
9. *Copier n'est pas jouer* (F. Molay, 2017 ; M. Buscatto, 2017) [CNPJ]
10. *Juste une ombre* (Karine Giébel, 2012 ; N. Spitzer, 2016) [JUST]

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<sup>738</sup> English translation: 'How do these interrogatives vary?'

<sup>739</sup> This production is the only audio play (i.e. an audio book read by different persons according to their role) and the only abbreviated version. It was nevertheless incorporated because Marc Lévy, the author of the novel, reads a role himself, and because it was erroneously labelled as 'unabbreviated'.

The novels were selected on the basis of their recent publication date, their availability as unabbreviated audio version as well as e-books, their non-translatedness (i.e. their authors had to be native speakers of French and they had to be originally written in French), their relatively homogenous genre, and their colloquial speech style. All of them contain spoken dialogues as well as narration and comprise thus situations of direct interaction as well as segments of reflection. The genre chosen was the one of “detective novels”, inasmuch as in all novels, some crime occurs and there are people investigating on it. This genre seemed to be preferable for three reasons: For one thing, unsolved criminal cases lead to many questions (investigators frequently ask questions to themselves as well as to witnesses and suspects), and for another, there are numerous audio books available.<sup>740</sup> When more than one novel from an author could be found, there were selected two books of the same author, read by different speakers. This was done to be able to check both on the individual consistency in choosing certain interrogatives (i.e. the random-effect of author dependency for morphosyntax), and on differences in intonational realisations of presumably similar constructions (i.e. the random-effect of reader dependency for intonation).

As in the previous chapters, a semasiological perspective is taken, i.e. the occurring question forms are to be observed and explained. Consequently, operationalisable aspects of the morphosyntactic form and the intonational realisation will be used as dependent variables (i.e. measured responses and thus values to be predicted), while linguistic and extralinguistic factors will be used as independent variables (i.e. potential predictors) (for the use of these statistical terms, see Baayen 2008: 13). Again, the broad aim is firstly to describe the distribution of question forms in this corpus, and secondly to find the factors contributing to the formulation of an interrogative. Ideally, there will be detectable correlations between morphosyntactic form, intonational realisation and discourse function.

In contrast to the last chapter, the quality of the recordings will permit F0-measurements, because audio book recordings are made in sound-proof cabins and, at least most of the times, there are no overlapping background noises or music. What is more, readers are trained, and there are producers checking the recordings. Hence, it is very unlikely that performance errors are retained. It may even be presumed that the realisation of the sentences is very norm-oriented, unless a non-conformity with the prescriptive standard is used as a stylistic means (e.g. to show the low social status of the person uttering the sentence in the novel). Such a standardisation might lead to less variation, and more straight-forward correlations. Although it is true that the French spoken in audio books is prone to be different from the French spoken in every-day situations, this does not mean that studies on oralised

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<sup>740</sup> On audible.fr, the category *policiers* (‘detective novels’) comprises 2680 audio books (without counting audio plays), of which 352 are in French. The similar category *Thriller* only amounts to 2532 and 304 [numbers taken on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2017]. Only the category *romans contemporains* would have offered more audio books, but that genre is certainly less homogenous in style (and *policiers* can be considered a subgenre of this).



written French have to be taken entirely apart. On the one hand, it seems to be reasonable that different varieties of the same language share at least some general aspects. On the other hand, the results of this investigation will be a good starting point for further investigations on other varieties, such as spontaneously spoken French.

In the second part of this section (6.2), the morphosyntactic variation in the interrogatives of the ten novels will be described and discussed. For this purpose, an automatic morphosyntactic analysis of all e-book sentences ending in a question mark was carried out by means of a Perl script I have written myself. The counts were then compared to the ones of previous studies as well as between the novels, and statistical significance was tested. The results as well as the advantages and disadvantages of such a methodology will be given in 6.2.1. In a second step, all *où*-interrogatives (about 200) and comparable samples of (morphosyntactically marked and unmarked) yes/no-interrogatives were investigated in detail. For those samples, linguistic (e.g. the position of *où*) and extralinguistic (e.g. the sex of the reader) factors were annotated manually in a spreadsheet, which could directly be used for statistical evaluations with R, calculating logistic regression models. The results of the exploration of the data as well as of their statistical evaluation will be given in 6.3. In a third step, the question forms examined in 6.2.2 were analysed intonationally. The interrogatives were cut out manually from the audio books (which had been converted to mp3-files) and saved as .wav-files with Audacity. Then, the question forms were annotated in the same spread sheet as used for 6.2.2, and again several (logistic and linear regression) models were calculated. The observations and results obtained will be discussed in the third part of the section (6.3). In the last part of the section (6.4), there will be drawn some conclusions and given an outlook on possible future research.

## **6.2 Automatic analysis of the whole e-books**

In this subsection, I will give an overview of the distribution of the question forms in the ten entire novels and compare it to previous corpus studies. More precisely, I will present and discuss the methodology as well as the results I obtained by an automatic semantic-morphosyntactic annotation. In addition, I will explore the data with regard to certain factors that may be related to the choice of a morphosyntactic form.

## 6.2.1 Methodology

In order to be able to analyse large texts, such as whole novels, I wrote two Perl<sup>741</sup> scripts as tools to construct and analyse corpora of written interrogatives.<sup>742</sup> By means of these scripts, the text versions of the novels could be analysed automatically. The first one, `corpus_builder_novels.pl`, extracts all sentences ending in a question mark, and annotates them semantically (i.e. yes/no-, wh-, and disjunctive interrogatives) as well as morphosyntactically (e.g. *EST-CE QUE* or wh-in-situ).<sup>743</sup> Moreover, each interrogative is assigned an ID (i.e. a chronological occurrence number), and the novel and its author are captured as well. Also, it is retained whether the interrogative was part of direct speech or narration. In the output file, each interrogative is thus preceded by several pieces of information (see table 41), which are separated from each other by under-scores and from the written interrogative by a colon and a white space character.

Table 41: Automatic annotation of question forms

Semantic type	Morphosyntactic type	Author	Abbreviated title of novel <sup>744</sup>	Occurrence number	Speech type
YNI (yes/no-interrogative)	DEC (declarative)	Bussi	ALEX	e.g. 967	directspeech narration
WHI (wh-interrogative)	ELL (elliptical)	Giébel	CNPJ		
	ESK ( <i>est-ce que</i> )	Izzo	ESCV		
DSI (disjunctive interrogative)	ESB ( <i>Qu'est-ce qui</i> )	Lemaitre	LTEA		
	FRO (fronted wh)	Lévy	MMAT		
TIP ( <i>ti</i> -particle) <sup>745</sup>	INF (wh + infinitive)	Molay	SCAR		
	INS (stylistic inversion)		TOKE		
	INV (clitic inversion)		TEEL		
	QUE (wh + <i>que</i> )		TRAV		
	SIT (wh-in-situ)				
	SUB ( <i>qui</i> -subject)				
TAG (tag question)					

To illustrate this, an extract of the annotated interrogative corpus of Jean-Claude Izzo's novel *Total Khéops* is included:<sup>746</sup>

WHI\_SIT\_Izzo\_TOKE\_196\_directspeech: T'as eu mon adresse où ?  
 WHI\_ELL\_Izzo\_TOKE\_197\_directspeech: Comprendre quoi ?  
 WHI\_ESB\_Izzo\_TOKE\_198\_directspeech: Qu'est-ce qui t'est arrivé ?  
 YNI\_DEC\_Izzo\_TOKE\_199\_directspeech: Tu veux plus chaud ?  
 WHI\_SIT\_Izzo\_TOKE\_200\_directspeech: C'est quoi, ça ?

<sup>741</sup> Perl is a programming language typically used for text processing ([www.perl.org](http://www.perl.org)). Strictly speaking, it is a family of programming languages, but as it is quite common to use *Perl* for referring to *Perl 5*, this abbreviation will be used in this thesis as well.

<sup>742</sup> The Perl scripts as well as the output text files are openly accessible under <https://hdl.handle.net/11403/interrogatives-in-novels>.

<sup>743</sup> For more details on these annotations, see chapter 2, pp.30ff. and appendix p.405.

<sup>744</sup> The abbreviations are listed in the introduction of this chapter, on p. 1.

<sup>745</sup> As there were no questions with *ti*-particle, this type was removed from the results section.

<sup>746</sup> For the sake of clarity, the numbers after the annotations have been removed (e.g. WHI\_SIT instead of WHI20\_SIT22). These numbers were useful for error correction, but they are irrelevant to the corpus analysis.

YNI\_ELL\_Izzo\_TOKE\_201\_directspeech: Avec moi ?  
 WHI\_FRO\_Izzo\_TOKE\_202\_directspeech: Comment il le sait ?  
 YNI\_TAG\_Izzo\_TOKE\_203\_directspeech: Logique, non ?  
 WHI\_FRO\_Izzo\_TOKE\_204\_directspeech: Pourquoi t'es là ?  
 YNI\_DEC\_Izzo\_TOKE\_205\_directspeech: T'as une idée ?  
 YNI\_DEC\_Izzo\_TOKE\_206\_directspeech: C'est ça ?  
 WHI\_ESK\_Izzo\_TOKE\_207\_directspeech: Qu'est-ce tu racontes ?  
 [...]  
 YNI\_DEC\_Izzo\_TOKE\_230\_directspeech: Ça vous arrive souvent ?  
 YNI\_ESK\_Izzo\_TOKE\_231\_narration: Est-ce qu'elle était dans un de ces circuits ?  
 YNI\_DEC\_Izzo\_TOKE\_232\_narration: Lâchée dans des partouzes de porcs friqués ?<sup>747</sup>  
 DSI\_ELL\_Izzo\_TOKE\_233\_directspeech: Avec ou sans oreiller ? »  
 WHI\_INS\_Izzo\_TOKE\_234\_narration: Que pouvait faire Marie-Lou chez moi, à cet instant ?

Once the novels were annotated, the output file could be analysed by means of the second Perl script, which is called `corpus_analyzer_novels.pl`. It prints the interrogatives sorted alphabetically (and thus sorted by semantic type > morphosyntactic type > (author > novel >) number), counts the total occurrences as well as the different types, and calculates ratios. In order to make the analysis as self-explanatory as possible, the results are printed within a short text:

```

This corpus contains __interrogative(s).
As for the semantic types, it contains
__polar one(s),
__constituent one(s), and
__disjunctive one(s).
The ratio of yes/no-interrogatives to wh-interrogatives is __.
As for the morphosyntactic types, it contains [...]
  
```

Furthermore, the script prints R-code for statistical evaluation, so that the output can be directly inserted into and calculated by R. The following part of the R-script tests, for example, whether the counts of the morphosyntactic types in the yes/no-interrogatives are significantly different from the counts of the morphosyntactic types in the wh-interrogatives. For this purpose, both a Pearson's Chi-squared test and a Fisher's Exact test can be run.

```

my.table_whi_yni=matrix(c($num_yni_DEC,$num_whi_DEC,$num_yni_esk,$num_whi_esk,$num_yni_in
v,$num_whi_inv),2,3)
my.table_whi_yni
dimnames(my.table_whi_yni)= list(Semantics=c('YNI','WHI'), MorphoSyntax=c('DEC','ESK','INV'))
chisq.test(my.table_whi_yni)
fisher.test(my.table_whi_yni)
  
```

This methodology has several strengths and weaknesses. Apart from the facilitation of statistical tests, one of its obvious merits is its potential to analyse large amounts of data within very little time. More precisely, the two scripts built and analysed the interrogative corpus within two minutes. The selection and annotation of relevant structures, which would take several months if done manually, is thus

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<sup>747</sup> This interrogative is actually elliptical and should be annotated as ELL. For the counts of the main types, this is however not of importance.

significantly accelerated. Automation also provides new opportunities, such as the direct inclusion of comparisons of subsamples (e.g. yes/no-interrogatives vs. wh-interrogatives, direct speech vs. narration, and Lévy vs. Izzo).

Another upside is its objectivity and accountability: The commands in the scripts are followed systematically, such that every single annotation is reproducible and explainable. By going through the output files, errors can be detected, and instructions can be enhanced. This also helps to determine what can be put down to structural rules, which is an important step for understanding the regularity and variation in French interrogatives. Likewise, clerical errors and inconsistencies, which easily occur in manual corpus building, are avoided.

However, automation also entails some demerits. First of all, some categorisations are very complicated, if not impossible, to be encoded automatically. This goes particularly for pragmatic types (cf. pp.48ff.). More importantly, though, any automatic string operation is based on pattern matching, such that some structures will have been erroneously extracted or misannotated due to overgeneralisations.

The first problem concerns the operationalisation of a written interrogative as a sentence (i.e. speech material between two sentence-final punctuation marks) ending in a question mark. Due to this generalisation, deviations from punctuation standards in the source files, such as the overuse of commas in (404) to (406), may lead to the extraction of more than just the interrogative. Some sentences comprised more than one structure. Strictly speaking, interrogatives as the following ones were thus not accurately annotated, since they were annotated together with other structures:

- (404) Amuse-toi ne serait-ce qu'à tousser une fois, je noie ton moteur avec du sirop avant de te jeter à la casse et je te remplace par une jeune voiture tout électronique, sans starter et sans états d'âme quand il fait froid le matin, tu as bien compris, j'espère ?<sup>748</sup>
- (405) Qu'est-ce qu'il y a, tu as l'air terrorisé ?<sup>749</sup>
- (406) Qu'est-ce que tu as, tu es blanc comme un linge, c'est ce truc que tu as bu qui ne passe pas ?<sup>750</sup>

Although the different parts of the sentences were ostensibly related, not all of them were part of an interrogative construction. Rather, they were some kind of antecedent or assertive explications. Besides, some sentences comprised more than one question form. While (404) and (405) only comprise one interrogative, (406) comprised a genuine question as well as an answer-offering

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<sup>748</sup> English translation: 'Have fun if only by coughing one time, I'll kill your engine with sirup before scrapping you and I'll replace you by a young all-electronic car without starter and without problems when it is cold in the morning, you understand, I hope?' (TOKE\_502)

<sup>749</sup> English translation: 'What's the problem? You look terrified...'. (SICE\_906)

<sup>750</sup> English translation: 'What's wrong with you? You're as white as sheets. Is it the thingy you drank that makes you feel sick?' (SCAR\_88).

question.<sup>751</sup> If one wanted to annotate no more and no less than all interrogative structures, one would have to find another way to extract question forms. Although several of the above-mentioned cases did occur, they did not seem to noticeably falsify distributional tendencies, and the extraction of ?-sentences remains the most efficient way to automatically collect interrogative structures from written texts.

Similarly, the generalisation of a written interrogative as a string from the first word character after a sentence-final punctuation mark until a question mark caused problems because some sentences ended in a question mark although they did not contain any interrogative structures. In other words, there were some false positives because ? was not only used to mark the sentence type 'question'. More precisely, question marks were also used to emphasize a sentence's utterance meaning (i.e. a directive to say something, see (407) to (409)).

(407) Dites-moi ?<sup>752</sup>

(408) Alors dis-moi un peu à quoi ça servirait ?<sup>753</sup>

(409) Devinez qui tient la main du petit Malone sur la photo ?<sup>754</sup>

Just as question marks did not always indicate interrogatives, quotation marks did not always indicate direct speech: They were also used for citations of thought-explication questions (see (410) and (411)) or written (see (412)) speech as well as other quote-like utterances (see (413)).

(410) Et l'essentiel, ce n'est pas « comment ? », c'est d'abord « pourquoi ? ».<sup>755</sup>

(411) Après le « Qui ? », elle se concentrait sur le « Comment ? ».<sup>756</sup>

(412) Avant de partir à son tour Camille adressa un mail au Dr Crest lui proposant un texte pour l'annonce suivante : « Et vos autres œuvres...? C.V. »<sup>757</sup>

(413) « Vous croisez au bord d'une falaise une jolie fille ? Ne lui tendez pas la main ! On pourrait croire que vous l'avez poussée. »<sup>758</sup>

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<sup>751</sup> Interestingly, many of the cases in which several questions are marked by a single question mark comprise an answer-offering question (for details on this pragmatic type, see p. 45). Such a punctuation is obviously based on the pragmatic coherence between the sentences, and it would be interesting to see in which cases the authors decided to use a single sentence-final punctuation mark. As this would lead too far away from the core issues of this thesis, I leave this open for further investigation. It will though be of great interest what regularities in the pragmatic interdependence of the sentences can be found. Also, a comparison of the prosodic realisation of these sentences with the one of corresponding sentences that are separated by several sentence-final punctuation marks, will give insight in the choice and interpretation of punctuation marks.

<sup>752</sup> English translation: 'Tell me?' (LTEA\_5607)

<sup>753</sup> English translation: 'So tell me (a bit) about what that was good for?' (MMAT\_7770)

<sup>754</sup> English translation: 'Guess who's holding the hand of the little Malone in the photo?' (MMAT\_5124)

<sup>755</sup> English translation: 'And the most important thing is not *why*, it is *how*.' (TRAV\_1216+1217)

<sup>756</sup> English translation: 'After the (question on) *who* she focussed on the (question on) *why*.' (MMAT\_5924+5925)

<sup>757</sup> English translation: 'Before leaving himself, Camilla wrote an e-mail to Dr Crest, in which he proposed a text for the following announcement: And your other work ? C.V.' (TRAV\_881)

<sup>758</sup> English translation: 'You meet a pretty girl at the edge of a cliff? Don't reach her your hand ! One might believe that you pushed her.' (LTEA\_5457, the quote is not part of the actual novel but of an extract of another one presented at the end of the book)

In return, not all direct speech was marked by dashes or quotation marks either. In some cases, there were no explicit punctuation marks, but the co(n)text made clear that the interrogative was actually part of an oral conversation (see (414) and (415)) or that the question was directly posed to the reader (see (416) and (417)).

(414) *Peace... commenta Maleval, comme « paix »?*<sup>759</sup>

(415) *L'éducatrice, elle aussi plus jeune qu'Amanda, se contenta de bafouiller quelques questions au début : Vous ne le prenez pas dans vos bras ? Vous ne l'embrassez pas ? Vous ne lui parlez pas ? Puis, à son tour, elle apprit à se taire.*<sup>760</sup>

(416) *comment l'auriez-vous interprétée, vous?*<sup>761</sup>

(417) *Vous avez de beaux yeux, j'espère, de belles mains, un beau cœur, mon lecteur du futur ? Vous ne me décevrez pas ? Promis ?*<sup>762</sup>

Consequently, the binary categorisation into 'narration' and 'direct speech' will not have been perfect.<sup>763</sup> Nonetheless, the mentioned cases did not seem to be very frequent and overall tendencies should be reliable.

Another generalisation problem arises when forms are structurally ambiguous: When strings cannot be classified based solely on word order and/or morpholexical marking, automatic annotation becomes problematic. For example, complementary questions are superficially identical to polar ones (see also p.32). Hence, pattern matching cannot distinguish wh-questions without an explicit question word from yes/not-interrogatives, and this marginal constituent-question type will not be recognised by the scripts.

Apart from this specific case, wh-interrogatives are marked by a question word. This fact is used by the corpus builder script for the detection of wh-interrogatives. Unfortunately, the pattern matching of question words is though not faultless either as complementisers can be string-identical to question words (see (418) and (419)).

(418) *On ne peut pas savoir où il l'a frappée ?*<sup>764</sup>

(419) *On peut savoir pourquoi ?*<sup>765</sup>

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<sup>759</sup> English translation: 'Peace... commented Maleval, as in « paix »?' (TRAV\_675)

<sup>760</sup> English translation: 'The youth worker, who was also younger than Amanda, contented herself with mumbling some questions at first: You don't take him into your arms? You don't kiss him? You don't talk to him? Then, she as well learnt to be silent.' (MMAT\_4325-4327)

<sup>761</sup> English translation: 'How would you have interpreted it?' (TRAV\_986, directly addressing the reader of a letter)

<sup>762</sup> English translation: 'I hope you have beautiful eyes, hands and a good heart, my future reader? You won't disappoint me? Promised?' (LTEA\_4360-4362)

<sup>763</sup> Here, one might want to add that narration is more prone to errors than direct speech because interrogatives tend to be more complex in narration than in direct speech. The manual evaluation was though satisfying for interrogatives in narration parts as well.

<sup>764</sup> English translation: 'We cannot find out where he's beaten her up?' (TRAV\_1665)

<sup>765</sup> English translation: 'May one (= I) know why?' (TRAV\_1546)

Such cases were dealt with by determining that potential question words directly following a complementiser-introducing verb such as *savoir* (and its conjugated forms) are no wh-interrogatives unless they contain another potential question word or they are preceded by a direct-object pronoun. However, other constructions (e.g. relative clauses and comparatives) also had to be detected. Consider for example the following question form (see (420)):

(420) Et à des tables de jeu, où ça mise gros, je parie ?<sup>766</sup>

Originally, this interrogative was annotated as non-inverted wh-ex-situ structure (WHI\_FRO). This is because most interrogative structures starting with *où* after a comma are to be classified as wh-ex-situ interrogatives. In this case, the structure *je parie* can, however, be used as an operationalisation to identify the question form as a (declarative or elliptical) yes/no interrogative. This can be put down to the fact that *je parie* is only compatible with explicitly confirmation-seeking interrogatives, which are expressed without any morphosyntactical marking (in French and several other languages). Although the interrogative was still not entirely appropriately annotated (YNI\_DEC instead of YNI\_ELL), the category ('morphosyntactically unmarked yes/no-interrogative') to be counted was now correct. The more complex a sentence was, the more likely it was that no generalisation could be used. Therefore, some cases like (421) had to be incorporated manually, and the possibility that single structures with apparent wh-expressions that are no question words have been overlooked cannot be dismissed.

(421) Des mausolées familiaux parfois plus imposants encore que la maison dans laquelle ils ont vécu ?<sup>767</sup>

The actual number of wh-interrogatives may thus be slightly smaller than the automatic analysis suggests. Likewise, the number of disjunctive interrogatives may be slightly lower than suggested. This is because the scripts simply annotate any structure containing *ou* in non-initial position as a disjunctive interrogative. Although this strategy obtains a very high success rate, it leads to single miscodings such as (422) or (423), which are actually yes/no-questions.

(422) Ne m'insulte pas ou je t'explode la gueule, c'est compris ?<sup>768</sup>

(423) Par la suite, vous ne l'avez jamais entendue évoquer Wilde ou Oscar ?<sup>769</sup>

In the vast majority of cases, annotations will be correct for the semantic types. This goes also for the main morphosyntactic types, but for the more specific morphosyntactic types of structures without inversion or *EST-CE QUE*, error rates were higher.

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<sup>766</sup> English translation: 'And at gambling tables, where they bet a lot of money, I bet?' (TOKE\_229)

<sup>767</sup> English translation: 'Family mausoleums that are sometimes even more imposing than the house in which they lived?' (LTEA\_4928)

<sup>768</sup> English translation: 'Don't insult me or I'll smash your face, is that clear?' (JUST\_6427)

<sup>769</sup> English translation: 'Afterwards you have never heard her speak about Wilde or Oscar?' (CNPJ\_5881)

For instance, elliptical interrogatives are recognized only when they are short (one or two words) or when they start in a certain way (e.g. with *parce que*), so the number of elliptical interrogatives will be too low. For example, interrogatives such as the following, were annotated as DEC, FRO or SIT instead of ELL (see (424) to (426)):

- (424) *Donc, né le 16 décembre 1969 ?*<sup>770</sup>
- (425) *Et, plus prosaïquement, qu'on puisse vouloir vous tuer ?*<sup>771</sup>
- (426) *Mon motif de quoi ?*<sup>772</sup>

What is more, not all *wh*-subjects can be detected based solely on the surface structure of an interrogative. As a consequence, the scripts only identify fronted *qui* ( $\Rightarrow$ SUB) and *Qu'est-ce qui* ( $\Rightarrow$ ESB), such that interrogatives like (427) or (428) were interpreted as FRO instead of SUB.

- (427) *Combien de jeunes filles innocentes seront encore tuées, meurtries, violentées, sauvagement assassinées avant que la police parvienne à arrêter leur assassin ?*<sup>773</sup>
- (428) *Quelle mère accepterait cela ?*<sup>774</sup>

This is done because the scripts cannot reliably decide whether there is a subject after the *wh*-phrase or not. Hence, such structures could be  $Q=\{s/S\}V$  as well as  $Q\{s/S\}V$ . As these structures are both non-inverted without question particle, this inaccuracy does though not affect overall counts.

Accordingly, the counts to be considered were rather the main morphosyntactic types (i.e. 'inverted', 'periphrastic', 'other') than the more specific ones (e.g. 'tag', 'elliptical' or 'wh-in-situ'). The latter ones could though still function as indicators for rough estimates and were very useful when scanning the corpus for concrete examples.

In fact, there appeared to be only one problem that affected the counts of main morphosyntactic types: While the annotation of interrogatives containing *EST-CE QUE* or clitic inversion seemed to be very reliable, stylistic inversion was only recognized with *wh*-phrases that could not be a subject (see examples (429) to (432)), such that structures with *wh*-phrases consisting of [COMBIEN, LEQUEL or QUEL (+ preposition + article) + noun] (cf. (433) and (434)) may have been erroneously counted as non-inverted question forms.

- (429) *Comment est le ventre ?*<sup>775</sup>
- (430) *Que pouvait bien avoir à révéler ce bout de tissu éventré ?*<sup>776</sup>
- (431) *Quelle était la gare après Istres ?*<sup>777</sup>

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<sup>770</sup> English translation: 'So... Born on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 1969?' (ALEX\_433)

<sup>771</sup> English translation: 'And, to put it in more prosaic terms, that somebody may want to kill you?' (LTEA\_499)

<sup>772</sup> English translation: 'My reason for what?' (ESCV\_1083)

<sup>773</sup> English translation: 'How many more innocent girls will be killed, hurt, raped, slaughtered before the police manages to arrest their murderer?' (TRAV\_1588)

<sup>774</sup> English translation: 'What (kind of) mother would accept that?' (MMAT\_5102)

<sup>775</sup> English translation: 'How's your stomach?' (ESCV\_509)

<sup>776</sup> English translation: 'What could this tattered piece of cloth [=soft-toy] reveal?' (MMAT\_4386)

<sup>777</sup> English translation: 'Which one was the station after Istres?' (TEEL\_1824)



(432) Dans laquelle de ces rues se cachait Timo Soler ?<sup>778</sup>

(433) Quel âge avait votre petit-fils, lorsque vous l'avez vu pour la première fois ?<sup>779</sup>

(434) Combien de temps allait durer cette torture ?<sup>780</sup>

This is done on purpose. As the latter forms (i.e. (433) and (434)) are structurally ambiguous between QVS and Q={s/S}V and I did not want to include false positives for inversion, I had to put up with the possibility of overlooking some structures with stylistic inversion. While subject-verb agreement does not give anything away about whether the constituent preceding or the one following is the subject, semantics do: It will be the grandson that will have been of a certain age, (an 'age' cannot 'be of a certain grandson') and a torture can last a certain time (a 'time' cannot 'last a certain torture'). Such knowledge is though very difficult to be incorporated into an annotation script. Besides, only regular third-person plural verb forms could be captured by a regular expression (indicating forms ending in *-ent* and excluding the few relevant non-verbal words like *moment*), but irregular plural as well as singular verb forms had to be manually inserted. The verb forms (e.g. *vont* or *consiste*) and unambiguous [wh-phrase + verb form] structures (e.g. *quel âge avait* and *combien de temps allait durer*) I discovered during data exploration were incorporated manually, but single structures may have remained undiscovered.

In short, the most important errors have been removed, but some potentially erroneous codings had to be put up with. The development of a script carrying out a more accurate analysis of the specific morphosyntactic types or an even more fine-grained classification including the different types of clitic inversion or differentiations regarding dislocations would have been very time-consuming. At least regarding the specific morphosyntactic types, some inaccuracies and misclassifications will thus have remained in the corpus.

That said, I would like to stress the fact that the scripts do fulfill their job. In order to check whether errors still occurred on a regular basis, I finally tested the annotation of a random sample of 100 interrogatives. As not a single error relevant to overall countings was detected,<sup>781</sup> the scripts seemed to be sufficiently dependable. Therefore, the distributional analysis of the current scripts can reveal interesting tendencies, especially with regard to the approximate ratio of yes/no- to wh-interrogatives as well as the frequency of morphosyntactic marking by *EST-CE QUE* or inversion across semantic types, speech types and novels.

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<sup>778</sup> English translation: 'In which of these streets did Timo Soler hide?' (MMAT\_4965)

<sup>779</sup> English translation: 'How old was your grandson when you saw him last time?' (MMAT\_4292)

<sup>780</sup> English translation: 'How long would this torture last?' (TEEL\_8711)

<sup>781</sup> By a relevant error, I understand a case that affects the counts of semantic or main morphosyntactic types. The 7 errors detected thus concerned only the subclassification of morphosyntactic types without inversion and *EST-CE QUE*.

All in all, this methodology was thus certainly adequate to obtain an overview of the distribution of the main categories of interrogatives (semantic: yes/no-, wh-, disjunctive; morphosyntactic: inverted, *EST-CE QUE*, without either marking). General frequency comparisons, such as ‘morphosyntactically marked interrogatives’ vs. ‘morphosyntactically unmarked interrogatives’ can be carried out and should be reliable. Even if a few errors are contained, the large amount of data will guarantee that detected tendencies are true.<sup>782</sup> Additionally, the tentative annotation of more specific morphosyntactic types and the automatic sorting of the interrogatives facilitated further data exploration and the integrated counts and calculations were helpful to evaluate the significance of subsample differences.

## 6.2.2 Results

For the whole e-books, the automatic analysis reveals the following:

This corpus contains 8956 interrogative(s).

As for the semantic types, it contains

61.4% (i.e. 5499) yes/no-interrogative(s) (I) (=polar/total one(s)),

37.2% (i.e. 3330) wh-I (=constituent/partial one(s)), and

1.4% (i.e. 127) disjunctive I (=alternative one(s)).

The ratio of yes/no-interrogatives to wh-interrogatives is thus 1.7.

As for the morphosyntactic types, it contains

76.8% (i.e. 6880) construction(s) (including elliptical ones) without any morphosyntactic marking,

0.0% (i.e. 0) ‘ti’ one(s),

6.4% (i.e. 572) ‘est-ce que’ one(s), and

16.8% (i.e. 1504) inverted structure(s),

The ratio of morpho-syntactically marked to morpho-syntactically unmarked interrogatives is thus 0.3.

As for the semantic-morphosyntactic types:

Of the yes/no-I,

90.3% (i.e. 4968) are morphosyntactically unmarked,

(presumably 5.8% (i.e. 321) tag I, 61.7% (i.e. 3393) declarative I, and 22.8% (i.e. 1254) elliptical I)

1.4% (i.e. 76) are with ‘est-ce que’, and

8.3% (i.e. 455) are with subject-verb inversion.

The ratio of morpho-syntactically marked to morpho-syntactically unmarked interrogatives is thus 0.1.

Of the wh-I,

54.1%(i.e. 1802) are morphosyntactically ‘unmarked’ (i.e. marked by question word only)

(presumably 18.7% (i.e. 622) wh-in-situ I, 4.4% (i.e. 147) with ‘qui’ subject, 10.5% (i.e. 351) other wh-initial I, 16.8% (i.e. 560) elliptical wh-I, and 3.5% (i.e. 118) infinitive wh-I)

15.0%(i.e. 499) are with ‘est-ce que’ (of which 4 are ‘que’-questions, 96 ‘Qu’est-ce qui’ subject and 389 are ‘Qu’est-ce’ complement, and 10 other wh ‘est-ce qu{e/}’ structures), and

31.0%(i.e. 1033) are inverted (of which 848 are with clitic and 185 with stylistic inversion).

The ratio of morpho-syntactically marked to morpho-syntactically unmarked interrogatives is thus 0.3.

The ratio of ‘Qu’est-ce’ to other complement wh-I with ‘est-ce que’ is 38.9.

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<sup>782</sup> It goes without saying that this is only true if there are no recurrent errors. As automatic encoding is systematic, any erroneously annotated structure that is of high occurrence will falsify the results.

Of the disjunctive I,  
86.6% (i.e. 110) are morphosyntactically unmarked (at least 25 are elliptical),  
0.8% (i.e. 1) are with at least one 'est-ce que' (and possibly inversion), and  
12.6% (i.e. 16) are without 'est-ce que' and at least one inversion.  
The ratio of morpho-syntactically marked to morpho-syntactically unmarked interrogatives is thus  
0.1.

In other words, the ten novels contained about nine thousand interrogatives. Polar interrogatives outweighed constituent ones, and only few occurrences seemed to be alternative ones.<sup>783</sup> Most of the interrogatives were morphosyntactically unmarked – or in the case of *wh*-interrogatives, they were not marked apart from the question word.

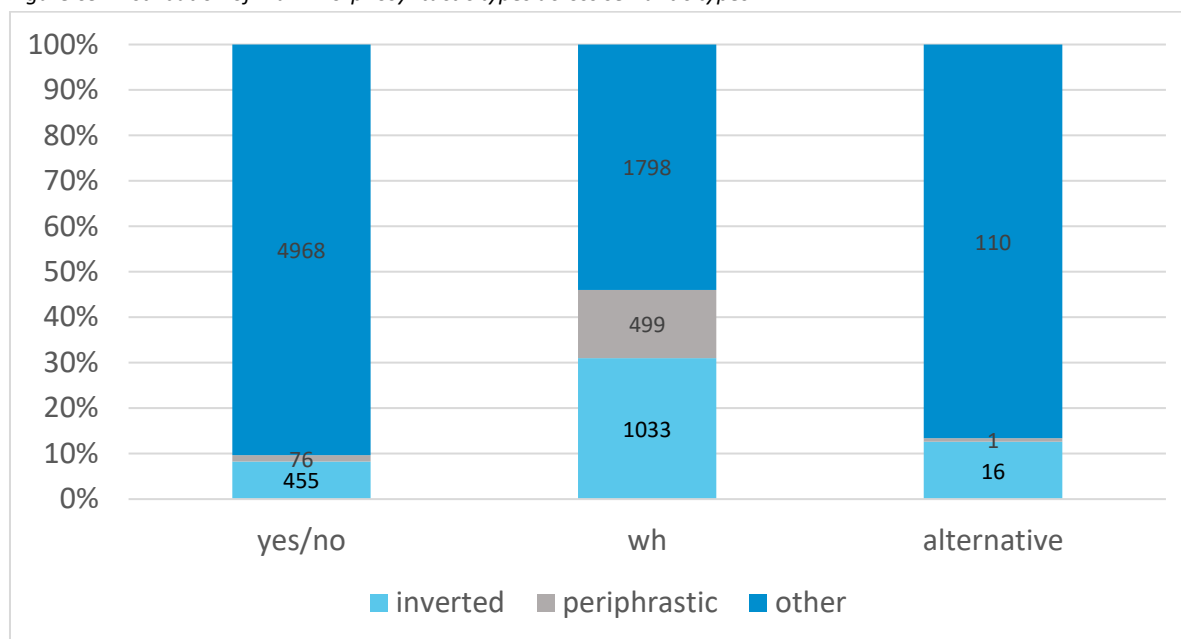
This held for all semantic types: For *yes/no*-interrogatives, *wh* ones and disjunctive ones, the prevailing structures were non-inverted forms without *EST-CE QUE*. However, *yes/no*- and disjunctive interrogatives occurred far less in inverted form than *wh*-interrogatives (see also figure 69): While only about 8% of the polar and less than 13% of the alternative questions contained subject-verb inversion, constituent ones did so in almost a third of the cases. An even more extreme asymmetry can be observed in *EST-CE QUE* structures: Less than 1.5% of the *yes/no*- and less than 1% of the disjunctive interrogatives but 15% of the *wh*-interrogatives were marked by the question particle. A Pearson's Chi-squared test confirms the statistical significance of the observed disproportionateness between the counts of morphosyntactic types in *yes/no* interrogatives and *wh*-interrogatives ( $p < 2.2e-16$ ), so it is extremely unlikely that these distributional differences are pure coincidence.<sup>784</sup>

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<sup>783</sup> If one considers the possibility that some of the annotated ones may even be polar ones (since an 'or'-element can also be part of a simple *yes/no*-question), disjunctive interrogatives may be even rarer than the script suggests.

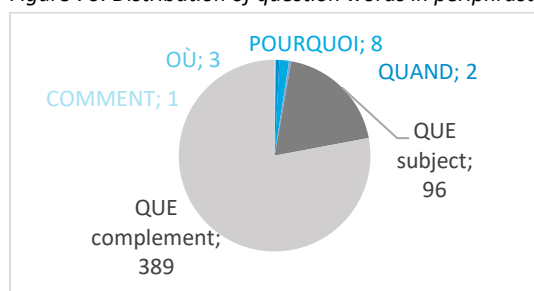
<sup>784</sup> The test was conducted for overall counts, for the use of *est-ce que*, and the use of subject-verb inversion. The result was the same for all three comparisons.

Figure 69: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types across semantic types



For wh-interrogatives, the scripts reveal another interesting detail: Out of 499 wh-interrogatives with the question particle *EST-CE QUE*, only 14 occurred with a question word other than *QUE* (see also figure 70). As for the remainder, 96 of these structures contained a *QUE*<sub>subject</sub> (i.e. *Qu'est-ce qui*) and 389 a *QUE*<sub>complement</sub> (i.e. *Qu'est-ce qu{e/'}*). In other words, even when wh-subjects are left aside, periphrastic wh-questions were in the vast majority of the cases *Qu'est-ce qu{e/'}* structures, and the use of *QUE* makes the use of the question particle much more likely. Again, the statistical significance of this difference in counts can be proven by a Pearson's Chi-squared test ( $p < 2.2e-16$ ).

Figure 70: Distribution of question words in periphrastic wh-structures



Let us now consider the automatised comparison of subcorpora. The first two subcorpora which shall be compared are 'narration' vs. 'direct speech'. For this binary categorisation, the output of the script is the following:

This corpus contains 1859 interrogatives in (potential) narration and 7097 interrogatives in direct speech (marked as such).

The proportions of the semantic types are...

54.3% vs. 63.3% yes/no-interrogatives,  
44.2% vs. 35.3% wh-interrogatives, and  
1.5% vs. 1.4% disjunctive interrogatives  
in narration vs. direct speech.

Subject-verb inversion is used in...

34.9% (590/1859) vs. 12.1% (729/7097) across all semantic types,  
26.5% (268/1010) vs. 4.2% (187/4489) in yes/no-interrogatives and  
45.1% ((313+58)/822) vs. 26.4% ((535+127)/2508) in wh-interrogatives  
in narration vs. direct speech.

The question particle 'est-ce que' is used in...

6.1% (114/1859) vs. 6.5% (458/7097) across all semantic types,  
5.0% (51/1010) vs. 0.6% (25/4489) in yes/no-interrogatives and  
7.7% (63/822) vs. 17.4% (436/2508) in wh-interrogatives  
98.4% (i.e. 62 'Qu'est-ce (qu)' out of 63 periphrastic wh-structures) vs. 97.0% (i.e. 423  
'Qu'est-ce (qu)' out of 436 periphrastic wh-structures) of the complement ones occurred  
with the question word QUE  
in narration vs. direct speech.

Hence, most of the interrogatives were produced as direct speech, and the tendencies observed for the whole novels are even stronger when considering direct speech only (see also figures 71 to 73): Yes/no-interrogatives are almost double as frequent as wh-interrogatives, inversion is even rarer across all semantic types, and the question particle is almost restricted to wh-interrogatives.

As a Pearson's Chi-squared test shows, the counts of the subcorpus of narration are significantly different from the counts of the subcorpus of direct speech. While the probability of *EST-CE QUE* can only be shown to be significant when separating the semantic types ( $p = 0.6522$  across semantic types,  $p < 2.2e-16$  for yes/no-interrogatives and  $p = 1.776e-11$  for wh-interrogatives), the distributional differences for inversion are as good as excluded from being due to chance even when taking the overall counts ( $p < 2.2e-16$ ). In other words, while there seems to be an interaction between semantic type and speech type for the likelihood of the use of *EST-CE QUE*, speech type seems to have a main effect on the likelihood of inversion.<sup>785</sup> Likewise, the distribution of semantic types seems to be subject to different conditions in the two sample: Yes/no-interrogatives were significantly more prevalent in the subcorpus of direct speech than in the subcorpus of potential narration.<sup>786</sup>

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<sup>785</sup> This observation has to be formulated tentatively because the data investigated are taken from an authentic corpus. Hence, the samples will exhibit distributional differences with regard to more than this factor.

<sup>786</sup> A Pearson's Chi-squared test proves the statistical significance of the distributional differences in morphosyntactic types between yes/no- and wh-interrogatives ( $p = 1.571e-12$ ).

Figure 71: Distribution of semantic types in narration vs. direct speech

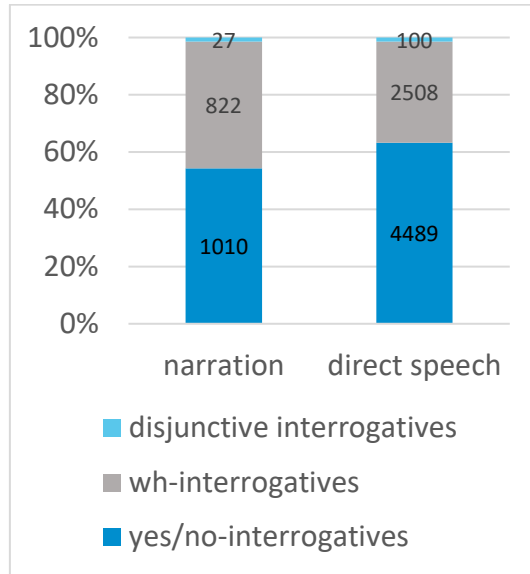


Figure 72: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types in yes/no-interrogatives in narration vs. direct speech

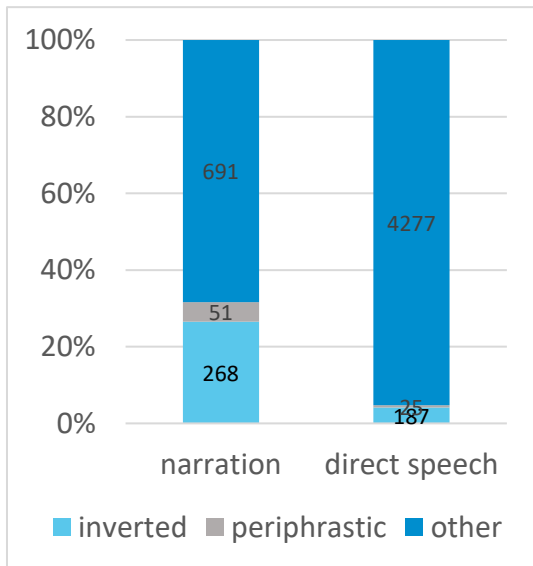
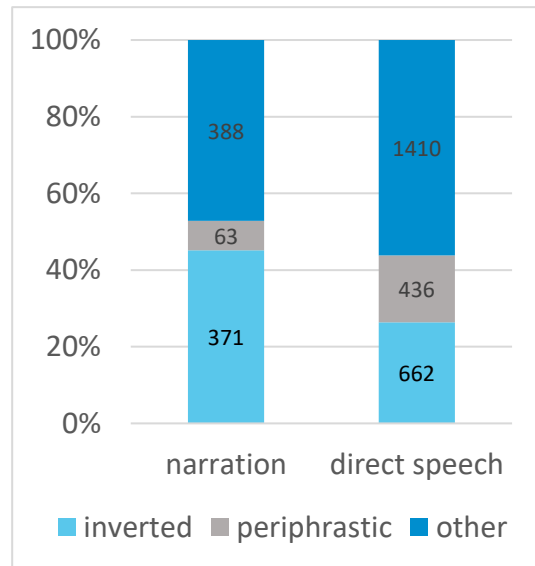


Figure 73: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types in wh-interrogatives in narration vs. direct speech



The second kind of subcorpora which shall be compared concerns the novels and their authors. For this, the script prints the following output:

The corpus contains interrogatives from 10 different novels, which were written by 6 different authors.

The proportions of the semantic types are...

yes/no-interrogatives:	60.1%	55.8%	61.4%	59.3%	60.1%	64.7%	64.5%	61.0%	65.2%	60.9%
wh-interrogatives:	38.6%	42.7%	37.2%	39.8%	38.0%	33.7%	34.5%	37.3%	33.0%	37.7%
disjunctive interrogatives:	1.3%	1.5%	1.4%	0.9%	1.8%	1.5%	1.0%	1.7%	1.8%	1.4%

Subject-verb inversion is used in...

14.8%	17.4%	13.9%	16.2%	21.2%	16.0%	15.5%	21.9%	14.7%	17.3%	of the whole novels
8.0%	7.6%	4.8%	6.4%	11.3%	7.3%	8.0%	13.8%	7.0%	9.9%	of the yes/no-interrogatives
25.6%	30.5%	28.9%	30.9%	36.8%	32.7%	29.8%	35.3%	30.3%	29.9%	of the whi-interrogatives

The question particle 'est-ce que' is used in...

8.1%	7.3%	5.5%	7.0%	6.3%	4.6%	6.0%	6.0%	6.9%	8.6%	of the whole novels
2.9%	1.1%	1.0%	1.7%	0.5%	0.8%	1.3%	1.4%	1.2%	2.3%	of the yes/no-interrogatives
16.4%	15.7%	13.0%	14.9%	15.8%	11.8%	14.8%	13.8%	18.4%	19.0%	of the whi-interrogatives

... for the respective novels (TOKE TRAV ALEX ESCV SCAR MMAT LTEA CNPJ JUST TEEL).

The distribution of semantic types was thus very consistent: about three fifths (between 55.8% and 65.2%) of the interrogatives of each novel were yes/no-interrogatives, more than a third (between 33.0% and 42.7%) wh ones, and only very few (between 0.9% and 1.8%) disjunctive ones. As for morphosyntactic marking, there was slightly more variation, but overall tendencies were still alike (see also figures 74 and 75): In all novels, more than two thirds of the interrogatives were neither marked by subject-verb inversion nor by the question particle *EST-CE QUE*. Besides, inverted and periphrastic structures were always more common in wh- than in yes/no-interrogatives (25.6% to 36.8% vs. 4.8% to 13.8% and 11.8% to 19.0% vs. 0.5% to 2.9%). Although several of the overall differences in counts reached statistical significance, proportions of the three main morphosyntactic types (i.e. 'with subject-verb inversion', 'with *EST-CE QUE*', and 'with neither of the two') were thus comparable.

Figure 74: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types in yes/no-interrogatives across novels

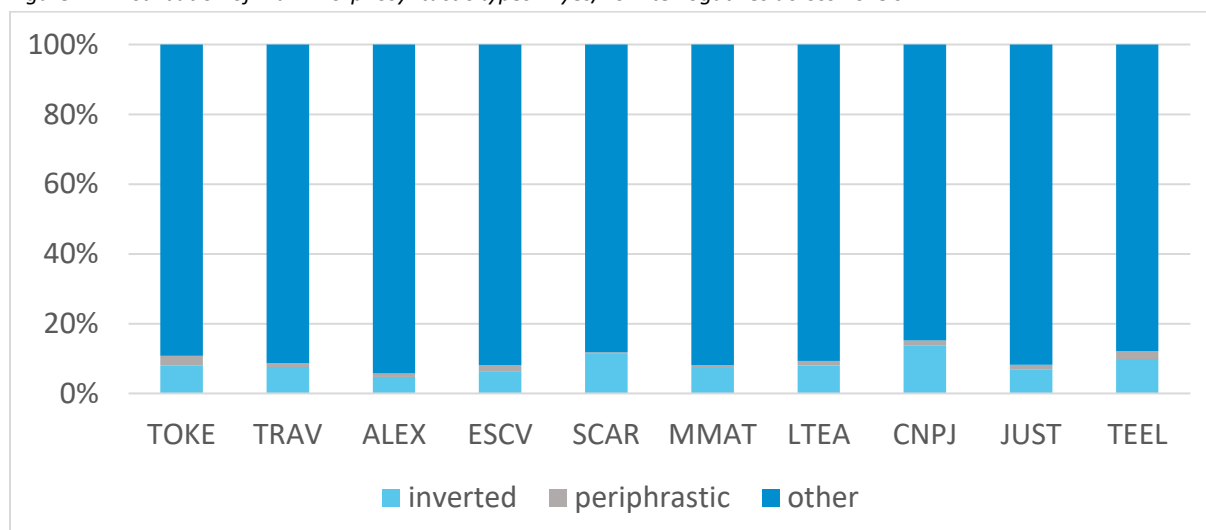
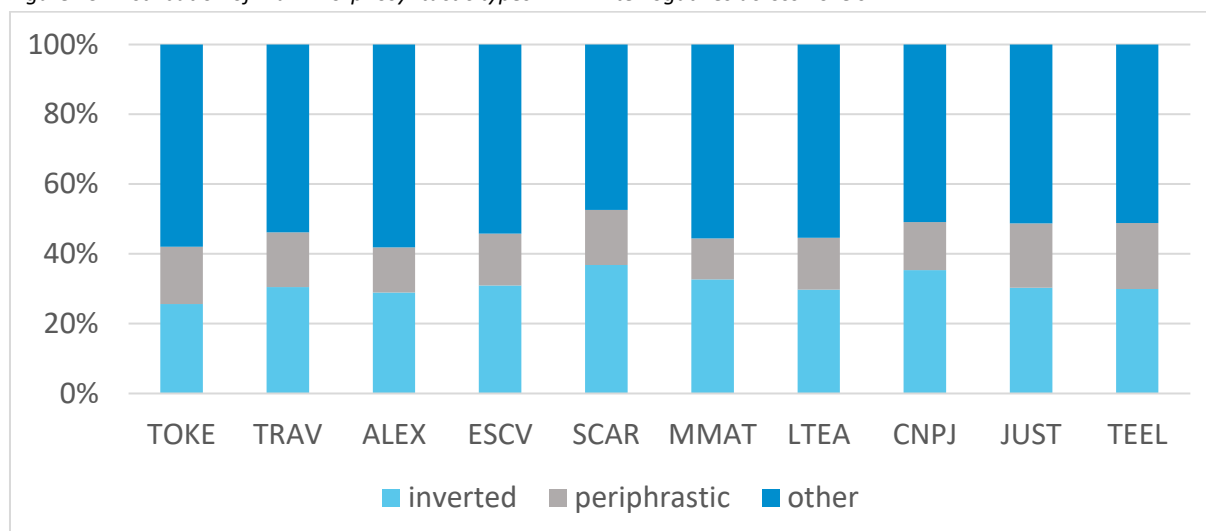


Figure 75: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types in *wh*-interrogatives across novels



## 6.2.3 Discussion

### 6.2.3.1 Comparison with previous corpus studies

For the interpretation of these results, it is worth taking a look at previous corpus studies, throwing light on whether these distributions are in line with them or not. Since the corpus used here is a collection of novels, the results will first be compared with other written corpora. After that, there will be an additional consultation of oral corpora.

One of the first studies investigating morphosyntactic variation in French interrogatives was the study of [Pohl 1965](#)). Besides observing his parents' speech (an engineer in his 80s and a woman in her 70s), the author analysed letters they had written within the preceding 15 years.<sup>787</sup> Not retaining question forms without a conjugated verb, he obtained 111 written interrogatives. Since those written interrogatives were all but one (which is positively biased, i.e. explicitly confirmation-seeking) inverted, he concluded that non-literary written French is much more rigid than the spoken everyday language. In letters, interrogatives may thus be as good as restricted to inverted structures. As we have seen, the interrogatives in my sample of detective novels do show morphosyntactic variation and can thus be contrasted with Pohl's observations. When comparing his results with the results of this study, it is obvious that either the medium of a letter is not comparable to a novel, or some language change has occurred (the novelists will be about two generations younger than Pohl's parents). At any rate, we can make a note of contemporary detective novels showing much more morphosyntactic variation in interrogatives than the letter communication between an upper-class old couple fifty years ago. In

<sup>787</sup> As the author explains, he read "une grande quantité de lettres, dont quelques-unes étaient vieilles d'une douzaine ou quinzaine d'années" (Pohl 1965: 502).



other words, the written language used in novels nowadays is not as rigid as written communication used to be in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>788</sup>

Only five years after Pohl's article, a monograph on French interrogatives in contemporary boulevard plays was published. Terry 1970) analysed the question forms of 25 plays, which premièred between 1957 and 1964. He selected them on the basis of their potential representativeness of contemporary spoken French, i.e. the French used in everyday conversations. In total, he collected 7995 interrogatives. Excluding non-finite forms, tag questions, repetitions, *si*-questions, vocatives, softened imperatives and questions about the belief of the hearer, he analysed around half of them (4365). As I did not exclude these structures, the proportion of interrogatives without subject-verb inversion and question particle may be expected to be higher than the one in Terry's study.

Table 42: Comparison of own data with Terry's (1970: 83) corpus of yes/no-interrogatives

	Terry's boulevard-play corpus	My corpus of 10 novels
inverted	11.2% (i.e. 339/3016)	8.3% (i.e. 455/5499)
periphrastic	3.2% (i.e. 97/3016)	1.4% (i.e. 76/5499)
other	85.6% (i.e. 2580/3016)	90.3% (i.e. 4968/5499)

Table 1: Comparison of own data with Terry's (1970: 83) corpus of wh-interrogatives

	Terry's boulevard-play corpus	My corpus of 10 novels
inverted	52.1% (i.e. 703/1349)	31.0%(i.e. 1033/3330)
periphrastic	38.0% (i.e. 512/1349)	15.0%(i.e. 499/3330)
other <sup>789</sup>	9.9% (i.e. 134/1349)	54.0%(i.e. 1798/3330)

As in my study, yes/no-interrogatives were far more frequent than wh ones. More precisely, the prevalence of polar questions was even more pronounced in Terry's corpus than in mine. What is more interesting, though, is that the asymmetry in the distribution of morphosyntactic types between yes/no-interrogatives and wh-interrogatives was even more distinct than in my corpus of detective

<sup>788</sup> It would be interesting to see whether present-day letters still show systematic use of inversion. However, the medium of a letter has also been subject to change. Considering today's extensive use of electronic devices, which offer other possibilities, such as e-mail, chats, SMS or other messaging services, written non-instant communication has become rare.

<sup>789</sup> Here, Terry uses the term "incomplete syntactic transformation". Such a denomination can be not only misleading, but has a strange moralising undertone, which seems to suggest that declarative wh-interrogatives would be less grammatical than morphosyntactically additionally marked ones.

novels:<sup>790</sup> While the vast majority of the yes/no-interrogatives were of declarative form wh-questions<sup>791</sup> were mostly formulated as inverted structures. As Terry 1970: 85) concludes, "it can be said that the predominance of interrogations by intonation change in Yes/no-questions is very significant, as is the predominance of inversion in Information-eliciting questions." If one supposes that the formulations of questions in boulevard plays and detective novels are similar, one might be tempted to interpret the less pronounced asymmetry as an indicator for an ongoing language change. Since the authors of Terry's plays were 1 or 2 generations younger than the novelists, this may be a reasonable inference.

Another three years later, one more monograph on French direct question forms was published by Behnstedt 1973). In general, the author described three varieties of French: popular language (*langue populaire*), the language of the middle class, and radio language (*Rundfunksprache*). His description of the *langue populaire* is mainly based on observations during his time as a lorry passenger<sup>792</sup>, but it also includes the analysis of 3 novels: Benjamin's *Gaspard* (1915), Céline's *Voyage au bout de nuit* (1932), and Queneau's *Zazie dans le Métro* (1959). Unfortunately, Behnstedt only analysed yes/no-interrogatives, but their distribution of morphosyntactic types was quite meaningful: In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the use of forms with inversion and the question particle *ti* seems to have been continuously declining, whereas declarative ones were gaining more and more ground (see table 43):

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<sup>790</sup> Yet, there is one crucial difference in the counts of Terry and mine: Terry excluded many declarative structures (e.g. infinitive questions or other elliptical forms) which I included. The divergence in the two yes/no-wh asymmetries will thus be slightly less pronounced than the numbers suggest.

<sup>791</sup> Terry calls wh-questions "information-eliciting questions". This term may however be misleading: Some wh-interrogatives, such as rhetorical ones, are by no means information-eliciting, and yes/no-interrogatives can very well elicit information (be it a mere truth value of the proposition or a more precise piece of information).

<sup>792</sup> The German word *LKW-Beifahrer* does not state whether he was travelling as a mere passenger, or as a co-driver, but he clearly took notes while sitting on the front seat.

Table 43: Comparison of own data with Behnstedt 1973: 17) corpus of yes/no-interrogatives<sup>793</sup>

	Behnstedt's corpus of three novels			My corpus of ten novels
	<i>Gaspard</i>	<i>Voyage au bout de nuit</i>	<i>Zazie dans le Métro</i>	
inverted	5.8% (i.e. 40/686)			8.3% (i.e. 455/5499)
	9.7% (i.e. 13/134)	5.2% (i.e. 16/306)	4.5% (i.e. 11/246)	
<i>ti</i>	6.9% (i.e. 47/686)			0.0% (i.e. 0 /5499)
	14.9% (i.e. 20/134)	7.2% (i.e. 22/306)	1.2% (i.e. 3/246)	
<i>est-ce que</i>	3.9% (i.e. 27/686)			1.4% (i.e. 76/5499)
	6.0% (i.e. 8/134)	2.9% (i.e. 9/306)	4.1% (i.e. 10/246)	
other	83.7% (i.e. 574/686)			90.3% (i.e. 4968/5499)
	69.4% (i.e. 93/134)	84.6% (i.e. 259/306)	90.2% (i.e. 222/246)	

Since questions with *ti* have not been observed in any of our ten contemporary novels,<sup>794</sup> it is likely that the *ti*-question form has become extinct – at least in contemporary detective novels.<sup>795</sup> As for the declarative variant, there appears to be a less overwhelming prevalence in my ten novels. Knowing that the declarative yes/no-interrogatives of my corpus include elliptical forms, I cannot directly compare them to (Behnstedt)'s proportions. Percentages in my study would be distinctly lower for morphosyntactically unmarked forms and higher for *est-ce que* as well as inverted ones if only finite interrogatives were counted. Nonetheless, the general trend to not mark yes/no-interrogatives morphosyntactically, would remain the same. Besides, the speech imitated in Behnstedt's selection of novels (the one of soldiers, working-class people or an ill-mannered child)<sup>796</sup> might be rated socio-stylistically lower than the speech of my detective novels (which comprises the speech of police officers, psychologists or journalists, which are certainly rather middle-class representatives). For this reason, I will also compare my results with the ones of Behnstedt's middle-class corpus of 25 radio plays. Socio-stylistically, the texts should be more or less of the same level as the detective novels investigated here. Yet, (apart from the common point of the absence of *ti*-structures) the differences between the middle-class corpus of radio-plays and my corpus seem to be greater than the ones

<sup>793</sup> Behnstedt (1973: 17) seems to have made several errorr when rounding the percentage. Hence, not all percentages correspond to his original ones.

<sup>794</sup> There were no hits for the search terms “-ti\s” or “-ti\s” (\s = ‘white space character’) and the exploration of the data did not suggest that there were any false negatives.

<sup>795</sup> Behnstedt (1973: 19) claimed that *ti* was not generally part of popular language, but rather a rural variant. Nonetheless, it is striking that not a single occurrence of this structure was found in my corpus of 10 detective novels whereas all three novels of Behnstedt did contain some occurrences.

<sup>796</sup> As Behnstedt (1970: 16) explains, he chose texts in which popular (“volkstümliche”) language is imitated.

between the popular language corpus of three novels and my corpus of ten novels (see tables 44 and 45).

Table 44: Comparison of own data with Behnstedt's (1973: 105) corpus of yes/no-interrogatives

	Behnstedt's radio-play corpus	My corpus of ten novels
inverted	16.1% (i.e. 38/236)	8.3% (i.e. 455/5499)
periphrastic	7.3% (i.e. 17/236)	1.4% (i.e. 76/5499)
other	76.6% (i.e. 181/236)	90.3% (i.e. 4968/5499)

Table 45: Comparison of own data with Behnstedt's (1973: 105) corpus of wh-interrogatives

	Behnstedt's radio-play corpus	My corpus of ten novels
inverted	81.3% (i.e. 74/91)	31.0% (i.e. 1033/3330)
non-inverted	18.7% (i.e. 17/91)	69.0% (i.e. 2297/3330)

Morphosyntactically marked interrogatives are generally more frequent in the radio-plays than in the novels: While in the radio-plays, almost a quarter of the yes/no-interrogatives is morphosyntactically marked, only slightly more than a ninth are so in the novels. Although elliptical structures may be responsible of some of the observed differences, at least the proportions of inverted and periphrastic structures are obviously unlike. As far as wh-interrogatives are concerned, differences are even greater: A prevalence of forms with straight word order and without question particle is only observed in the novels, but not in the radio plays. In the latter, 4 out of 5 wh-interrogatives are inverted. The distribution of morphosyntactic types in wh-interrogatives is thus definitely different from my corpus. Unfortunately, Behnstedt did not mention whether wh-interrogatives with *est-ce que* did simply not occur or were included into (or even excluded from) the counts of the non-inverted structures. Either way, the difference is highly significant, i.e. the null hypothesis that the two samples are taken from the same population can be refuted (Pearson's Chi-squared for all possibilities:  $p < 2.2e-16$ ). To conclude, my sample is clearly more similar to Behnstedt's popular language corpus of novels than to his middle-class corpus of radio plays. Yet, none of the samples seem to be part of the same population. This may be due to diachronic or author-dependent variation.

Since a great part of the language in contemporary novels is an attempt to imitate spoken language, it makes sense to also relate my results to some studies on oral speech. For this purpose, respectively three samples of spoken yes/no- and wh-interrogatives were selected and compared to the subcorpus of direct speech (see tables 46 and 47).

Table 46: Comparison of own data with previous oral corpora of yes/no-interrogatives

	(Coveney 2002)	(Druetta 2009)	Hansen 2001)	My whole corpus of ten novels	Direct speech in my corpus of ten novels
inverted	0% (i.e. 0/180)	1.6% (i.e. 6/375)	2.8% (i.e. 7/247)	8.3% (i.e. 455/5499)	4.2% (i.e. 187/4489)
periphrastic	20.6% (i.e. 37/180)	12.8% (i.e. 48/375)	14.6% (i.e. 36/247)	1.4% (i.e. 76/5499)	0.6% (i.e. 25/4489)
other	79.4% (i.e. 143/180)	85.6% (i.e. 321/375)	82.6% (i.e. 204/247)	90.3% (i.e. 4968/5499)	95.3% (i.e. 4277/4489)

Table 47: Comparison of own data with previous oral corpora of wh-interrogatives

	(Coveney 2002)	(Druetta 2009)	Myers (2007: 71)	My whole corpus of ten novels	Direct speech in my corpus of ten novels
inverted	9.0% (i.e. 11/122)	13.2% (i.e. 52/395)	29.2% (i.e. 63/216)	31.0% (i.e. 1033/3330)	26.4% (i.e. 662/2508)
periphrastic	48.4% (i.e. 59/122)	16.2% (i.e. 64/395)	27.8% (i.e. 60/216)	15.0% (i.e. 499/3330)	17.4% (i.e. 436/2508)
other	42.6% (i.e. 52/122)	70.6% (i.e. 279/395)	43.1% (i.e. 93/216)	54.0% (i.e. 1798/3330)	56.2% (i.e. 1410/2508)

Again, the problem of unequal annotation systems arises: While (Myers 2007) and (Druetta 2009) incorporated elliptical interrogatives just as I did, (Coveney 2002) and Hansen 2001) excluded them. As a consequence, the proportions of inverted and periphrastic structures were expected to be higher in the latter two studies. However, this was not always the case: In these two studies, inversion was even rarer than in the detective novels (i.e. <3% vs. >4%). What is more, in the ten detective novels the use of the question particle in yes/no-interrogatives was not only much rarer than in those two studies but than in all corpora of oral speech (i.e. less than 1% vs. two-digit percentages).

Interestingly, the distributions of main morphosyntactic types of the studies differed greatly not only from mine, but also from one another.<sup>797</sup> As opposed to the little variation observed between the ten novels (see figures 74 and 75 on pp.186f.), the corpora were visibly different from one another: For example, in Coveney's corpus, less than a tenth of the wh-interrogatives were inverted whereas inverted structures amounted to almost a third in Myers' corpus. Also, wh-interrogatives with neither inversion nor *EST-CE QUE* were significantly more common in Druetta's corpus than in the other oral

<sup>797</sup> As Pearson's Chi-squared tests show, only the studies of Druetta and Mosegaard-Hansen present interrogatives that may be part of the same population ( $p = 0.4511$ ).

corpora (almost three quarters vs. less than half). For this reason, it is important to consider more information on the respective corpora.

Coveney's corpus was the result of 18 hours of informal interviews between the author and 30 people working in 15 holiday centres in Picardy (France) in 1982.

The corpus that Druetta used contained three subcorpora: the G.A.R.S. corpora (which are all conversational but of very different situations, e.g. interviews, "conversations à bâtons rompus" and talk shows), a self-recorded radio corpus and "quelques autres énoncés [...] relevés au détour d'une conversation ou dans la rue" ('some other utterances [...] retained in the course of a conversation or in the street').

The corpus of Mosegaard-Hansen, which consisted of about four and a half hours of recordings, comprised four informal conversations (of which one was on the phone), three radio debates, and a rather informal examination at a vocational school.

As for Myers's study, the author used the three first sessions of the Blyth-Barnes Corpus of Spoken French, i.e. recorded discussions that took place at the home of Dr. Barnes in 1984. The three female speakers were all French language teachers at the University of Minnesota.

Hence, Coveney and Myers used a rather homogeneous corpus whereas Druetta and Mosegaard-Hansen tried to incorporate several (rather informal) speech styles. As a result, it will be easier to compare my data to the corpora used by Coveney and Myers.

As for the use of inversion, it is striking that the corpora Myers and I used were quite similar whereas Coveney's corpus contained much less inverted forms. One possible explanation for this would be that written imitation of spoken speech resembles a more formal speech style. The speakers in Myers' study were French language teachers, so their increased use of inversion may either be due to a more formal style of a conversation between colleagues or to some kind of sociolect (as teachers may more readily keep to prescriptive standards).

As for the use of the question particle *EST-CE QUE*, it is striking that in Coveney's corpus almost half of the wh-interrogatives contained the question particle whereas in the ten detective novels only less than a fifth did so. Again, Myers' findings were more similar to mine, but even here almost a third of the wh-interrogatives contained *EST-CE QUE*. It may be imaginable that the question particle is typical of the situation of interview-like conversations. However, I think it is much more likely that the corpora simply varied with regard to linguistic factors, such as the distribution of question words. If Coveney's corpus contained more occurrences of *QUE*, the prevalence of periphrastic structures is explainable

(see also last chapter). Of course, the concrete pragmatic functions of the interrogatives may also have played a role in the choice of the question forms.

To sum up, it is hard to say why morphosyntactic distributions vary without having detailed insight into the creation and composition of corpora. What is though absolutely clear it that the oral corpora showed much more variation than the ten detective novels of my own corpus. Accordingly, there seems to be less variation within this literary genre than in real spoken language.

At any rate, all samples of interrogatives had one point in common: Morphosyntactically-marked structures were more frequent in *wh*- than in *yes/no*-interrogatives. Hence, the semantic type clearly affected the likelihood of inversion and *EST-CE QUE*. This leads us to the next subsection, in which I will show which factors had an influence on the use of morphosyntactic marking in the interrogatives of the ten detective novels.

#### 6.2.3.2 Factorial analysis (by exploration)

In the following, the most promising of the linguistic and extralinguistic factors investigated in chapter 5 will be taken up. As opposed to the last chapter, I will structure the discussion of the results by the binary morphosyntactic types (i.e. inverted vs. straight word order and with vs. without question particle). By analysing the influence of the factors, I will show how one can predict the use of inversion or the question particle in (these and probably also other) contemporary detective novels.

#### The use of subject-verb inversion

##### Semantic type

Although *yes/no*-interrogatives are generally more frequent than *wh*-interrogatives, over two thirds of the inverted structures were *wh*-interrogatives (see results p.260ff.). In other words, subject-verb inversion was much more common in *wh*-interrogatives than in *yes/no*-interrogatives.

To exemplify this, the structure *{V/v}as-tu* ('go-yoU<sub>2ndperson-singular-informal</sub>') only occurred in *wh*-interrogatives. 6 out of 8 occurrences were part of the quasi-lexicalised question *comment vas-tu* (of which one is given as (435)), and 2 were part of a question about the destination (see (436) and (437)).

(435) *Comment vas-tu ?*<sup>798</sup>

(436) *Où vas-tu ?*<sup>799</sup>

(437) *Jusqu'où vas-tu aller, Jeanne ?*<sup>800</sup>

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<sup>798</sup> English translation: 'How are you (doing)?' (ESCV\_1875)

<sup>799</sup> English translation: 'Where are you going?' (SCAR\_2800)

<sup>800</sup> English translation: 'How far will you go, Jane?' (TEEL\_8467)

At least superficially, *wh*-interrogatives are thus treated more conservatively than *yes/no* ones. It remains though an open question whether standardisation is generally stronger in *wh*-interrogatives or there are distributional differences with regard to other factors that influence word order.

### Subject type

In general, inversion occurred with clitic as well as with full-NP subjects (see (438) to (440)).

(438) N'ai-je rien oublié ?<sup>801</sup>

(439) Alex et Pascal Trarieux étaient-ils, eux aussi, des « copains de Clichy » ?<sup>802</sup>

(440) Comment s'appelle la dernière victime ?<sup>803</sup>

As mentioned in chapter 2, stylistic inversion (see (440)) is restricted to interrogatives with a question word. Consequently, one might expect subject type to play a role with regard to *wh*-interrogatives. On the other hand, nominal subjects can also occur in complex inversion or they can even be dislocated, so there is no straightforward relation between the presence of a full-NP subject and the likelihood of inversion either.

### Verb-phrase complexity

There was another linguistic factor which seemed to have an influence on the probability of subject-verb inversion: verb-phrase complexity. As for inversion in periphrastic structures, *QU'EST-CE QUE* occurred with (see example (441)) and without (see examples (496) to (445)) stylistic inversion:

(441) Qu'est-ce que disent les médecins ?<sup>804</sup> (QEVs)

(442) Qu'est-ce que Karine souhaitait à cet instant ?<sup>805</sup> (QESV)

(443) Qu'est-ce que les flics foudaient chez Timo ?<sup>806</sup> (QESV)

(444) Qu'est-ce que Vasile Dragonman était venu faire cap de la Hève ?<sup>807</sup> (QESV)

(445) Qu'est-ce qu'une femme si charmante, compétente, intelligente, faisait avec un tel con ?<sup>808</sup> (QESV)

Interestingly, all four structures with straight word order were structurally complex whereas the one inverted structure was structurally simple: In (496) the verb phrase contains an temporal adverbial (i.e. *à cet instant*), in (443) and (444) it contains a local adverbial (i.e. *cap e la Hève / chez Timo*), and in (445) it contains a subject that is modified several times as well as a prepositional object. As a consequence, there was a correlation between the complexity of the verb phrase and word order.<sup>809</sup>

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<sup>801</sup> English translation: 'Haven't I forgotten anything?' (TRAV\_808)

<sup>802</sup> English translation: 'Were Alex and Pascal Trarieux also *friends of Clichy*?' (ALEX\_1622)

<sup>803</sup> English translation: 'What's the last victim's name?' (TEEL\_8314)

<sup>804</sup> English translation: 'What do the doctors say?' (TRAV\_974)

<sup>805</sup> English translation: 'What did Karine wish at that moment?' (TOKE\_428)

<sup>806</sup> English translation: 'What (the hell) did the cops do at Timo's?' (MMAT\_4053)

<sup>807</sup> English translation: 'What did Vasile Dragonman have come for to *cap de la Hève*?' (MMAT\_3958)

<sup>808</sup> English translation: 'What did such a charming, intelligent, competent woman do with such an idiot?' (LTEA\_5132)

<sup>809</sup> Of course, correlations for occurrences so low in number cannot be evaluated statistically.



This observation is also true for reality TV (see p.152). In the corpus of RTV-shows, 2 out of 3 periphrastic *wh*-interrogatives with a nominal subject were inverted. Both of these constructions were simple in form. Hence, there seems to be a positive correlation between the complexity of verb phrases and straight word order.<sup>810</sup>

However, this observation may only be valid for periphrastic structures. With regard to structures without *EST-CE QUE*, there could rather be found evidence for Guryev's (2018) division of morphosyntactic contexts into those ones with high and low flexibility (cf. 3.3.1): Apart from quasi-lexicalised expressions, inversion seemed to be more frequently used in structures containing some complex verb form (see examples (446) to (448)) or some non-clitic argument (see examples (449) to (451)):

- (446) Comment allez-vous l'appeler ?<sup>811</sup>
- (447) Comment peux-tu ne pas imaginer Dimitri entre les mains d'un cinglé pareil ?<sup>812</sup>
- (448) Et comment voulez-vous qu'il oublie ?<sup>813</sup>
- (449) Comment s'appelait cette foutue voiture rouge et noire ?<sup>814</sup>
- (450) Comment s'organise l'Institut médico-légal ?<sup>815</sup>
- (451) Comment gérez-vous votre culpabilité ?<sup>816</sup>

To conclude, verb-phrase complexity favours straight word order in periphrastic structures, but inversion in structures without question particle. In other words, there is an interaction between the predictor variables of 'presence of *EST-CE QUE*' and 'verb-phrase complexity'.

#### Speech type and sociostylistics

Structures with straight word order are typically attributed to informal spoken French, whereas inverted structures are said to be typical of cultivated and/or written varieties of French (cf. 3.1.1 Morphosyntactic forms). As direct speech is conceptually more spoken than narration, it can thus be expected that inversion is rarer in direct speech than in narration. This expectation was met (see figures 72 and 73, p.264). To illustrate this tendency, I present two subsequent interrogatives: The first one occurred in narration (see (452)) and the one following it occurred in direct speech (see (453)).

- (452) Ami de Zampa, Batisti s'était-il senti menacé ?<sup>817</sup> (SVs)
- (453) Alors beau brun, tu te décides enfin à m'épouser ?<sup>818</sup> (vocative + sV)

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<sup>810</sup> It remains to be tested whether this correlation is rather gradual or categorical. As the scale of this thesis is limited, I leave that open for further studies.

<sup>811</sup> English translation: 'How are you going to call him?' (TRAV\_658, direct speech)

<sup>812</sup> English translation: 'How can you not imagine Dimitri in the hands of such a lunatic?' (CNPJ\_5491, direct speech)

<sup>813</sup> English translation: 'And how do you want him to forget?' (MMAT\_4300, direct speech)

<sup>814</sup> English translation: 'What was the name of this damn red and black car?' (LTEA\_5274, narration)

<sup>815</sup> English translation: 'How is the forensic institute organised?' (CNPJ\_5620, direct speech)

<sup>816</sup> English translation: 'How do you cope with your guilt?' (JUST\_7135, direct speech)

<sup>817</sup> English translation: 'Being a friend of Zampa's, had Batisti felt threatened?' (TOKE\_146)

<sup>818</sup> English translation: 'So [my] pretty dark man, are you finally deciding to marry me?' (TOKE\_147)

On the other hand, even the direct speech in the novels is not truly spoken as novels are medially written. Therefore, some dialogues may not correspond to authentic conversations, and authors may decide to use inversion even though they would not use it in real life. This explains why, in reality TV, inversion was virtually absent from normal conversations (see chapter 5) whereas it was still regularly found in novel dialogues. In other words, if conversations are imitated in a realistic way, sociostylistic high variants will be chosen in very specific situations only. As a result, the imitated spoken language in novels is sometimes visibly artificial (see examples (454) and (455)) or marked by irony (see (456)).

(454) T'es-tu déjà occupée de patients dans ton état ?<sup>819</sup>

(455) Comment voudrais-tu que je ne cherche pas ?<sup>820</sup>

(456) Chère madame, pendant que votre gosse joue dans le bac à sable, auriez-vous l'obligeance de me dire si vous avez l'intention de poignarder un journaliste du New York Times le mois prochain ?<sup>821</sup>

It has been argued that clitic inversion is sociostylistically marked as high whereas stylistic inversion is neutral (see e.g. (Coveney 2002, 2011)). If that is true, the observed differences should be mainly attributed to clitic inversion. On the whole this was confirmed, but even stylistic inversion was slightly rarer in direct speech than in narration (see table 48).

Table 48: Proportions of word-order structures in *wh*-interrogatives in direct speech vs. narration

	With clitic inversion	With stylistic inversion	Without inversion <sup>822</sup>
Direct speech	21.3% (i.e. 535/2508)	5.1% (i.e. 127/2508)	73,6% (i.e. 1846/2508)
Narration	38,1% (i.e. 313/822)	7,1% (i.e. 58/822)	54,9% (i.e. 451/822)

This can be explained by the fact that sociostylistically low variants are more readily available for direct speech (e.g. *wh*-in-situ) than in narration. To support this, I searched for the structures “est quoi,” and “Quel(le)(s) est/sont”. As expected, the former occurred in direct speech only (for an example, see (457)) whereas the latter occurred in both speech types (see (458) and (459)).<sup>823</sup>

(457) C'est quoi, cette histoire d'ordinateur portable ?<sup>824</sup> (sVQ + S)

(458) Quel est leur contenu ?<sup>825</sup> (QVS)

(459) Quel est le prix d'une vie ?<sup>826</sup> (QVS)

<sup>819</sup> English translation: ‘Did you already look after patients in your state?’ (ESCV\_2125)

<sup>820</sup> English translation: ‘How could you want me not to look for it/him/her/them?’ (CNPJ\_5937)

<sup>821</sup> English translation: ‘Lady, while your child is playing in the sand box, would you be so kind to tell me if you intend to stab a journalist from the New York Times next month?’ (SCAR\_2966)

<sup>822</sup> The marginal type of inverted periphrastic structures has not been annotated and is thus included in the occurrences ‘without inversion’.

<sup>823</sup> The structure “est quoi” was found 22 times (in direct speech only). “Quel(le)(s) est/sont” was found 18 times (out of the 2508 *wh*-interrogatives) in direct speech and 4 times (out of the 822 *wh*-interrogatives) in narration. It is striking that this “neutral” variant was less used in narration than in direct speech.

<sup>824</sup> English translation: ‘What’ that laptop thing/story?’ (ALEX\_1546, direct speech)

<sup>825</sup> English translation: ‘What’s their content?’ (CNPJ\_6127, direct speech)

<sup>826</sup> English translation: ‘What’s the price for a life?’ (LTEA\_5459, narration)

- (460) Quel rapport cette histoire d'enlèvement a-t-elle avec la disparition de mon fils ?<sup>827</sup> (QSVs)  
 (461) Quelles injures avez-vous choisies ce jour-là, madame Bruneau ?<sup>828</sup> (QVs + vocative)

To further substantiate these observations, I also searched for the structure “Quel(le)s ... -...” (i.e. a ‘which’-question with clitic inversion). As predicted, this structure was much more common in narration (14/822 wh-interrogatives; for an example, see (460)) than in direct speech (12/2508 wh-interrogatives; for an example, see (461)).

#### Pragmatic meaning 1: Degree of information-seekingness

As confirmation-seekingness has been observed to correlate with the lack of morphosyntactic marking (cf. 3.2.2), I had a closer look at the degree of information-seekingness. Indeed, several of the declarative yes/no-interrogatives seemed to be biased towards a certain answer. For example, in (462) the speaker builds on what he can already see, in (463) the speaker tests a hypothesis, and in (464) the speaker just checks on whether the hearer is still able to follow the conversation.

- (462) Tiens, vous ne portez pas vos lunettes ?<sup>829</sup>  
 (463) C’est elle qui a fabriqué le cœur de Gouti et qui l’a caché ?<sup>830</sup>  
 (464) Jusque-là, vous me suivez, commandante ?<sup>831</sup>

However, there was also an apparent counter-example: In (465) the speaker is clearly oriented towards a positive answer. However, the fronted expression *sans doute* triggers inversion. As a consequence, this will actually be a declarative question although it contains inverted word order.

- (465) Sans doute ne le sait-il pas lui-même ?<sup>832</sup>

Even though the degree of information-seekingness is not an infallible predictor, my data generally support the previous observations. Using inversion may thus be used as a marker of the non-biasedness towards an answer.

#### Pragmatic meaning 2: Contextual-embeddedness

Likewise, the claim that contextually embedded questions tend to occur as declarative structures can be confirmed. Introductory questions (see examples (466) and (467)), precision questions (see examples (468) and (469)) and echo questions (see example (471)) clearly favoured {s/S}V(Q)- and elliptical forms.

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<sup>827</sup> English translation: ‘What is the relation between that kidnapping story and the disappearance of my son?’ (ALEX\_1339, narration)

<sup>828</sup> English translation: ‘What kind of abuse/insults did you choose that day, Mrs. Bruneau?’ (ALEX\_1354, direct speech)

<sup>829</sup> English translation: ‘So you’re not wearing your glasses?’ (TEEL\_8454, direct speech)

<sup>830</sup> English translation: ‘Was it her who made Gouti’s heart and hid it?’ (MMAT\_3868, direct speech)

<sup>831</sup> English translation: ‘Up to there you can follow me, chief?’ (MMAT\_3890, direct speech)

<sup>832</sup> English translation: ‘Probably he doesn’t even know himself?’ (TEEL\_8910, narration)

- (466) [Et tu sais quoi ? Une molécule qui ne laisse aucune trace dans l'organisme.](#)<sup>833</sup>  
 (467) [Qu'elle prenne bien quoi ? Sa mort ? Son exécution ?](#)<sup>834</sup>  
 (468) – Elle voulait de l'argent ? – Non. – [Elle voulait quoi ?](#)<sup>835</sup>  
 (469) – Tu as raison, Marianne. – [Raison de quoi ?](#) – Pour les priorités. L'aéroport.<sup>836</sup>  
 (470) – J'ai fait un bon de deux semaines en avant, Simon. – [Tu as fait quoi ?](#)<sup>837</sup>  
 (471) – C'est le futur quatre-étoiles[...] – [Le quoi ?](#) – Le futur quatre-étoiles.<sup>838</sup>

However, while contextual embeddedness straightforwardly favours such structures, declarative and elliptical forms do not seem to be restricted to these three pragmatic functions. It remains though open to interpretation whether all of these structures have to be linked to the discourse or not. In examples (472) and (473), the questions are certainly somehow related to the previously said, but they do not directly take up any formulations or the like.

- (472) – [Pardieu a donné le poste à Martins. \[...\] – Merde, répond simplement Gomez. Il te l'a annoncé comment ?](#)<sup>839</sup>  
 (473) – [D'accord, je marche, mais pour interroger Ortiz, il n'y aura que Marisa et moi. \[...\] Marisa, vous la trouvez comment ?](#) demanda Alberto en reprenant ses cartes.<sup>840</sup>

## The use of the question particle

### Semantic type

The fact that wh-interrogatives were more often formulated as morphosyntactically-marked structures (see results, p.261) was only straightforward for inverted structures. Although wh-interrogatives with a question particle were by no means rare (15.0%), they were clearly marginal for question words other than *QUE* (0.4%). In fact, there was a significant interaction between the semantic type and the question word: In general, the use of *EST-CE QUE* may be more likely in wh-interrogatives than in yes/no-interrogatives, but this relation is quite the reverse when the question word is not *QUE*.

### Question word

Of the almost five hundred wh-interrogatives with *EST-CE QUE*, there were only 14 ones that were no *Qu'est-ce* structures (see figure 70 on p. 262). 8 of them were with *pourquoi*, 3 with *où*, 2 with *quand*, and 1 with comment.

<sup>833</sup> English translation: 'And you know what? [It's] a molecule that doesn't leave any trace in an organism.' (JUST\_7806, direct speech)

<sup>834</sup> English translation: 'That she'd take what? Her death? Her execution?' (MMAT\_4210, narration)

<sup>835</sup> English translation: '– Did she want to have money? – No. – What did she want to have?' (ALEX\_1832)

<sup>836</sup> English translation: '– You're right, Marianne. – Right about what? – Concerning the priorities. The airport.' (MMAT\_4237)

<sup>837</sup> English translation: '– I issued a voucher two weeks in advance. – You did what?' (SCAR\_3382)

<sup>838</sup> English translation: '– That's the future four star. – The what? – The future four star.' (LTEA\_4443)

<sup>839</sup> English translation: '– Pardieu gave the position to Martins. [...]' – 'Crap, Gomez simply answered. How do he let you know?' (JUST\_7553)

<sup>840</sup> English translation: 'All right, I'm in, but for Ortiz' interrogation, there will only be Marisa and I. How do you find Marisa?' (SCAR\_3128)

- (474) Pourquoi est-ce qu'ils roulaient comme ça ?<sup>841</sup>  
 (475) Pourquoi est-ce que tu es là, autour de moi, à tourner en rond, à t'escrimer pour moi ?<sup>842</sup>  
 (476) Pourquoi est-ce qu'il me dit dans sa lettre que les victimes m'avaient fait du mal ?<sup>843</sup>  
 (477) Pourquoi est-ce que je ne m'en souviens pas ?<sup>844</sup>  
 (478) Pourquoi est-ce que c'est toi, aujourd'hui, qui as peur des fantômes ?<sup>845</sup>  
 (479) Pourquoi, pourquoi est-ce que ce gamin aurait fait ça ?<sup>846</sup>  
 (480) Alors, pourquoi qu'tu m'as pas baisée comme n'importe quelle nana ?<sup>847</sup>  
 (481) Et pourquoi que ta Marie-Jo te larguerait ?<sup>848</sup>  
 (482) Elle appartient à un copain, mais je vous dois bien cela, où est-ce que vous voulez aller ?<sup>849</sup>  
 (483) Où est-ce qu'Aurélia a encore rangé ce foutu dossier ?<sup>850</sup>  
 (484) Mais où qu'tu vis ?<sup>851</sup>  
 (485) Quand est-ce que je la rencontre ?<sup>852</sup>  
 (486) Et quand est-ce que tu comptes passer aux choses sérieuses avec lui ?<sup>853</sup>  
 (487) Comment qu'elle a pu se faire embarquer par ces types ?<sup>854</sup>

Remarkably, this frequency distribution goes against Behnstedt's (1973: 95) ranking of *EST-CE QUE* acceptance: According to Behnstedt, partial-question forms with *EST-CE QUE* would be most accepted and frequent with *OÙ* and *QUAND*. Periphrastic interrogatives with *POURQUOI* would be less common, and the least accepted question words with *EST-CE QUE* would be *COMBIEN* and *QUE<sub>prepositional</sub>*. Whereas there were indeed no occurrences of *COMBIEN* and *QUE<sub>prepositional</sub>* in the corpus of ten novels, *POURQUOI* was much more frequent than *OÙ* and *QUAND*. It is rather unlikely that it is due to chance that more than half of the periphrastic *wh*-interrogatives (without *Qu'est-ce*) contained the 'why'-equivalent. Also, it is remarkable that non-adverbial question words (i.e. *QUI*, *LEQUEL*, *QUEL*, *COMBIEN*) did not occur in periphrastic structures. While the absence of a structure can never proof its non-existence, it can – if the corpus is a representative sample of a variety – very well show that a certain form is not very common.

At any rate, the distributional inequality of *QUE* vs. 'other questions words' can be taken as an indicator that *Qu'est-ce (qui/que/qu')* should rather be treated as a grammaticalized structured (see also chapter 5, p.201). Indeed, there can be found three further arguments for doing so.

<sup>841</sup> English translation: 'Why were they driving like this?' (ESCV\_515)

<sup>842</sup> English translation: 'Why are you there, around me, going around in circles, slaving over for me?' (ESCV\_771)

<sup>843</sup> English translation: 'Why does he tell me in his letter that the victims had hurt me?' (TEEL\_2133)

<sup>844</sup> English translation: 'Why don't I remember this?' (TEEL\_2210)

<sup>845</sup> English translation: 'Why is it you today who is afraid of ghosts?' (LTEA\_5771)

<sup>846</sup> English translation: 'Why, why should this child have done that?' (LTEA\_6135)

<sup>847</sup> English translation: 'So why didn't you fuck me like any other chick?' (TOKE\_352)

<sup>848</sup> English translation: 'And why should your Mary-Joe leave you?' (MMAT\_3731)

<sup>849</sup> English translation: 'It belongs to a friend, but I owe you this, where do you want to go?' (SCAR\_4207)

<sup>850</sup> English translation: 'Where again did Aurélia put this damn folder?' (LTEA\_5510)

<sup>851</sup> English translation: 'Where (on earth) do you live?' (TOKE\_97)

<sup>852</sup> English translation: 'When will I meet her?' (ESCV\_650)

<sup>853</sup> English translation: 'And when are you going to turn to serious stuff with him?' (JUST\_7569)

<sup>854</sup> English translation: 'How could she get involved with those guys?' (TOKE\_276)

First, *Qu'est-ce que* occurred as an elliptical interrogative (see (488)) while structures with other question words did not (see (489)):

(488) ???*Qu'est-ce que* ?<sup>855</sup> (QE)

(489) ???{*Pourquoi/où/quand*} *est-ce que* ? (QE)

However, a closer inspection of the cotext reveals that this occurrence may rather be a deviation from punctuation standards because the question mark is followed by an ellipsis (i.e. "..."):

Il embrassa sa main, puis fouilla dans la poche de sa veste. Il lui tendit un écrin.

– *Qu'est-ce que* ?...<sup>856</sup>

– *Ouvre et tu verras !*

Hence, this elliptical question was not a “complete” elliptical question such as *Quoi ?* (‘What?’), but the beginning of an interrogative which was interrupted. Nonetheless, this occurrence is worth mentioning because structures like *Pourquoi est-ce que*?... or *Où est-ce que*?... would still be less conceivable. In the corpus, there were two more occurrences of a question word followed by an ellipsis (see (490)), but none with a question word other than *QUE*.

(490) *Qu'est-ce que*... ?<sup>857</sup> (QE)

Secondly, *QU'EST-CE QUE* occurred with and without stylistic inversion (see (441) to (445), p.274) while other question words only occurred in structures with straight word order (see (483) and (481), p.279). However, as there was only 1 out of 5 *QU'EST-CE QUE* structures with a nominal subject that contained stylistic inversion, it should be added that the absence of instances with stylistic inversion may very well be due to chance (cf. 1/5 vs. 0/2). In fact, stylistic inversion in periphrastic wh-structures does not seem to be restricted to *QUE* (see (491) and (492)).

(491) *OÙ EST-CE QUE VONT VOS PETITS SOUS* ?<sup>858</sup>

(492) *Comment est-ce que fait Emile* ?<sup>859</sup>

Hence, this argument (which Myers 2007: 82 too used) may be rather weak, but nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that *QU'EST-CE QUE* seems to be more frequent with stylistic inversion than other question words.

Thirdly, *QUE*<sub>subject</sub> has been restricted to the periphrastic form for several centuries (cf. Kaiser 1980: 47) and *QUE* is the only question word that cannot be fronted without inversion (see int. al. Dethloff & Wagner 2014: 557ff.; Coveney 2002: 185f.). As a consequence, it has been argued that *QU'EST-CE QUE*

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<sup>855</sup> English translation: ‘What?’ (CNPJ\_6218)

<sup>856</sup> English translation: ‘He kissed her hand, then he searched something in the pocket of his jacket. He reached a small jewel box. – What?... – Open it and you will see!’ (CNPJ\_6218 with context)

<sup>857</sup> English translation: ‘What...?’ (JUST\_7803+7943)

<sup>858</sup> English translation: ‘Where does your (little) money go?’ <https://de.ulule.com/rooster-keaton-premier-ep/>

<sup>859</sup> English translation: ‘How does Emile do?’ <http://www.ecolepetitesection.com/2015/01/emile-veut-faire-la-fete-semaine-16-2014-2015.html>

may have taken the blank in the French interrogative paradigm (see Myers 2007: 65). More precisely, it is conceivable that the frequent use of *Qu'est-ce qui* – whose sound chain could be analysed as *Qu'est-ce qu'il* – lead to the increased analogical use of *Qu'est-ce qu{e/'}*. As frequency rates clearly suggest, *Qu'est-ce qu{e/'}* structures have thus a different status than other periphrastic *wh*-structures.

Resuming the linguistic factors of semantic type and question word, one can establish the frequency rates of the use of the question particle in descending order:

<i>wh-k</i> -interrogatives > yes/no-interrogatives > other <i>wh</i> -interrogatives
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### Subject type

In general, the question particle is used with pronominal as well as full-NP subjects. This goes for yes/no-interrogatives (see (493) and (494)), *QUE*-interrogatives (see (495) and (496)), and other *wh*-interrogatives (see (497) and (498)) alike.

- (493) *Est-ce que tu as mal* ?<sup>860</sup> (EsV)
- (494) *Est-ce qu'un flic pouvait déborder la loi* ?<sup>861</sup> (ESV)
- (495) *Qu'est-ce qu'on fête* ?<sup>862</sup> (QEsV)
- (496) *Qu'est-ce que Karine souhaitait à cet instant* ?<sup>863</sup> (QESV)
- (497) *Pourquoi est-ce que je ne m'en souviens pas* ?<sup>864</sup> (QEsV)
- (498) *Pourquoi, pourquoi est-ce que ce gamin aurait fait ça* ?<sup>865</sup> (QESV)

However, when looking more closely at the subject type, a negative correlation between periphrastic yes/no-interrogatives and 2<sup>nd</sup>-person pronouns can be found (see figure 76). In yes/no-interrogatives, *EST-CE QUE* is thus more common in non-directly addressing speech (i.e. reflection about oneself or a third party) than in direct addresses whereas in *wh*-interrogatives direct addresses occur in every other interrogative. As the reason for such a correlation cannot be the pronoun itself, I will come back to this correlation during the discussion of pragmatic meaning.

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<sup>860</sup> English translation: 'Do you feel pain?' (TRAV\_977)

<sup>861</sup> English translation: 'Could a cop go beyond the law?' (TOKE\_64)

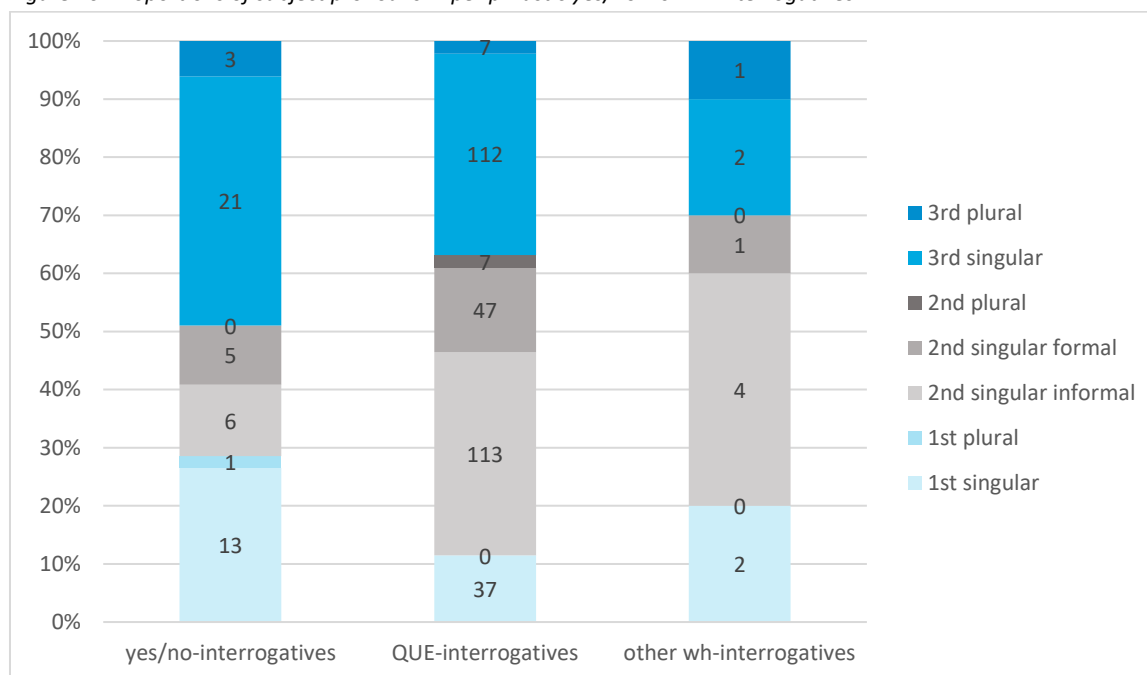
<sup>862</sup> English translation: 'What are we celebrating?' (TRAV\_561)

<sup>863</sup> English translation: 'What did Karine wish at that moment?' (TOKE\_428)

<sup>864</sup> English translation: 'Why don't I remember this?' (TEEL\_8413)

<sup>865</sup> English translation: 'Why should that child have done this?' (LTEA\_5183)

Figure 76: Proportions of subject pronouns in periphrastic yes/no- vs. wh-interrogatives



### Degree of formality

Traditionally, periphrastic structures have been described as sociostylistically neutral (see chapter 3, p.62). If they were sociostylistically higher than non-inverted interrogatives without question particle, one may expect contextual differences. However, there was no noticeable difference in the degree of formality in the following examples (cf (499) and (500) vs. (501) and (502)), which varied with regard to the use of *EST-CE QUE*:

- (499) *Bonjour, madame, je peux vous aider ?*<sup>866</sup>
- (500) *Vous verrez quoi, madame ?*<sup>867</sup>
- (501) *Est-ce que vous prenez des médicaments, madame ?*<sup>868</sup>
- (502) *Qu'est-ce qu'il y a, madame ?*<sup>869</sup>

Although all four interrogatives are directly addressing a woman in a formal way, they occur with as well as without the question particle. Therefore, the structures seem to be either interchangeably used or they may vary with regard to some other (presumably extralinguistic) factor.

### Speech type

In general, periphrastic interrogatives were about as likely to occur in narration as in direct speech (see results p.263). However, there was a significant interaction between semantic type and speech type: *EST-CE QUE* positively correlated with narration in yes/no-interrogatives, but with direct speech in wh-interrogatives. In other words, direct speech decreased the probability of the use of *EST-CE QUE* for

<sup>866</sup> English translation: 'Good morning/afternoon, ma'am, can I help you?' (JUST\_6847)

<sup>867</sup> English translation: 'What do you see, ma'am?' (LTEA\_4473)

<sup>868</sup> English translation: 'Do you take any medicine, ma'am?' (JUST\_6781)

<sup>869</sup> English translation: 'What's the problem, ma'am?' (JUST\_6867)



yes/no-interrogatives whereas it increased the probability of the use of *EST-CE QUE* for wh-interrogatives (see tables 49 and 50).

Table 49: Proportions of periphrastic structures in yes/no-interrogatives in direct speech vs. narration

	Without <i>EST-CE QUE</i>	With <i>EST-CE QUE</i>
Direct speech	99.4% (i.e. 4464/4489)	0.6% (i.e. 25/4489)
Narration	95% (i.e. 959/1010)	5.0% (i.e. 51/1010)

Table 50: Proportions of periphrastic structures in wh-interrogatives in direct speech vs. narration

	Without <i>EST-CE QUE</i>	With <i>Qu'est-ce qu{i/e/'}</i>	With another question word + <i>EST-CE QUE</i>
Direct speech	82.6% (i.e. 2072/2508)	16.9% (i.e. 423/2508)	0.5% (i.e. 13/2508)
Narration	92.3% (i.e. 759/822)	7.5% (i.e. 62/822)	0.1% (i.e. 1/822)

In yes/no-interrogatives, the question particle is used significantly more often in narration than in direct speech. As we will see, this can probably be attributed to difference in pragmatic usage. In wh-interrogatives, the distributional difference turns out to be insignificant if *Qu'est-ce qu{i/e/'}* is counted as 'not containing the question particle' (Pearson's Chi-squared test,  $p = 0.2244$ ). Hence, in direct speech, there are more *Qu'est-ce qu{i/e/'}* structures than in narration; but knowing that [*QUE* + question particle] is at least partly grammaticalised, this does not mean that the question particle is used more readily in wh-interrogatives. Instead, it is possible that direct speech simply contained more question forms with *QUE*. As a result, the following observation is only true if [*QUE* + *EST-CE QUE*] is analysed according to its surface structure.

wh-interrogatives in direct speech > wh-interrogatives in narration  
> yes/no-interrogatives in narration > yes/no-interrogatives in direct speech

#### Pragmatic meaning 1: emphatic reinforcement

As Antes (2016: 608) observed, her only occurrence of *est-ce que* with a question word other than *QUE*, which was with the interrogative adverb *pourquoi*, seemed to be a reinforced question. Consequently, she argued that *est-ce que* seems to be used to emphasise an interrogative in spoken speech. Indeed, this observation is true for my corpus as well. All wh-adverbial *EST-CE QUE* interrogatives seem to be somewhat more insisting than other (inverted or non-inverted) interrogatives: They are asked with a certain emphasis, or at least they are not asked in passing, but either stressing real answer-seekingness or some state of non-understanding or outrage (see (503) to (505), which were already mentioned, but are regiven for convenience).

(503) *Pourquoi est-ce que c'est toi, aujourd'hui, qui as peur des fantômes?*<sup>870</sup>

<sup>870</sup> English translation: 'Why is it you today who is afraid of ghosts?' (LTEA\_5771)

- (504) Où est-ce qu'Aurélia a encore rangé ce foutu dossier ?<sup>871</sup>  
 (505) Quand est-ce que je la rencontre ?<sup>872</sup>

Interestingly, this is particularly obvious for wh-k-questions: All 4 interrogatives that contained a wh-adverbial followed by *qu{e/'}* were somewhat emphatic because they expressed the non-understanding of the contained proposition (see (506) to (509), which were already mentioned, but are regiven for convenience). What is more, I also found an interrogative that was not extracted by the scripts because it was marked by an exclamation point (see (510)). Hence, my data support Antes' claim.

- (506) Mais où qu'tu vis ?<sup>873</sup>  
 (507) Comment qu'elle a pu se faire embarquer par ces types ?<sup>874</sup>  
 (508) Alors, pourquoi qu'tu m'as pas baisée comme n'importe quelle nana ?<sup>875</sup>  
 (509) Et pourquoi que ta Marie-Jo te larguerait ?<sup>876</sup>  
 (510) Pourquoi qu'ils veulent courir si loin !<sup>877</sup>

Wh-k-questions may be sociostylistically marked and even subdued to diachronic change, but this observation shows that they are comparable to question forms with a non-reduced question particle. Therefore, their classification within the category of periphrastic interrogatives is justified.

Similarly, periphrastic yes/no-interrogatives are not excluded from usual interaction, but if the question is an information-seeking question in direct speech, there is usually a certain degree of importance to the answer (see (511) to (515)). As opposed to wh-interrogatives, it cannot be the non-understanding of the encoded proposition (as the truth value of the latter remains open), but the potential response is presented as being of great interest to the speaker.

- (511) Est-ce que je suis clair ?<sup>878</sup>  
 (512) Est-ce que tu as mal ?  
 (513) Est-ce que ta maman t'a dit autre chose après ?<sup>879</sup>  
 (514) Est-ce que vous prenez des médicaments, madame ?<sup>880</sup>  
 (515) Est-ce que nous sommes seuls, ici ?<sup>881</sup>

To conclude, it can be retained that questions with a question particle tend to be emphatic.

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<sup>871</sup> English translation: 'Where again did Aurélia put this damn folder?' (LTEA\_5510)

<sup>872</sup> English translation: 'When will I meet her?' (ESCV\_650)

<sup>873</sup> English translation: 'Where (on earth) do you live?' (TOKE\_97)

<sup>874</sup> English translation: 'How could she get involved with those guys?' (TOKE\_276)

<sup>875</sup> English translation: 'So why didn't you fuck me like any other chick?' (TOKE\_352)

<sup>876</sup> English translation: 'And why should your Mary-Joe leave you?' (MMAT\_3731)

<sup>877</sup> English translation: 'Why (on earth) do they want to run that far!' (TOKE between 174 and 175)

<sup>878</sup> English translation: 'Did I make myself clear?' (TRAV\_1151)

<sup>879</sup> English translation: 'Did your mum tell you something else afterwards?' (MMAT\_3469)

<sup>880</sup> English translation: 'Do you take any medicine, ma'am?' (JUST\_6781)

<sup>881</sup> English translation: 'Are we alone (here)?' (JUST\_7323)

### Pragmatic meaning 2: politely demanding

As for reality TV, *EST-CE QUE* seemed to be used as a strategy to mark politeness in yes/no-interrogatives (see chapter 5, p.198f.). In the present corpus, no further evidence for this claim could be found, but there is no counter-evidence either: Although the French ‘please’-equivalent occurred more often without the question particle (see (516) to (520)), this does not mean that *est-ce que* cannot be used to deliberately render an interrogative more polite.

- (516) *Est-ce que vous pouvez me dire ce que je fais ici, s’il vous plaît ?*<sup>882</sup>
- (517) *Vous pouvez nous laisser, s’il vous plaît ?*<sup>883</sup>
- (518) *Vous pouvez m’ouvrir, s’il vous plaît ?*<sup>884</sup>
- (519) *Pourriez-vous me suivre, s’il vous plaît ?*<sup>885</sup>
- (520) *Tu peux venir, s’il te plaît?*<sup>886</sup>

### Pragmatic meaning 3: thought explication and self-directedness

In the last chapter, it was observed that *EST-CE QUE* was significantly more often used in thought explication (see p.189). This observation may explain why periphrastic yes/no-interrogatives were more common in narration than in direct speech (see table 49, p.283) for, in general, narration is reported reflection. A closer look at the corpus confirms this: Practically all yes/no-interrogatives with *EST-CE QUE* are (see examples (521) to (523)).

- (521) *Est-ce que Trarieux l’attend ?*<sup>887</sup> (ESV)
- (522) *Est-ce que ce cahier l’aiderait à enfin aimer sa mère ?*<sup>888</sup> (ESV)
- (523) *Un meurtre romantique, est-ce que ça peut exister ?*<sup>889</sup> (S+EsV)

What is more, this may also explain the disparity of subject pronouns in yes/no- vs. wh-interrogatives (see figure 76, p.282): In reflection, first- and third-person pronouns are certainly much more likely to occur. As a fact, none of the periphrastic yes/no-interrogatives occurred with a first-person subject.

The examples suggested that this was mainly true for yes/no-interrogatives. However, the corpus of ten novels this might also be valid for wh-interrogatives as well: In narration the only instance of a periphrastic wh-interrogative that was not a ‘what’-question was a self-directed question (see (524)). On the other hand, this question is certainly also emphatic. As a consequence, one cannot say for sure whether it is rather the empathicness or the self-directedness which is responsible for the use of the question particle.

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<sup>882</sup> English translation: ‘Can you tell me, what I’m doing here, please?’ (ALEX\_1635)

<sup>883</sup> English translation: ‘Could you leave us alone, please?’ (TEEL\_8573)

<sup>884</sup> English translation: ‘Can you open me, please?’ (JUST\_7155)

<sup>885</sup> English translation: ‘Could you follow me, please?’ (CNPJ\_6141)

<sup>886</sup> English translation: ‘Can you come, please?’ (TRAV\_877)

<sup>887</sup> English translation: ‘Is Trarieux waiting for her?’ (ALEX\_1422)

<sup>888</sup> English translation: ‘Would that book help her to finally love her mother?’ (LTEA\_5378)

<sup>889</sup> English translation: ‘Can [something like] a romantic murderer exist?’ (TEEL\_8883)

(524) Pourquoi est-ce que je ne m'en souviens pas ?<sup>890</sup> (QESV)

## 6.2.4 Further exploration of the data

### Inversion in 'why' and 'what'-structures

In the literature, it is stated that *QUE* is impossible with complex inversion while *POURQUOI* is impossible with stylistic inversion (see chapter 2, p.34). This claim can be supported by my data (see also chapter 5, p.155): Neither were there any *POURQUOI* VS-structures, nor were there any *QUE* SVs-structures. What is more, while even long NP subjects were integrated into 'why'-structures (see (525)), they were dislocated in 'what'-structures (see (526)). Hence, although corpus studies cannot prove the ungrammaticality of structures (see also chapter 2, p.7), my data offer empirical evidence for the avoidance of *POURQUOI* VS- and *QUE* SVs-structures.

(525) Et pourquoi Nicolas, ce garçon si charmant, si touchant, n'a-t-il rien dit ?<sup>891</sup> (QSVs)

(526) Que veut-il, ce bourreau qui ne dit rien ?<sup>892</sup> (QVs + S)

### Grammatical restrictions on declarative wh-fronting

As it has been suggested in the literature that *quand* and *que* are unlikely (if not impossible) to occur in Q{s/S}V-structures (cf. Behnstedt 1973: 208f.; Coveney 2002: 229; Dekhissi & Coveney 2018; for a different opinion see Druetta 2009), these question words have been investigated in more detail. Indeed, all 5 *quand*-structures that could be analysed as QsV-structures at first sight were actually elliptical interrogatives in which *quand* was used as a conjunction (see examples (527) to (531)). However, some QsV-structures were used when the question word was preceded by a preposition (see examples (532) and (533)).

(527) Quand il apprivoise le renard ?<sup>893</sup> (XsV)

(528) Quand on a le cœur qui bat déjà beaucoup trop vite ?<sup>894</sup> (XsV)

(529) Quand il m'aura assassinée ?<sup>895</sup> (XsV)

(530) Quand elle serait morte ?<sup>896</sup> (XsV)

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<sup>890</sup> English translation: 'Why don't I remember this?' (TEEL\_8413)

<sup>891</sup> English translation: 'And why didn't tell Nicolas, that charming and moving boy(, anything)?' (LTEA\_5092)

<sup>892</sup> English translation: 'What does this hangman that does not say anything want?' (ALEX\_1240)

<sup>893</sup> English translation: 'When he tames the fox ? (/When does he tame the fox)' (LTEA\_5721); preceding sentence: Tu connais l'histoire du Petit Prince ? 'Do you know the story of the Little Prince?'

<sup>894</sup> English translation: 'When your heart is already beating much too fast? (/When does your heart beat much too fast?)' (JUST\_8235); preceding sentence: *Combien de temps peut-on vivre sans dormir ?* 'How long can you live without sleeping?'

<sup>895</sup> English translation: 'When he'll have killed me?' (JUST\_8677); — Si c'est lui, je ne tarderai pas à le choper... 'If that's him, it won't take long to catch him ; subceding sentence:— *Bien avant, rassure-toi.* 'Well before that, don't worry.'

<sup>896</sup> English translation: 'When she's be dead?' (ALEX\_2977); preceding sentence : *À quel moment comptait-il s'en servir ?* 'When did he intend to use that?'; subsequent sentence : *Pour aller l'enterrer ?* 'To burry her?'

- (531) Quand l'entreprise a fermé ?<sup>897</sup> (XSV)  
 (532) Et depuis quand tu parles le québécois ?<sup>898</sup> (QsV)  
 (533) Depuis quand je n'ai pas ri ?<sup>899</sup> (QsV)

This was similar for 'what'-questions: *QUE* seems to be excluded from being fronted without inversion unless it is part of a prepositional wh-phrase (see examples (537) and (538)). Just like *quand*, *que* only occurred sentence-initially when it was used in an elliptical interrogative as a conjunction (see examples (534) to (536)).

- (534) Que vous aurez une troisième chance ?<sup>900</sup> (XsV)  
 (535) Que tu avais ressuscité ?<sup>901</sup> (XsV)  
 (536) Que le tueur se paye notre tête ?<sup>902</sup> (XSV)  
 (537) De quoi tu parles, Andrew ?<sup>903</sup> (QsV + vocative)  
 (538) À quoi ça me servait de poser ces questions ?<sup>904</sup> (QsV)

Coveney's explanation for the avoidance of declarative structures with fronted *quand* may seem plausible: As *quand* is frequently used as subordinate conjunction, it might conflict with listeners' expectations to use it as a question word. However, the question arises why this goes for *que* as well: If one only needed a means to disambiguate *QUE* (question word vs. conjunction), one could resort to the use of *quoi*, which is already used in prepositional wh-phrases and in postverbal position.

#### Grammatical restrictions on wh-in-situ

Several authors have claimed that *pourquoi*-in-situ is either ungrammatical (Mathieu 2004) or at least very marginal (Quillard 2000; Druetta 2009; Kalmbach 2012-2017; Coveney 2011; Adli 2015; Dekhissi & Coveney 2018). My data clearly support these claims: There was not a single occurrence of *pourquoi* in situ.

Overall, also Mathieu's (2004) claim that negation is not possible with in-situ wh-phrases can be corroborated by my data: None of the 4 negated wh-in-situ structures was a usual information-seeking question; rather, they were strongly contextually grounded questions that took up previous speech or actions (see examples (539) to (542)).

- (539) Et tu ne l'as pas vue depuis quand ?<sup>905</sup> (sVQ)

<sup>897</sup> English translation: 'When the enterprise closed? / When did the enterprise close?' (TRAV\_1779); preceding sentence: *C'était il y a longtemps.* 'That was a long time ago.'

<sup>898</sup> English translation: 'And since when do you speak the Quebec dialect?' (SCAR\_3997)

<sup>899</sup> English translation: 'Since when haven't I laughed?' (TEEL\_2538)

<sup>900</sup> English translation: 'That you will have a second chance?' (SCAR\_3361)

<sup>901</sup> English translation: 'That you had come back to life?' (SCAR\_3406)

<sup>902</sup> English translation: 'That the killer is pulling our leg?' (CNPJ\_5805)

<sup>903</sup> English translation: 'What are you talking about, Andrew?' (SCAR\_3383)

<sup>904</sup> English translation: 'What would be the point (for me) in asking these questions?' (TOKE\_258)

<sup>905</sup> English translation: 'Since when haven't you seen him?' (TRAV\_1179); Context:

— *Et qu'est-ce qu'elle fait Évelyne?*

- (540) T'aimes pas quoi ?<sup>906</sup> (sVQ)  
 (541) Vous ne pensiez pas quoi ?<sup>907</sup> (sVQ)  
 (542) Je ne vois pas qui ?<sup>908</sup> (sVQ)

In contrast, the claim that wh-in-situ structures “are much better with pronouns than with full noun phrases” (Mathieu 2004) could not be confirmed. Although it is true that wh-in-situ structures are much more common with clitic subjects (cf. example (543)) or clitically doubled and dislocated noun phrases (cf. examples (544) and (545)), this does not mean that wh-in-situ structures with non-clitic subjects were avoided. In fact, there could be found several occurrences which seemed to be only slightly connected to what had been previously said (see examples (546) to (549)).

- (543) Tu travailles pour Santeny depuis quand ?<sup>909</sup> (sVQ)  
 (544) Il a roulé quand la dernière fois, ton break Ford ?<sup>910</sup> (sVQ+S)  
 (545) C'était quoi, ce détail, Anika ?<sup>911</sup> (sVQ+S)  
 (546) Les corps sortent quand ?<sup>912</sup> (SVQ)  
 (547) Sandra rentre quand ?<sup>913</sup> (SVQ)  
 (548) Batisti me mènerait où ?<sup>914</sup> (SVQ)  
 (549) Et la manufacture manufacturait quoi ?<sup>915</sup> (SVQ)

- 
- Elle cherche du travail.  
 — Ah... Et elle n'en trouve pas, c'est ça ?  
 — Pas encore.

*Louis ne dit rien, il attend de savoir quelle stratégie Camille va adopter. Mais Camille se sent pris d'une immense fatigue parce que tout ça est prévisible, écrit, et que dans ce métier, même les emmerdements deviennent une formalité. Il opte pour le plus rapide, histoire d'être débarrassé.*

- Et tu ne l'as pas vue depuis quand ?  
 — Elle est partie samedi. (Travail soigné, position 736-744)

<sup>906</sup> English translation: 'What don't you like ?' (TOKE\_79); Context:

*Je regardai mon voisin dans les yeux. Les autres arrêtaient de taper sur les parois. Sûr que ça devenait grave. Ils se serrèrent autour de moi.*

- Qu'est-ce tu nous biffes, mec ? T'aimes pas quoi ? Le rap ? Nos gueules ?  
 — J'aime pas que vous me fassiez chier. (Total Khéops, position 923-925)

<sup>907</sup> English translation: 'What didn't you think? / You didn't think what?' (MMAT\_4291); Context:

*— Il fallait bien qu'ils prennent leurs responsabilités, justifia Joséf. On n'y pensait pas, lorsqu'ils sont partis en Guyane...*

- Vous ne pensiez pas quoi ? insista Papy. Il connaissait pourtant déjà la réponse.  
 (Maman a tort, positions 5673-5674)

<sup>908</sup> English translation: 'Whom don't I see?' (ESCV\_1949); Context:

*Arthur lâcha brusquement l'épaule de Lauren et ramena son bras le long de son corps.*

- Vous ne la voyez pas, hein ? demanda-t-il à l'infirmière.  
 — Je ne vois pas qui ?

— Personne ! (Et si c'était vrai, positions 606-608)

<sup>909</sup> English translation: 'Since when have you been working for Santeny?' (TRAV\_1124)

<sup>910</sup> English translation: 'When did you drive your car for the last time?' (ESCV\_944)

<sup>911</sup> English translation: 'What was that detail, Anika?' (LTEA\_5390)

<sup>912</sup> English translation: 'When will the corpses be released?' (TRAV\_1154)

<sup>913</sup> English translation: 'When will Sandra come home?' (TEEL\_8450)

<sup>914</sup> English translation: 'Where would Batisti take me?' (TOKE\_261)

<sup>915</sup> English translation: 'And what did the factory produce?' (SCAR\_2920)

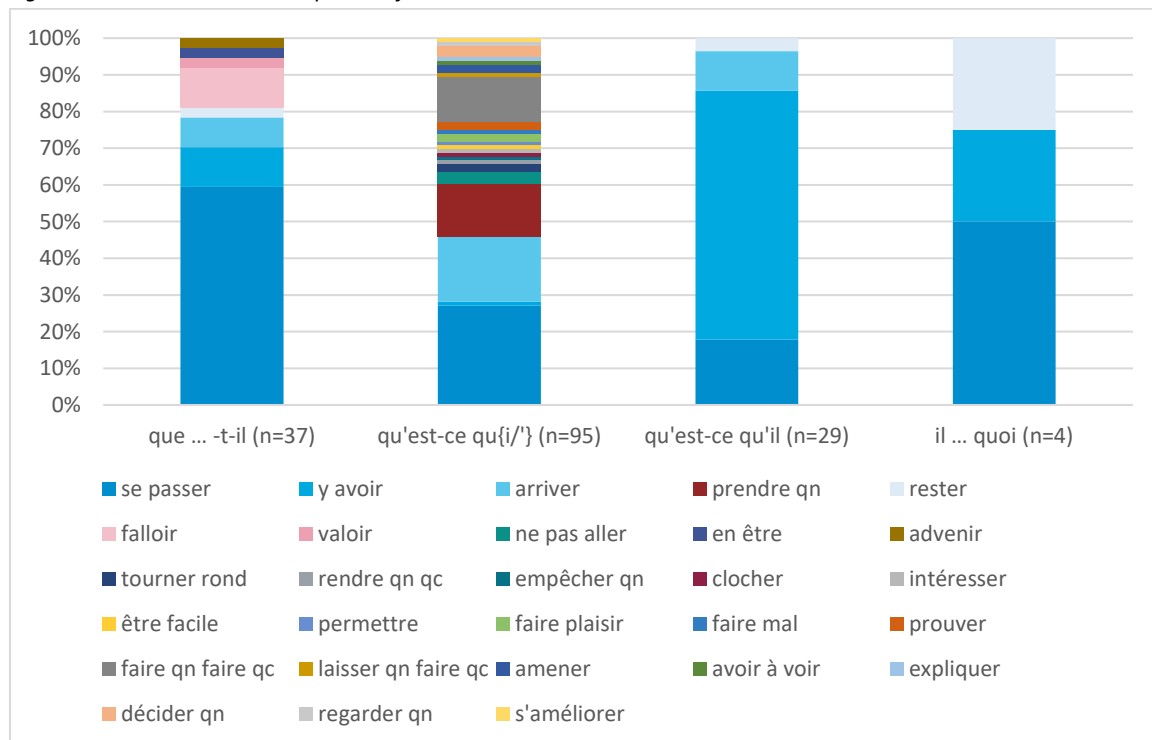
### Questions asking about 'what'-subjects

In total, there were found four different structures for asking about a 'what'-subject (see also chapter 2, p.33): An inverted structure in which *qu(e/')* (i.e. *QUE-ex-situ*) functions as the subject attribute (see (550)), a periphrastic structure in which *Qu'est-ce qui* (i.e. *QUE-ex-situ + EST-CE QUE*) functions as the grammatical subject of the sentence (see (551)), a periphrastic structure in which *Qu'est-ce qu{e/'}* (i.e. *QUE-ex-situ + EST-CE QUE*) functions as the subject attribute (see (552)), and a structure in which *quoi* (i.e. *QUE-in-situ*) functions as the subject attribute (see (585)).

- (550) Arthur, que se passe-t-il ?<sup>916</sup> (vocative + QVs)
- (551) Qu'est-ce qui se passe en Hongrie ?<sup>917</sup> {{QE}={s/S}V}
- (552) Qu'est-ce qu'il se passe dans sa tête ?<sup>918</sup> (QEsV)
- (553) Il se passe quoi, ce soir-là ?<sup>919</sup> (sVQ)

There was thus a verb (i.e. *se passer*) for which all four structures were found. However, this was not the case for all verbs, and morphosyntactic structures were not equally distributed across verbs. To get an overview of morphosyntactic variation in *QUE*-questions, let us consider the distribution of verbs across these four structures (see figure 77) as well as the distribution of forms across the three most common verbs in these interrogatives (see figure 78).

Figure 77: Verbs across 'what'-question forms in the ten detective novels



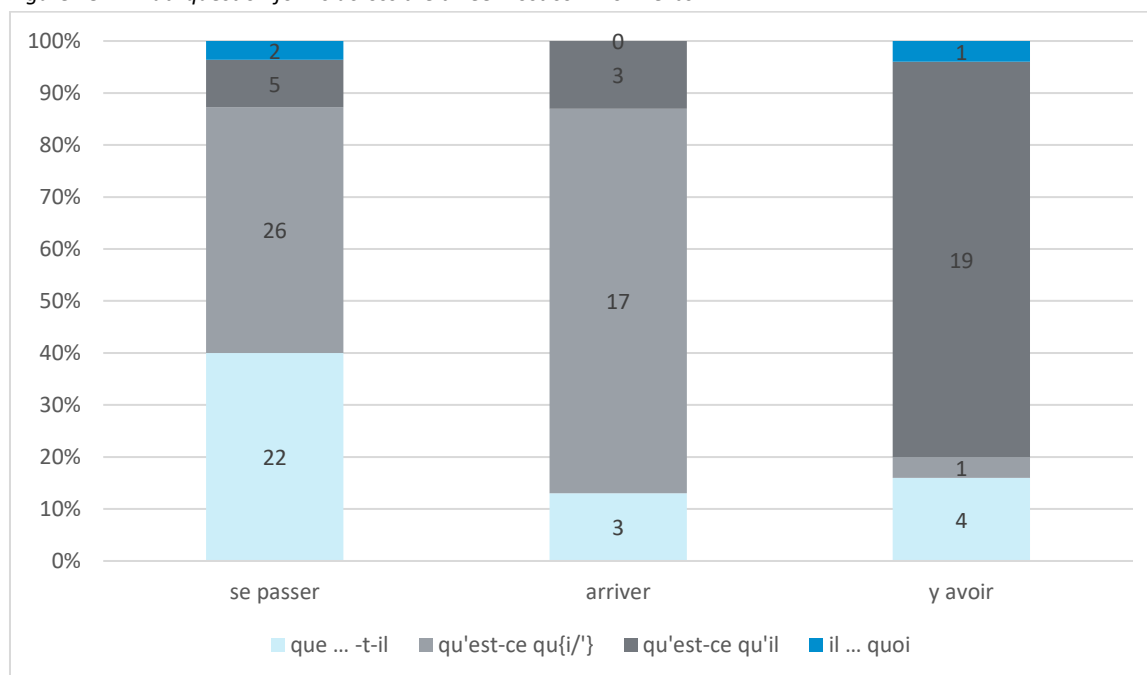
<sup>916</sup> English translation: 'Arthur, what's happening?' (ESCV\_2460, direct speech)

<sup>917</sup> English translation: 'What's happening in Hungary?' (LTEA\_4681, direct speech)

<sup>918</sup> English translation: 'What's happening in his/her head?' (TEEL\_8788, narration)

<sup>919</sup> English translation: 'What does happen that evening?' (LTEA\_4900, direct speech)

Figure 78: 'What'-question forms across the three most common verbs



What strikes the eye is that *Qu'est-ce qui* showed the greatest variation with regard to verbs, followed by inverted structures. In contrast, *wh*-fronted and *wh*-in-situ structures asking for an impersonal subject attribute only occurred with the three most common verbs (i.e. *se passer*, *arriver*, and *y avoir*) and *rester*.

On closer inspection, some regularities can be found. For one thing, *valoir* and *falloir* occurred only as inverted structures. As they were not numerous (they occurred only 1 and 4 times respectively), this may though be due to chance.

(554) *Que vaut-il mieux, monsieur Dragonman ?*<sup>920</sup> (QVs + vocative)

(555) *Que leur faut-il de plus ?*<sup>921</sup> (QVs)

More interestingly, verbs that were not inherently impersonal (e.g. *faire (qn) faire qc*, *intéresser* or *expliquer*) seemed to exclude subject-attribute structures (see examples (556) to (558)):

(556) *Qu'est-ce qui te fait rire ?*<sup>922</sup> ({{QE}}={s/S}V)

(557) *Qu'est-ce qui t'intéresse ?*<sup>923</sup> ({{QE}}={s/S}V)

(558) *Qu'est-ce qui peut expliquer cette déformation ?*<sup>924</sup> ({{QE}}={s/S}V)

<sup>920</sup> English translation: 'What is more worth, Mr. Dragonman?' (MMAT\_3605)

<sup>921</sup> English translation: 'What else do they need?' (JUST\_7060)

<sup>922</sup> English translation: 'What makes you laugh?' (TOKE\_416)

<sup>923</sup> English translation: 'In what are you interested?' (ESCV\_2060)

<sup>924</sup> English translation: 'What can explain this deformation?' (CNPJ\_5922)



In addition, some verbs occurred exclusively in the  $\{\text{QE}\}=\{\text{s/S}\}\text{V}$ -form even though they were inherently impersonal. This was the case for *prendre qn*, *ne pas aller*, *amener*, *décider qn*, *clocher* and *tourner rond* (see examples (559) to (564)).

- (559) *Qu'est-ce qui t'a pris de m'emmener ici* ?<sup>925</sup>  $\{\text{QE}\}=\{\text{s/S}\}\text{V}$
- (560) *Qu'est-ce qui ne va pas, Clotilde* ?<sup>926</sup>  $\{\text{QE}\}=\{\text{s/S}\}\text{V}$
- (561) *Qu'est-ce qui t'amène* ?<sup>927</sup>  $\{\text{QE}\}=\{\text{s/S}\}\text{V}$
- (562) *Qu'est-ce qui vous décide tout à coup* ?<sup>928</sup>  $\{\text{QE}\}=\{\text{s/S}\}\text{V}$
- (563) *ALORS NÉGR0, QU'EST-CE QUI CLOCHE* ?<sup>929</sup>  $\{\text{QE}\}=\{\text{s/S}\}\text{V}$
- (564) *Qu'est-ce qui ne tourne pas rond* ?<sup>930</sup>  $\{\text{QE}\}=\{\text{s/S}\}\text{V}$

At least for *PRENDRE QUELQU'UN*, which occurred 14 times, it is very unlikely that it is due to mere chance that this verb was always used with *Qu'est-ce qui*. Hence, either there is a lexical preference, or this verb is linked to some other factor(s) favouring periphrastic subject structures. To find out more about possible factors influencing the morphosyntactic form of questions asking for an impersonal subject, let us investigate the verbs that appeared in at least three of the four different forms.

The least frequent verb that occurred in three different forms was *rester* ('to be left'). It occurred once as an inverted structure (see (565)), once with *Qu'est-ce qu'il* (see (566)), and once with *quoi*-in-situ (see (567)).

- (565) *Que restait-il de la présence de Modigliani, Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, de celle d'Apollinaire, de Sartre et Cocteau, d'Hemingway même, de Faulkner et de Scott Fitzgerald sur le boulevard Montparnasse et rue de la Gaîté* ?<sup>931</sup>
- (566) *Il n'y a jamais qu'une seule roue de secours dans une voiture et lorsqu'on se retrouve en pleine nuit dans un endroit où les téléphones portables ne passent pas, Qu'est-ce qu'il vous reste à faire sinon marcher jusqu'au village le plus proche pour aller chercher de l'aide* ?<sup>932</sup>
- (567) *Il me restait quoi dans mon jeu* ?<sup>933</sup>

Interestingly, the *wh*-in-situ structure was an introductory question for it was followed by the self-given answer *Quatre dames*. ('Four queens/ladies.') and could correspondingly be considered as pragmatically conditioned. In the remaining two cases, which did not differ with regard to their pragmatic meaning (they were rhetorical questions), the factor of speech type might explain the morphosyntactic difference: As narration may be seen as conceptually more 'written' than 'direct

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<sup>925</sup> English translation: 'What made you bring me here?' (SCAR\_3344)

<sup>926</sup> English translation: 'What's the problem, Clothilde?' (LTEA\_4713)

<sup>927</sup> English translation: 'What brings you here?' (TEEL\_8429)

<sup>928</sup> English translation: 'What did make you change your mind?' (ESCV\_1932)

<sup>929</sup> English translation: 'What is it that does not fit in?' (TOKE\_495)

<sup>930</sup> English translation: 'What's wrong? / What's not going well?' (TEEL\_8082)

<sup>931</sup> English translation: 'What was left of the presence of Modigliani, Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, Apollinaire, Sartre and Cocteau, or even of Hemingway, Faulkner and Scott Fitzgerald at the *boulevard Montparnasse* and *rue de la Gaîté*?' (CNPJ\_5744, narration)

<sup>932</sup> English translation: 'There is never more than just one spare wheel, and when you find yourself in the middle of the night at a place where mobile phones don't work, what else can you do but walk to the next village for searching for help?' (SCAR\_3124, direct speech)

<sup>933</sup> English translation: 'What was left for me in my game?' (TOKE\_467, narration)

speech', inversion may be more readily chosen in comments than in dialogues. However, it is not true that inversion was only found in narration: For other verbs, inversion was regularly found in direct speech as well.

In the case of *ARRIVER* ('to happen to somebody; literally: to arrive'), which was the second least frequent verb that occurred in three different forms, all 3 occurrences of inverted structures were in direct speech (an example is presented as (568)). Moreover, the other two variants occurred in narration as well as in direct speech (see examples (569) to (572)). Hence, there is at least no straightforward relation between narration and inversion. Furthermore, the choice of a certain structure cannot be directly related to individual preferences of an author either because the periphrastic examples were taken from one and the same novel.

- (568) *Que vous est-il arrivé ?*<sup>934</sup> (QVs)
- (569) *Qu'est-ce qui t'a... t'a... t'arrive ?*<sup>935</sup> ({QE=s/S}V)
- (570) *Qu'est-ce qui m'arrive ?*<sup>936</sup> ({QE=s/S}V)
- (571) *Qu'est-ce qu'il t'arrive ?*<sup>937</sup> (QEsV)
- (572) *Qu'est-ce qu'il lui arrive à celle-là ?*<sup>938</sup> (QEsV)

The only possibility would be that the author deliberately varied structures according to the speaker or the situation. However, there is evidence that the two periphrastic structures are indeed completely interchangeable as the two variants occurred even within the same turn (see example (573)):

- (573) *Qu'est-ce qu'y a, ma fille ? Qu'est-ce qu'il t'arrive ?*<sup>939</sup> ({QE}={s/S}V + QEsV)

This may also be put down to phonetics: As /il/ can be reduced to [i] in informal French, there is actually no audible difference between the periphrastic interrogative asking for the grammatical subject and the one asking for the subject attribute.<sup>940</sup>

Remarkably, this (i.e. the first interrogative of (573)) was though the only occurrence of *y avoir* in a question form asking for the grammatical subject. All 19 other periphrastic structures with *y avoir* contained the impersonal pronoun *il* (one of them is given as (577)). This may be seen as a further indicator that there are certain lexical preferences, or in other words, the likelihood of a structure may also depend on the verb. Again, neither inversion nor periphrasis were directly related to a certain

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<sup>934</sup> English translation: 'What happened to you?' (TEEL\_8190, direct speech)

<sup>935</sup> English translation: 'What's happening to you? / What's wrong with you?' (TEEL\_8925, direct speech; the speaker is a stutterer)

<sup>936</sup> English translation: 'What's happening to me? / What's wrong with me?' (TEEL\_8456, narration)

<sup>937</sup> English translation: 'What's happening to you? / What's wrong with you?' (TEEL\_8094, direct speech)

<sup>938</sup> English translation: 'What's the matter with that girl over there?' (TEEL\_8264, narration)

<sup>939</sup> English translation: 'What's the problem? What's the matter with you?' (TEEL\_8093+8094, direct speech)

<sup>940</sup> Of course, this does not explain why in some cases authors chose to use *qu'est-ce qu'il* and in others *qu'est-ce qu{i'}*. Such a study would be a good starting point for a more detailed study on questions asking for the subject.

speech type. Inverted and periphrastic structures with *Y AVOIR* ('to be there, to exist') occurred in narration (see (574) and (576)) as well as in direct speech (see (575) and (577)). As for *wh*-in-situ structures, there was found a single occurrence (given as (578)). As was the case for the *quoi*-in-situ structure with *RESTER*, the situation in which this interrogative occurred was though rather specific: As the question was posed by a police officer who searched for weapons, it was clearly presupposed (cf. chapter 3) and not a neutral information-seeking question.

- (574) *Qu'y a-t-il de vrai dans tout cela ?*<sup>941</sup> (QVs)
- (575) *Qu'y a-t-il de si urgent ?*<sup>942</sup> (QVs)
- (576) *Il n'y a rien de secret, non, c'est de l'embarras, des douleurs et puis, Qu'est-ce qu'il y aurait à dire devant un pareil échec ?*<sup>943</sup> (QEsV)
- (577) *Qu'est-ce qu'il y a ?*<sup>944</sup> (QEsV)
- (578) *Ici, il y a quoi ?*<sup>945</sup> (sVQ)

As for the verb with the most occurrences, *SE PASSER*, the previous observations can be confirmed: Inverted and periphrastic structures occurred in direct speech as well as in narration, and there was no straightforward factor which could predict which of the three structures would be chosen. The only tendency observable was that narration favoured inversion: 5 out of the 8 interrogatives in narration were inverted whereas 28 (25 QEV, 3 QEsV) out of 47 interrogatives in direct speech. As for the two *wh*-in-situ structures (see (585) and (586)), as previously observed the *quoi*-in-situ interrogatives were no out-of-the-blue questions. Rather, the preceding discourse already suggested that some event will occur / occurred. They were thus used to probe for details.

- (579) *Que se passait-il ?*<sup>946</sup> (QVs)
- (580) *Nico, que se passe-t-il ?*<sup>947</sup> (QVs)
- (581) *Qu'est-ce qui se passe, mes jolies ?*<sup>948</sup> ({QE}={s/S}V)
- (582) *Qu'est-ce qui se passe en Hongrie ?*<sup>949</sup> ({QE}={s/S}V)
- (583) *Qu'est-ce qu'il va se passer ?*<sup>950</sup> (QEsV)
- (584) *Qu'est-ce qu'il se passe ?*<sup>951</sup> (QEsV)
- (585) *Il se passe quoi, ce soir-là ?*<sup>952</sup> (sVQ)
- (586) *Il s'est passé quoi, là-bas ?*<sup>953</sup> (sVQ)

<sup>941</sup> English translation: 'What in there is true?' (TRAV\_1085, narration)

<sup>942</sup> English translation: 'What is there that is this urgent?' (SCAR\_2969, direct speech)

<sup>943</sup> English translation: 'There's nothing secret, no, it's the embarrassment, the pain, et then, what would there be to say to such a failure?' (ALEX\_1264, narration)

<sup>944</sup> English translation: 'What's the problem?' (JUST\_6893, direct speech)

<sup>945</sup> English translation: '(And) what's here?' (TOKE\_314, direct speech) ; the question was preceded by – *Putain ! Mais y a rien, que j'te dis. C'est là-haut. J'vous montre.* and followed by – *Ça ! fit Béraud en montrant une mitraillette Thompson.*

<sup>946</sup> English translation: 'What happened?' (CNPJ\_5651, narration)

<sup>947</sup> English translation: 'Nico, what's happening?' (CNPJ\_5713, direct speech)

<sup>948</sup> English translation: 'What's happening(, my pretty girls)?' (LTEA\_4581, direct speech)

<sup>949</sup> English translation: 'What's happening in Hungary?' (LTEA\_4681, narration)

<sup>950</sup> English translation: 'What will happen?' (TEEL\_8845, narration)

<sup>951</sup> English translation: 'What's happening?' (TEEL\_8865, direct speech)

<sup>952</sup> English translation: 'What is going to happen that evening?' (LTEA\_4900, direct speech)

<sup>953</sup> English translation: 'What happened that evening?' (CNPJ\_6047, direct speech)

To conclude, questions asking for a ‘what’-subject showed the full range of variation. Some verbs favoured a certain structure, and narration slightly promoted inversion, but there was no factor that unequivocally predicted which structure would be used. The most promising observation was about the rarest morphosyntactic type in impersonal constructions: *Quoi*-in-situ questions were restricted to very specific situations, namely the probing for details about something previously evoked. This might also explain why this type is not mentioned in some grammars (cf. Dethloff & Wagner 2014: 563+572). Interestingly, *quoi*-in-situ questions are though not generally omitted, but only when asking for the subject. Hence, the question arises whether other wh-in-situ questions do not show this pragmatic conditioning. This is precisely what will be treated in the next subsection.

### The position of the question word

Indeed, my data suggest that there is no general pragmatic difference between QsV- and sVQ-interrogatives (cf. 3.2.2). For example, information-seeking questions about the time occurred with preverbal as well as postverbal wh-phrases (see examples (587) and (588)).

(587) *Quelle heure il est ?*<sup>954</sup> (QsV)

(588) *Il est quelle heure ?*<sup>955</sup> (sVQ)

As the situation is almost the same in both examples (the speaker is in a bad condition and is asking for the time without having evoked anything about time in advance, cf. footnotes), the structures can be regarded as completely equivalent.

As for questions about a subject’s general condition, situations in which wh-in-situ and wh-ex-situ structures occurred were not very different from one another either (cf. footnotes), but it was interesting that third-person pronouns occurred more often in wh-in-situ structures (see examples

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<sup>954</sup> English translation: ‘What time is it?’ (JUST\_6484, direct speech)

— *Calme-toi, je t’en prie. Tu es tombée, c’est tout. C’est ma faute.*

*Bertrand l’aide à s’asseoir, cale deux oreillers dans son dos. Elle tourne la tête vers le réveil qui clignote, ressent une douleur fulgurante dans l’épaule.*

— *Quelle heure il est ?*

— *5 h 10. J’ai appelé un médecin, il sera là d’une minute à l’autre. (Juste une ombre, Positions 626-630)*

<sup>955</sup> English translation: ‘What time is it?’ (TOKE\_193)

*J’avais un gant mouillé d’eau froide sur le front. Je sentis la même fraîcheur sur mes yeux, mes joues, puis dans le cou et sur la poitrine. Quelques gouttes d’eau glissèrent sur mes omo plates. Je frissonnai. J’ouvris les yeux.*

*Marie-Lou me sourit. J’étais nu. Sur mon lit.*

— *Ça va ?*

*Je fis oui de la tête, fermai les yeux. Malgré la faible lumière, j’avais du mal à les garder ouverts. Elle enleva le gant de mon front. Puis elle le reposa. Il était de nouveau froid. C’était bon.*

— *Il est quelle heure ? je dis.*

— *Trois heures vingt. (Total Khéops, positions 1725-1731)*

(589) to (591)) while second-person pronouns occurred more often in wh-ex-situ structures (see example (592) for a declarative and (593) for an inverted structure):

- (589) Ils vont comment ?<sup>956</sup> (sVQ)
- (590) Il va comment ?<sup>957</sup> (sVQ)
- (591) Comment elle va ?<sup>958</sup> (QsV)
- (592) Comment tu vas ?<sup>959</sup> (QsV)
- (593) Comment vas-tu ?<sup>960</sup> (QVs)

At first sight, one could assume a discourse-related difference because the subjects referred to by the third-person pronouns were previously mentioned whereas the hearer (and thus the subject referred to by the second-person pronouns) was usually not directly mentioned in advance. Nonetheless, this difference is not as straight-forward as some of the previous studies suggest (cf. 3.2.2). At any rate, this is though not a strict rule (cf. example (591)).<sup>961</sup>

What is more, questions on the name of a person showed the opposite tendency: While the question word occurred in interrogatives with a second-person pronoun in postverbal position, it did so in interrogatives with a third-person pronoun in preverbal position. In fact, there was not a single

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<sup>956</sup> English translation: ‘How are they (doing)?’ (TRAV\_788)

- *Fatiguée?*
- *Pas mal. Ce qui me fatigue le plus, c’est encore mes parents, tu sais...*
- *J’imagine. Ils vont comment?*
- *Toujours les mêmes, c’est bien ça le pire. (Travail soigné, positions 3175-3178)*

<sup>957</sup> English translation: ‘How is he (doing)?’ (MMAT\_4262)

- *Marianne ? Ecoute-moi ça. On a retrouvé Soler ! Un coup de fil anonyme. Une femme. Il dormait sur le siège passager d’une Twingo garée sur le parking de l’aéroport.*
- *Marianne, brusquement tirée de sa torpeur, délaissa les avions immobiles et se tourna vers son adjoint.*
- *Timo Soler... Enfin ! Il va comment ?*

- *Mal... Un poumon perforé, une plaie toujours ouverte à l’omoplate, hémorragie interne, mais il était toujours vivant quand Bourdaine et Benhami ont ouvert la portière. Ils ont même relevé quelques bribes de conscience. Les paupières qui s’agitent, les lèvres qui tremblent, ce genre de truc, rien de plus... T’attends pas à des aveux ! (Maman a tort, positions 5457-5462)*

<sup>958</sup> English translation: ‘How is she (doing)?’ (LTEA\_4746)

- *Franck ? Tu es où ?*
- *A l’hôpital de Calvi ! Avec Valentine.*
- *Comment elle va ? Réponds, bordel, réponds-moi ! (Le temps est assassin, positions 2849-2852)*

<sup>959</sup> English translation: ‘How are you (doing)?’ (JUST\_7526)

- *Oui ?*
- *Bonjour, Alexandre, c’est Valentine.*
- *Valentine..., répète Gomez avec un sourire. Comment tu vas ?*
- *C’est à toi qu’il faut poser la question, répond la jeune femme. (Juste une ombre, positions 5455-5456)*

<sup>960</sup> English translation: ‘How are you (doing)?’ (JUST\_7218)

Il s’installe dans un des fauteuils, elle lui sert son apéritif préféré. Un verre de saint-joseph blanc. Cloé a fait trois magasins avant de le trouver.

- *Comment vas-tu ? demande-t-elle.*
- *Bien. Et toi ?*
- *Ça va, assure-t-elle. (Juste une ombre, positions 4048-4050)*

<sup>961</sup> There could not be found any differences regarding semantic meaning either. The hypothesis that wh-in-situ structures may rather be interpreted literally (cf. 4.3.2, Task 5) could not be checked because the literal meaning of the verb (‘to go’) did not occur.

occurrence of *comment tu t'appelles*, but 4 of *tu t'appelles comment*, and there were 2 occurrences of *comment il s'appelle* and 1 of *comment elle s'appelle*, but not a single occurrence of *il/elle s'appelle comment*.<sup>962</sup> This may be an issue of a step towards lexicalisation, but this would have to be investigated based on even larger amounts of data.

### 6.2.5 Conclusion

To put it briefly, the use of subject-verb inversion and *EST-CE QUE* was not equally distributed across conditions. The following distributional differences could be annotated automatically and shown to be statistically significant: Yes/no-interrogatives were less often inverted and more often periphrastic than wh-interrogatives, the question word *QUE* was more likely to appear with *EST-CE QUE* than other question words, and morphosyntactic marking was less likely in direct speech than in narration. As further exploration of the data suggests, there are various grammatical as well as pragmatic factors that also play a role. On the whole, previous studies could be confirmed, but there were two findings that may be taken as innovations: 'what'-subject questions seem to depend on the verb as well as the situation, and there could be found instances in which the position of the question word does not seem to be of importance.

At any rate, the use of a certain morphosyntactic form is not fully predictable. There remains a certain degree of liberty for contemporary writing, and authors will have personal preferences. To exemplify this, examples (594) to (596) show instances in which the conditions were exactly the same ('what'-question with *QUE* as wh-expression, *TU* as subject, present-tense verb form of *FAIRE*, locative at the end of the sentence, direct speech, information-seeking with a certain unexpectedness) but all three question forms were used.

(594) *Que fais-tu là ?*<sup>963</sup>

(595) *Qu'est-ce que tu fais à New York ?*<sup>964</sup>

(596) *Tu fais quoi là ?*<sup>965</sup>

One of the most interesting findings was the reoccurring difference between yes/no- and wh-interrogatives: Inversion is significantly more frequent in constituent question forms than in polar ones. This difference can be observed in the oral corpora of Coveney (2002) and Druetta (2009), but the difference is even more extreme in written corpora of imitated speech, such as Terry's (1970), Behnstedt's (1973) or mine (see also chapters 3 to 5). The question which arises, is whether those frequency differences in inverted structures are simply related to the (degree of standardisation of the

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<sup>962</sup> For third-person pronouns, there were also 2 occurrences of inverted structures.

<sup>963</sup> English translation: 'What are you doing there?' (CNPJ\_6013)

<sup>964</sup> English translation: 'What are you doing in New York?' (SCAR\_2473)

<sup>965</sup> English translation: 'What are you doing there?' (TOKE\_195)

respective) semantic type or whether they might rather be explained by the different discourse functions they fulfil.<sup>966</sup> More precisely, it could be that yes/no-interrogatives tend to be asked more often about B-events, i.e. when (only) the hearer knows the answer. This assumption is based on Hansen's (2001: 474) prediction that "questions featuring SV will tend to be questions about B-events, while questions using V-CI and ESV will tend to be about other types of events." It will thus be interesting to see whether yes/no-interrogatives tend to be used more often in B-events than wh ones. On the other hand, wh-in-situ and wh-ex-situ forms without inversion might be socio-stylistically more marked than declarative yes/no-question forms. In that case, the difference could easily be explained by a difference in normative pressure, as Behnstedt (1973) supposes.

Since the automatic annotation of pragmatic predictors is very difficult if not impossible, a more detailed manual analysis was needed to check this hypothesis. The methodology and the results of this analysis will be described in the next subsection.

### 6.3 Manual analysis of locative questions

In this subsection, a subsample will be analysed. More precisely, all *où*-interrogatives and a comparable sample of yes/no-questions will be examined. This will be done by manual annotation and the calculation of logistic and linear regression models for the different factors.

The aim of this study being the statistical analysis of a well-determined set of questions, the questions should all contain the same question word. Since *où*-questions are sufficiently frequent (in general but also in the genre of detective stories) and they have not been reported to be subject to any morphosyntactic restrictions (cf. *POURQUOI* or *QUE*), they seem a sensible choice. Also, *où* can function as an argumental (e.g. with *être*, *se trouver* or *aller*) as well as a non-argumental complement (e.g. with *acheter* or *voir*), and it has been observed to be one of the most accepted question words with *EST-CE QUE* (Behnstedt 1973). Therefore, one can expect to find a considerable number of *où*-interrogatives, in which variation is prone to occur.

As the semantic type of a question has been shown to have a significant influence on the morphosyntactic as well as the intonational form of a question (see chapters 3 to 5), a comparable sample of yes/no-questions should be included into the analysis. As *où*-questions usually ask for a place, this sample should contain some locative expression, such as encoded by a prepositional phrase (e.g. *au restaurant*). The locative contained in the questions should be possible to be replaced by *où* so that potential minimal pairs (see examples (597) and (598)) could be detected.

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<sup>966</sup> While Behnstedt (1973) has argued for the former, Coveney (2002) has put forward the latter.

- (597) Il est où ?<sup>967</sup> (sVQ)  
 (598) Il est dans la maison ?<sup>968</sup> (sV)

For this purpose, all interrogatives containing a conjugated verb form of *ÊTRE* or *ALLER* and a preposition were automatically extracted, and false positives (e.g. *Suis-je conne à ce point ?* ‘Am I (really) THIS stupid?’) were manually sorted out. In the end, 51 yes/no-interrogatives were retained. The interrogatives were copied into a spreadsheet, in which manual annotations were added. In a last step, the spreadsheet was used to evaluate the collected data statistically by means of R.

### 6.3.1 The prediction of morphosyntactic types in the sample

In the first part of this subsection, the distribution of morphosyntactic types shall be investigated. It will be shown that...

- ⇒ Yes/no interrogatives have a stronger tendency for declarative structures than wh ones.
- ⇒ Modal verbs do not seem to influence the word order of locative interrogative constructions.
- ⇒ Non-clitic subjects, a higher degree of formality, narration and B-events favour inversion.

The dependent variable, i.e. the morphosyntactic form of the interrogatives, was assessed by categorisation according to subject type (=>clitic subject, non-clitic subject, both), word order (=>inverted vs. straight), presence of morpholexical marking (=>presence or absence of question particle), and wh-position (=>pre- vs. postverbal). By doing so, seven different morphosyntactic types were detected (cf. table 51).

Table 51: Morphosyntactic types of ‘where’-questions found in my corpus of ten detective novels

Type	Subject type	Word order	Question particle	Position of où	Structure	Example
<b>simple clitic inversion</b>	s	inverted	absent	pre-verbal	QVs	<i>Où va-t-on ?</i> ‘Where are we going?’ (ESCV_2006)
<b>complex clitic inversion</b>	S & s	inverted	absent		QSVs	<i>Où ce flic obèse voulait-il en venir ?</i> ‘To what point did this obese cop want to get?’ (LTEA_4567)
<b>stylistic inversion</b>	S	inverted	absent		QVS	<i>Où est ma mère ?</i> ‘Where is my mother?’ (LTEA_5246)
<b>EST-CE QUE</b>	s/S	straight	present: full form		QE{s/S}V	<i>..., où est-ce que vous voulez aller ?</i> ‘Where do you want to go?’ (SCAR_3255)
<b>QUE</b>	s/S	straight	present: QUE only		Qk{s/S}V	<i>Mais où qu’tu vis ?</i> ‘Where (on earth) do you live?’ (TOKE_97)

<sup>967</sup> English translation: ‘Where is he?’ (ALEX\_1187)

<sup>968</sup> English translation: ‘Is he in the house?’ (JUST\_7233)

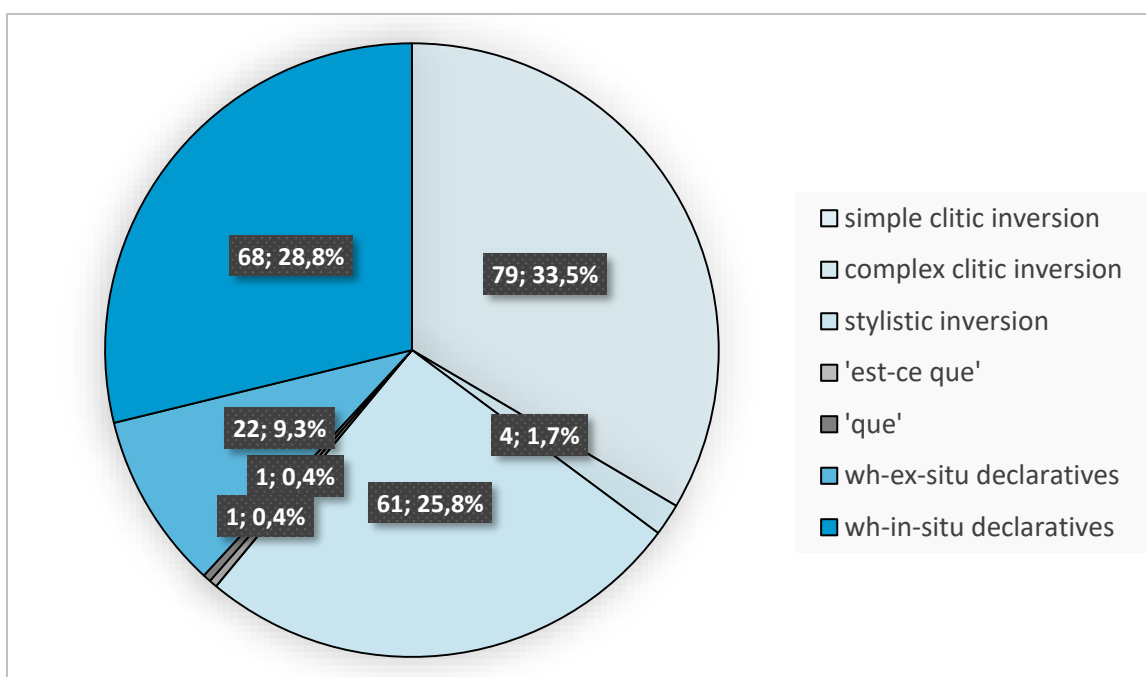


<b>wh-ex-situ declarative</b>	s/S	straight	absent		Q{s/S}V	<i>Où tu vas ?</i> 'Where are you going?' (ALEX_1553)
<b>wh-in-situ declarative</b>	s/S	straight	absent	post-verbal	{s/S}VQ	<i>On va où ?</i> 'Where are we going?' (TOKE_369)

Q = question word, S = non-clitic subject, s = clitic subject, V = verb, E = *EST-CE QUE*, k = *QUE*

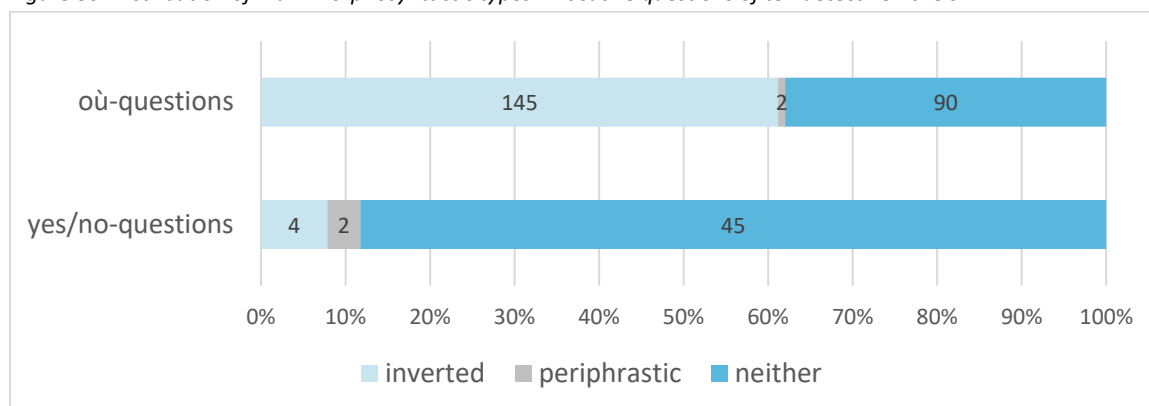
The overall distribution of these morphosyntactic types was as follows (see figure 79):

Figure 79: Distribution of morphosyntactic types in 'where'-questions of ten detective novels



Interestingly, inverted interrogatives were thus even more frequent than declarative ones, and periphrastic 'where'-questions occurred only twice. Although simple inversion (i.e. simple clitic and stylistic inversion) was the most common form of 'where'-questions, *où*-in-situ structures were not uncommon either. Only periphrastic interrogatives proved to be rare. Compared with the corresponding sample of yes/no-interrogatives (cf. figure 80), it becomes clear that *où*-interrogatives were less likely to be morphologically marked (0.8% vs. 3.9%) and much more likely to be inverted (60.8% vs. 5.9%) (chi-squared test on word order ~ semantic type:  $p = 1.374e-11$ ).

Figure 80: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types in locative questions of ten detective novels



This distributional difference between **semantic types** is in line with previous findings (cf. table 10, p.71). As for the prevalence of inverted forms, the results are particularly similar to the ones in Terry's (1970) and Behnstedt's (1973) plays: While the vast majority of the yes/no-questions are {s/S}V-structures, more than half of the wh-interrogatives are inverted. Hence, contemporary detective novels seem to share some characteristics with plays from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In order to get more insight into the variations in the formulation of these interrogatives, verb and subject distributions shall be considered. First of all, it should be noted that there was only one negated interrogative (see example (599)), so the influence of **negation** could not be assessed statistically.

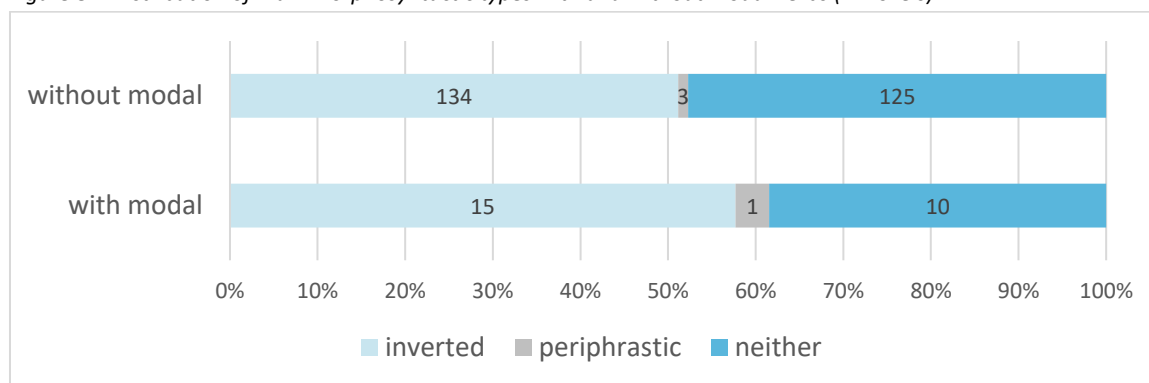
(599) *Vous ne voulez pas rentrer à la maison ?*<sup>969</sup> (sV)

As negation marks a certain orientation towards a negative answer, this example is in line with the expectation that biased questions are more likely to be produced as declarative question forms.<sup>970</sup> Secondly, the influence of the modal verbs *pouvoir* ('can') and *vouloir* ('want') shall be investigated. As figure 81 shows, the distributions of main morphosyntactic types are however very similar for interrogatives with and without **modals**. Consequently, the use of a modal verb did not seem to have an impact on the choice of the morphosyntactic form of a question (chi-squared test on word order ~ modal:  $p = 0.6661$ ).

<sup>969</sup> English translation: 'Don't you want to come home?' (TEEL\_8648)

<sup>970</sup> Nonetheless, it should be noted that morphosyntactic marking is not impossible with negation either. For instance, the question *Est-ce que ce n'est pas trop lourd ?* has been uttered and overheard in an authentic conversation.

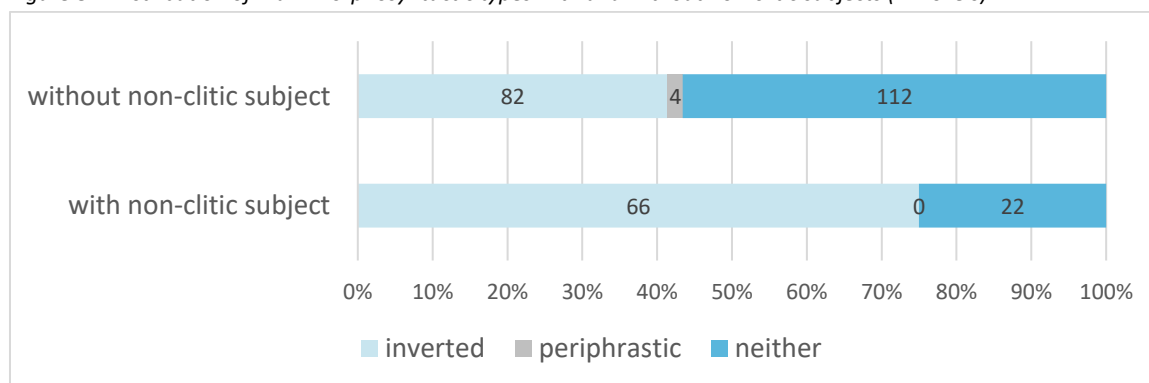
Figure 81: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types with and without modal verbs (in novels)



In contrast, the presence of a **non-clitic subject** correlated positively with the use of subject-verb inversion (cf. figure 82, chi-squared test for word order ~ subject type:  $p = 3.088e-07$ ). Although one quarter of the non-clitic subjects occurred in structures with straight word order (for examples, see (600) to (603)), full noun subjects did thus largely increase the likelihood of subject-verb inversion. The latter effect was attributable to stylistic inversion (cf. example (604)) only.

- (600) Tes parents, ils sont où ?<sup>971</sup> (S+sVQ)
- (601) Il est où, papa ?<sup>972</sup> (sVQ+S)
- (602) Mais où il est, ce putain de tube ?<sup>973</sup> (QsV+S)
- (603) L'avion pour Galway est encore sur la piste ?<sup>974</sup> (SV)
- (604) Où sont tes papiers ?<sup>975</sup> (QVS)

Figure 82: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types with and without non-clitic subjects (in novels)



Let us now turn to the potential extralinguistic factors that were compiled in chapter 3. The first factor that shall be examined in detail is the one of the **degree of formality**. As inversion has traditionally been regarded as an indicator of formality, one can hypothesize that the use of the formal 2<sup>nd</sup>-person-subject pronoun will correlate with the use of inversion. Indeed, such a correlation could be detected (cf. figure 83, chi-squared test on word order ~ second-person-singular subjects:  $p = 0.02902$ ).

<sup>971</sup> English translation: 'Where are your parents?' (TOKE\_439)

<sup>972</sup> English translation: 'Where is dad?' (LTEA\_5126)

<sup>973</sup> English translation: 'Where is this damn tube?' (TEEL\_8184)

<sup>974</sup> English translation: 'Is the plane going to Galway still on the runway?' (MMAT\_4270)

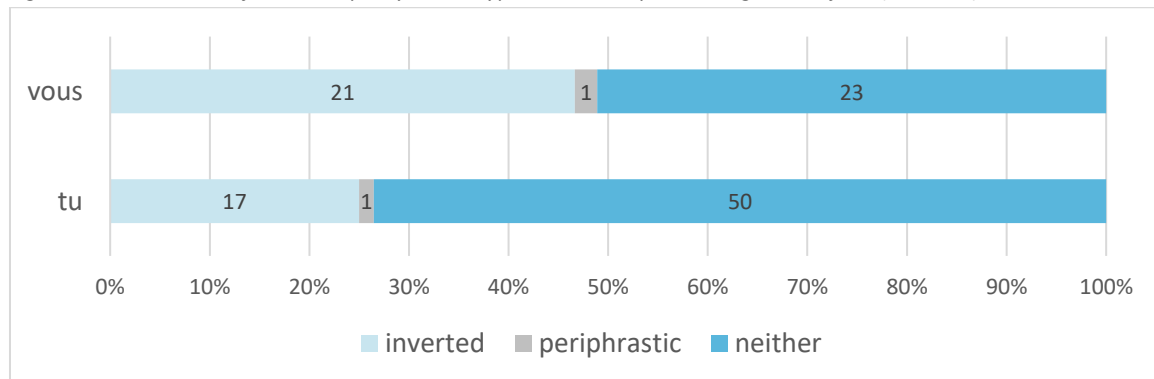
<sup>975</sup> English translation: 'Where are your documents?' (JUST\_6494)

Nonetheless, this correlation is a mere tendency: There were also various cases of *tu* in inverted structures (cf. example (605)) and *vous* in declarative ones (cf. example (606)).

(605) *Où es-tu, ma chérie ?*<sup>976</sup> (QVs + vocative)

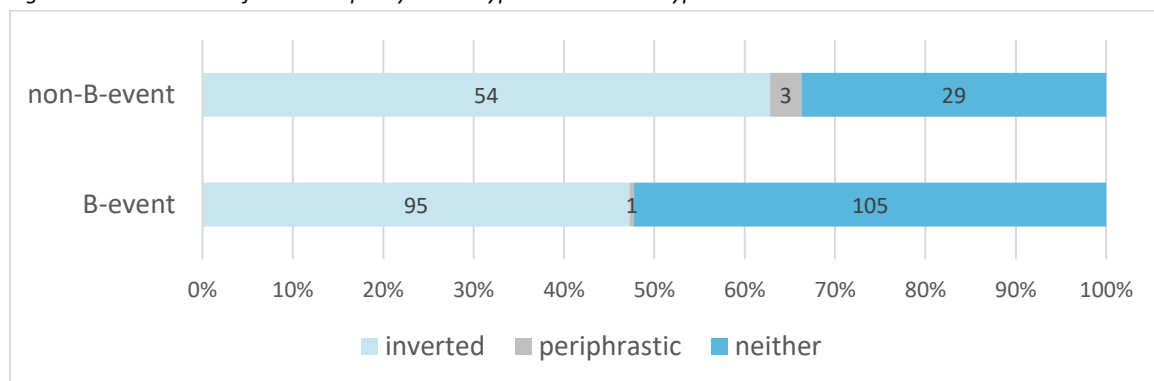
(606) *Où vous avez trouvé ça ?*<sup>977</sup> (QsV)

Figure 83: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types across 2<sup>nd</sup>-person-singular subjects (in novels)



As for the event type, the data support Hansen’s (2001: 474) claim that “questions featuring SV will tend to be questions about B-events, while questions using V-Cl and ESV will tend to be about other types of events”: questions with a classic distribution of knowledge were more likely to be realised as declarative structures than questions in which the speaker did not take the hearer to be a potential source for his own information (cf. figure 83, chi-square test on word order ~ event type:  $p = 0.02244$ ).

Figure 84: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types across event types



Yet, this does not mean that Hansen’s entire reasoning can be supported. If the mere fact that a question is not intended to solicit a reaction from the addressee lead to the avoidance of declarative structures (cf. Hansen 2001: 514), interrogatives in narration would always have been marked by inversion or the question particle.

Even though it is true that narration favours inversion (cf. figure 85, chi-squared test on word order ~ speech type:  $p = 0.0009077$ ), the division is though not as clear as it was for the reality-TV shows (=>off-

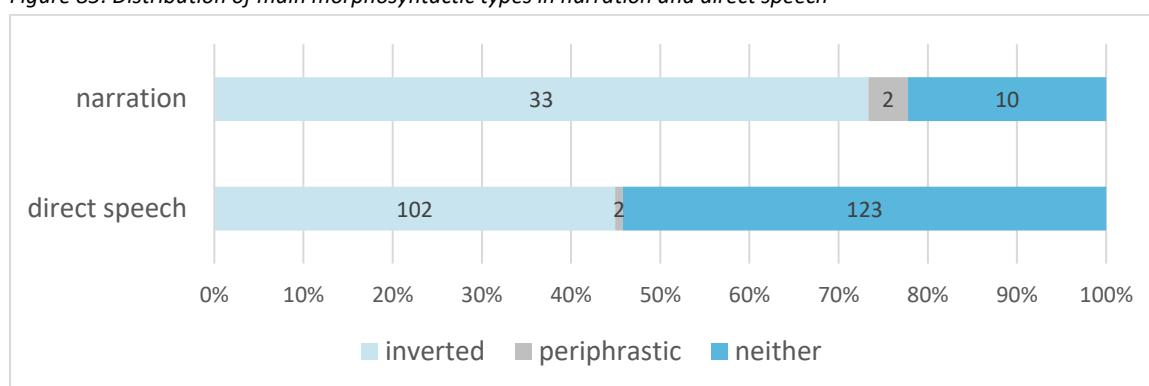
<sup>976</sup> English translation: ‘Where are you, darling?’ (TEEL\_8032)

<sup>977</sup> English translation: ‘Where did you find that?’ (TOKE\_144)

voice comment vs. direct interaction on screen, see chapter 5). In direct speech, inversion is by no means marginal, and even complex clitic inversion is used occasionally (see examples (607) and (608)). Likewise, the reflection questions of the narrator are not always marked by a postverbal subject (cf. examples (609) to (611)). The factor of **speech type**, i.e. narration vs. direct speech, did thus show a similar effect as the connected factor of event type, but this correlation is no more than a tendency either.<sup>978</sup>

- (607) Et Étienne, où est-il en ce moment ?<sup>979</sup> (S+QVs)
- (608) Où tout cela a-t-il commencé ?<sup>980</sup> (QSVs)
- (609) Il suffit peut-être de se rendre chez un armurier ?<sup>981</sup> (sV)
- (610) D'où ils la sortaient, cette salope ?<sup>982</sup> (QsV)
- (611) Batisti me mènerait où ?<sup>983</sup> (SVQ)

Figure 85: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types in narration and direct speech



Although all factors but the one of modals seemed to have a significant influence, the **calculation of logistic regression models** including several factors at once does not prove all of the factors to be significant. As the obtained sample is most certainly not big enough to check on more than two or three independent factors, I decided to consider only the sample of *où*-interrogatives. Also, I excluded the periphrastic interrogatives (due to their marginality) as well as the factors that were not applicable to the whole data set. As a result, the predictor variables to be tested came down to only four factors: modals (expected to be insignificant), presence/absence of *s* clitic subject (expected to be significant), event type (expected to be significant) and speech type (expected to be significant). As word order as well as the position of *où* have been discussed, two maximal linear regression models were calculated and reduced by the step()-function.

<sup>978</sup> The few instances of written communication were excluded from the countings.

<sup>979</sup> English translation: 'And Etienne, where is he right now?' (CNPJ\_5894)

<sup>980</sup> English translation: 'Where did all this begin?' (TRAV\_826)

<sup>981</sup> English translation: 'Maybe it's enough to go to a gunsmith's?' (JUST\_6756)

<sup>982</sup> English translation: 'Where had they found that bitch?' (CNPJ\_6240)

<sup>983</sup> English translation: 'Where would Batisti take me?' (TOKE\_261)

As for the outcome variable of word order, only the event type can be shown to be significant ( $p = 0.0277$ ), and for the outcome variable of wh-position, all four factors are relevant although only with regard to interactions.<sup>984</sup> Hence, one will have to continue investigation if one wants to have statistically sound evidence for the influence of the factors. As only the factor of event type can be proved to be of importance with regard to word order and all four factors could be shown to have an impact on the position of *où*, a larger data set will help to determine the main effects and interactions.

### 6.3.2 The prediction of final intonation contours

In this subsection, the focus is on the impact of semantic, pragmatic and morphosyntactic factors on the intonation of question-mark sentences. It will be shown that there is (preliminary) evidence that...

- ⇒ yes/no-interrogatives have a much stronger tendency for final rises than wh ones.
- ⇒ morphosyntactic marking in yes/no-interrogatives does not (necessarily) lead to a weaker tendency for final rises.
- ⇒ final question words may lead to more and/or higher rises than non-final ones.
- ⇒ questions in narration are more likely to be pronounced with a final fall than questions in direct speech.
- ⇒ B-events are more rising than non-B-events.
- ⇒ intonation is generally quite hard to predict.

In order to keep the interpretation of statistical results straightforward, only binary predictor variables were tested: semantic type (WHI vs. YNI), morphosyntactic marking (inverted vs. straight word order<sup>985</sup>), position of *où* (pre- vs. postverbal), event type (B-event vs. non-B-event) and speech type (direct speech vs. narration). In addition, the numeric factor of utterance length in syllables was tested (as suggested by Delais-Roussarie & Herment 2018). As for the operationalisation of intonational forms, only boundary tones (=> H% vs. L%) were used although the entire nuclear configurations were annotated (for an overview of the four possible nuclear configurations, see chapter 2, pp.46f.). Since nuclear configurations (and hence also boundary tones) are perception-related and thus annotated based on mere impression, intonation was additionally captured by F0-measurements obtained by Praat. As final tonal movement can be determined by looking at the end of an utterance as well as at the overall contour, it was decided to capture several measurements: the mean F0 of the whole utterance, the penultimate and the ultimate. Hence, three regression models were calculated: A logistic one to predict boundary tones, a linear one to predict the difference between the last two syllables (difference between the mean F0 in the ultimate and the mean F0 in the penultimate in st) and a linear one to predict overall tonal movement (i.e. difference between the mean F0 of the ultimate and the mean F0 of the whole utterance in st).

---

<sup>984</sup> SpeechType\_binary narration:EventType\_binary non-B-event:  $p = 0.0120$ ; NonCliticSubjectno:Modalwithout  $p = 0.0341$

<sup>985</sup> The morphosyntactic marking by *EST-CE QUE* was left out because there was only one occurrence with *où*.

Before the different factors are tested statistically, overall distributions shall be presented. As figures 86 and 87 show, wh-interrogatives show greater intonational variation than yes/no-interrogatives:<sup>986</sup> While none of the total questions is pronounced with a simple fall, this is the most frequent form in partial questions. Furthermore, YNQ have a clear preference for simple rises whereas WHQ are almost equally often rising as falling. On the whole, this is in line with previous findings (cf. chapter 3).

Figure 86: Distribution of nuclear configurations in 'where'-questions of ten detective novels

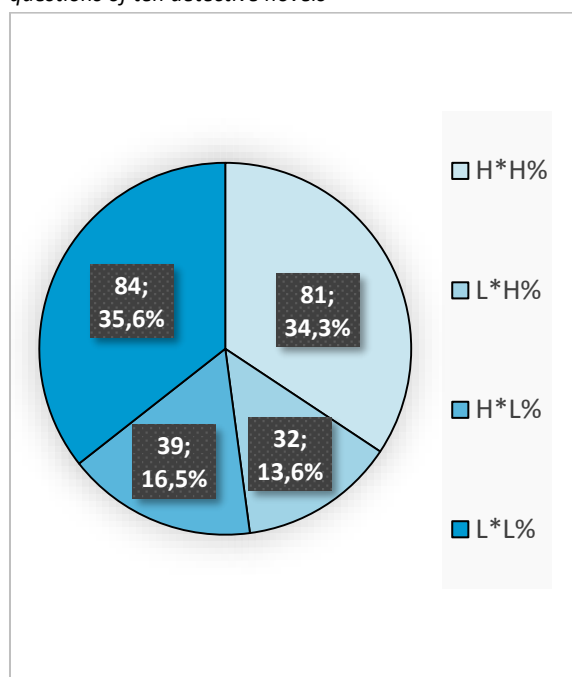
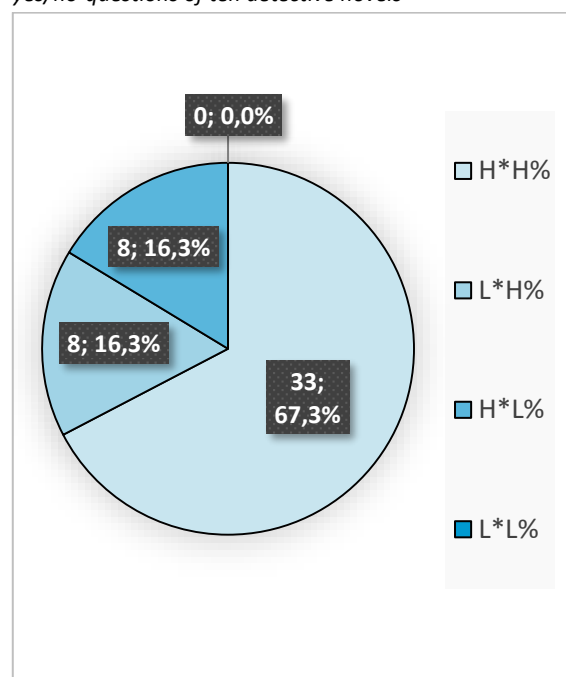


Figure 87: Distribution of nuclear configurations in locative yes/no-questions of ten detective novels



When exploring the data in greater detail, one of the most striking facts is that all 6 morphosyntactically marked yes/no-interrogatives are pronounced with a final rise (see examples (612) to (617)):

- (612) *Peut-on au moins s'asseoir sous le porche ?*<sup>987</sup> (Vs, H\*H%)
- (613) *Sera-t-il dans ce train ?*<sup>988</sup> (Vs, H\*H%)
- (614) *En est-il au stade des hallucinations, déjà ?*<sup>989</sup> (Vs, H\*H%)
- (615) *Une femme pouvait-elle flairer cela chez une rivale ?*<sup>990</sup> (SVs, H\*H%)
- (616) *Est-ce qu'il m'attend dans le train ?*<sup>991</sup> (EsV, H\*H%)
- (617) *Est-ce qu'elle était dans un de ces circuits ?*<sup>992</sup> (EsV, H\*H%)

This is particularly surprising because morphosyntactically unmarked questions (i.e. {s/S}V-structures) were occasionally also pronounced with fall-rises and rise-falls. Putting it differently, morphosyntactically marked structures showed an even stronger tendency for simple rises than

<sup>986</sup> This difference in countings can be shown to be statistically significant (chi-squared test,  $p = 9.996e-06$ ).

<sup>987</sup> English translation: 'Can we at least sit under the porch?' (ESCV\_2426, direct speech)

<sup>988</sup> English translation: 'Will he be on that train?' (TEEL\_8159, narration)

<sup>989</sup> English translation: 'Was he already in the state of hallucinations?' (JUST\_6991, narration)

<sup>990</sup> English translation: 'Could a woman sense this for a rival?' (LTEA\_5152, narration)

<sup>991</sup> English translation: 'Is he waiting for me on the train?' (TEEL\_8065, narration)

<sup>992</sup> English translation: 'Was she in one of these tours?' (TOKE\_231, narration)

morphosyntactically unmarked ones. As the observed cases of morphosyntactically marked yes/no-questions are rare, one should though not jump to conclusions. What can still be recorded is that this sample suggests that it is the semantic type of WHQ and not morphosyntactic marking which has an influence on final tonal movement.

As it has been claimed that wh-in-situ structures would be linked to final rises (see 3.2.1), one might expect a clear tendency for H\*H% in wh-postverbal structures. However, this was not the case (cf. figure 88). Indeed, this was not even the case in the structures in which *où* occurred in absolute final position (cf. figure 89). Hence, it is not surprising that there cannot be proved any influence of the (relative or absolute) wh-position on the selection of boundary tones (chi-squared test,  $p = 0.3975$  for relative position and  $p = 0.4158$  for absolute position).

Figure 88: Distribution of nuclear configurations in 'où'-questions across relative wh-position

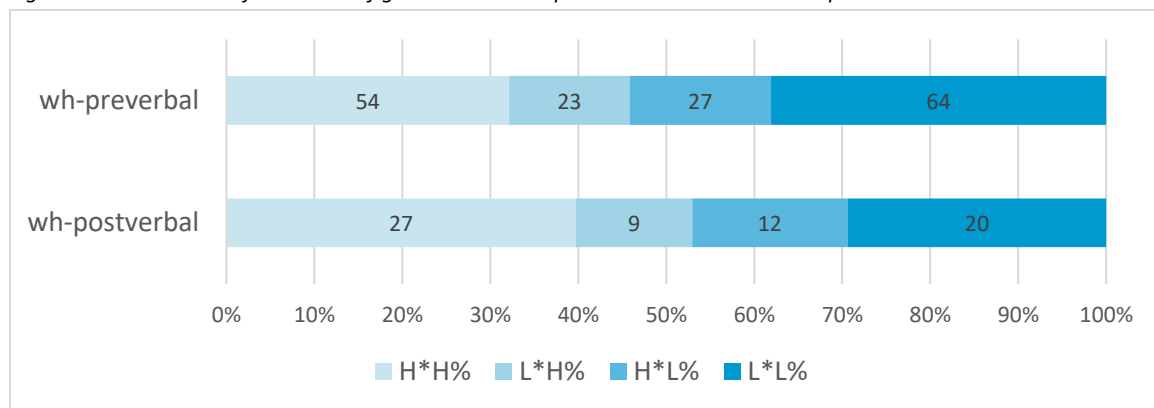
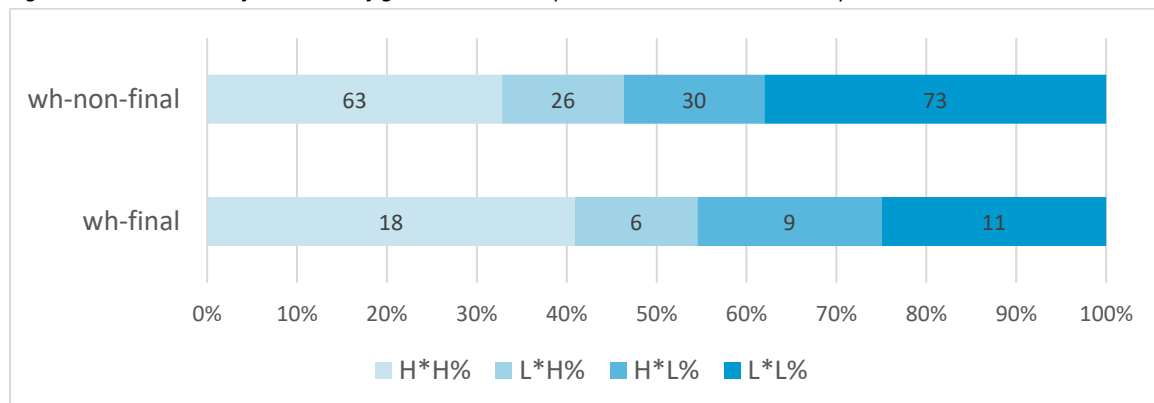


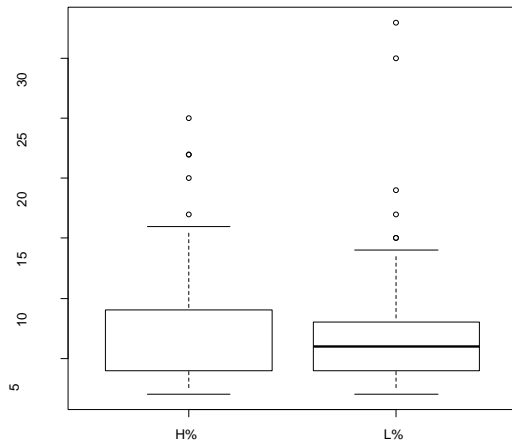
Figure 89: Distribution of nuclear configurations in 'où'-questions across absolute wh-position



As for the last of the string-related factors, i.e. the factor of utterance length, there is no obvious correlation either: For both boundary tones, the mean utterance length is about six syllables (cf. figure 90). Therefore, this sample rather seems to refute Delais-Roussarie & Herment's (2018) idea that length may have an impact on intonational realisation.



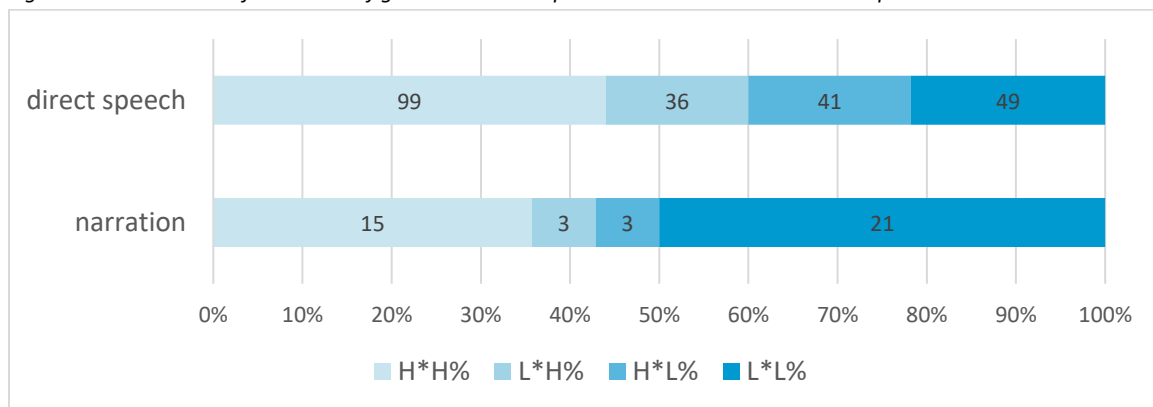
Figure 90: Length of utterance in syllables across boundary tones (in locative questions)



However, the picture changes if intonation is not captured by the binary classification of the boundary tone but by F0-measurements: Although the effect size is not very big, length turns out to be a significant factor (estimate = 0.12942,  $p = 0.009$ ). On average, final tonal movement increases by an eighth st per syllable. However, the model from which this significance test is taken does not account for a lot of the data (adjusted R-squared: 0.02093).<sup>993</sup>

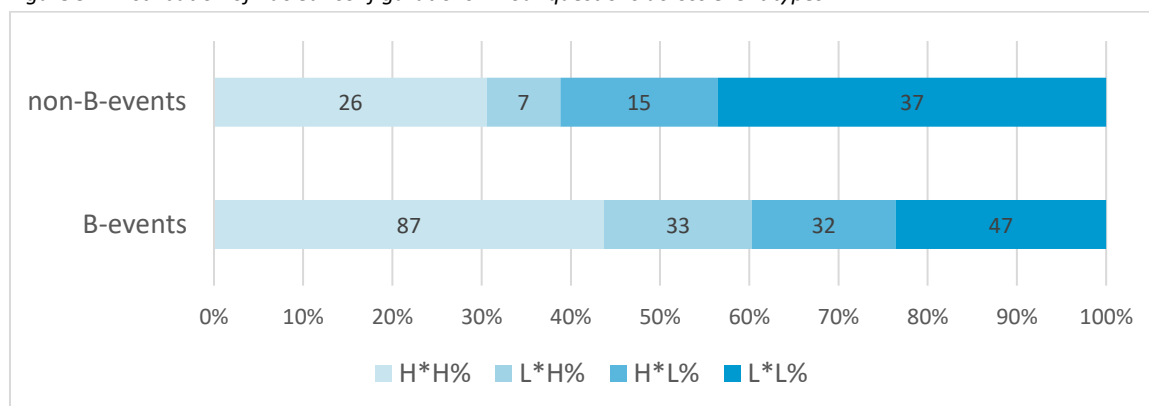
The last two factors – which are to some extent interrelated – also show interesting tendencies. The less direct interrogatives (i.e. the ones taken from narration or non-B-event situations) are more often pronounced with a final fall (cf. figures 91 and 92). While this observed distributional difference is shown to be statistically significant in the case of event type (chi-squared test,  $p = 0.000227$ ), it only approaches significance for speech type (chi-squared test,  $p = 0.0585$ ).

Figure 91: Distribution of nuclear configurations in 'où'-questions in narration and direct speech



<sup>993</sup> Interestingly, there could not be detected any statistically relevant relation between overall movement and utterance length.

Figure 92: Distribution of nuclear configurations in 'où'-questions across event types



Having seen which factors are prone to have an impact on tonal movement, the factors should be used to predict intonational outcome. Accordingly, the following maximal models have been calculated and reduced by the step()-function:

```

model1_all = glm(BoundaryTone ~ SemanticType * SpeechType_binary * EventType_binary *
LengthSyllables, family = "binomial", data = data2)
model1_ou = glm(BoundaryTone ~ SpeechType_binary * EventType_binary * LengthSyllables, family =
"binomial", data = data2_who)
model2_all = lm(DifferenceLastSyllables ~ SemanticType * SpeechType_binary * EventType_binary *
LengthSyllables, data = data2)
model3_all = lm(OverallMovement ~ SemanticType * SpeechType_binary * EventType_binary *
LengthSyllables, data = data2)

```

As far as model1 is concerned, only the semantic type can be proven to have a significant effect. For statistically reliable data, one would thus obviously need a larger sample. Models 2 and 3 may not be the best models, but at least they do prove several of the other factors to be significant (cf. tables 52 and 53). For example, narrated yes/no-interrogatives seem to be significantly more rising when considering overall movement. Although this is clearly no more than a starting point for further research, the models are helpful to show that the factors investigated are prone to be correlated with intonation.

Table 52: Model to predict the mean-F0 difference between last syllables

	Estimate	Std. Error	T value	Pr(> t )
(Intercept)	0.403630	0.459	0.879	0.38045
SemanticTypeYNI	1.964832	1.51	1.298	0.19558
SpeechType_binary narration	2.166241	1.54	1.405	0.16123
<b>EventType_binary non-B-event</b>	<b>-3.797297</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>-2.580</b>	<b>0.01045*</b>
LengthSyllables	0.004796	0.07	0.071	0.94334
<b>SemanticTypeYNI:EventType_binary non-B-event</b>	<b>9.404289</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>3.293</b>	<b>0.00113**</b>
SemanticTypeYNI:LengthSyllables	0.087845	0.15	0.591	0.55519

<b>SpeechType_binary narration:LengthSyllables</b>	<b>-0.400207</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>-2.230</b>	<b>0.02665*</b>
<b>EventType_binary non-B-event:LengthSyllables</b>	<b>0.448974</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>2.463</b>	<b>0.01446*</b>
<b>SemanticTypeYNI:EventType_binary non-B-event:LengthSyllables</b>	<b>-0.723123</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>-2.670</b>	<b>0.00808**</b>

Table 53: Model to predict the mean-F0 difference between the last syllable and the whole utterance

	Estimate	Std. Error	T value	Pr(> t )
(Intercept)	-0.74354	0.440	-1.690	0.092295.
SemanticTpeYNI	0.08335	1.310	0.064	0.949321
SpeechType_binary narration	0.68215	1.441	0.474	0.636249
EventType_binary non-B-event	-1.82416	1.242	-1.468	0.143217
<b>LengthSyllables</b>	<b>-0.19139</b>	<b>0.063</b>	<b>-3.022</b>	<b>0.002767**</b>
<b>SemanticTypeYNI:SpeechType_binary narration</b>	<b>15.14481</b>	<b>4.307</b>	<b>3.516</b>	<b>0.000519***</b>
<b>SemanticTypeYNI:LengthSyllables</b>	<b>0.25506</b>	<b>0.128</b>	<b>1.993</b>	<b>0.047315*</b>
SpeechType_binary narration:LengthSyllables	-0.22473	0.166	-1.351	0.177913
EventType_binary non-B-event:LengthSyllables	0.24458	0.138	1.775	0.077082.
<b>SemanticTypeYNI:SpeechType_binary narration:LengthSyllables</b>	<b>-1.33867</b>	<b>0.397</b>	<b>-3.374</b>	<b>0.000859***</b>

## 6.4 Conclusion

The prediction of morphosyntactic and intonational forms was not very reliable, but there could be observed several tendencies. By means of data exploration and statistical tests on countings for individual factors, it has been observed that inversion and falling intonation are more likely in *wh-* than in *yes/no* interrogatives and that morphosyntactic marking does not seem to weaken the prevalence of rising forms in total questions. Besides, it has been found further evidence that the question word *QUE* strongly favours the use of *EST-CE QUE* and the few cases of periphrastic interrogatives did not contradict the claim that the interrogative particle *EST-CE QUE* is mainly used when questioning is explicated or reinforced (cf. chapter 5). As opposed to what has been suggested in the literature (see in particular Cheng & Rooryk 2000), a postverbal/final position of the question word may favour rising intonation, but it is not directly linked to final rises. As for the speech type – which can be seen as evidence for a medial dichotomy as put forward by Koch & Oesterreicher (2011) – it could be observed that direct speech facilitates declarative structures and rising intonation while narration promotes subject-verb inversion and falling intonation.

## 7. Implications for didactics :

### *Que faire avec la variation des interrogatives dans l'enseignement ?*<sup>994</sup>

In this chapter, I will address the question of how interrogatives are and should be taught with regard to morphosyntactic and intonational variation. For this purpose, I will first introduce Valdman's notion of *pedagogical norms* (see 7.2). Then, based on that concept, I will formulate my own pedagogical norm for French interrogatives, also considering the proportions observed in reality TV shows and detective novels (see 7.3). To see how interrogative variation is actually treated, I will analyse two German and two French textbooks for beginners of French as a foreign language (aka *français langue étrangère*, henceforth FLE), presenting their respective distributions of question forms as well as a selection of their exercises and rules (see 7.4).<sup>995</sup> As I will show, non-inverted structures without *EST-CE QUE* prevail in all textbooks. However, in the remaining question forms, German materials rather avoid inversion, using more periphrastic structures than French ones. With regard to intonation, none of the textbooks treats tonal movement in detail. Nonetheless, there are isolated discrimination exercises, and some materials mention final rises. In a last step, I will give concrete suggestions for the classroom teaching of interrogatives (see 7.5). My main claim is to integrate variation from early on, trying to stay close to authentic language use at least in perception. All the same, it is a valid objection that the first and foremost aim in language teaching is to enable students to express themselves, so the production of (any) question form is certainly much more important than linguistic accuracy.

### 7.1 Introduction

While an accurate description of language variation is of great interest mainly to theoretical linguists, its didactical implications can be of great use to a wide range of people, including educational institutions (such as the *Ministry of Education and the Arts* in the UK, the *ministère de l'Éducation Nationale* in France, or the *Kultusministerien* in the respective *Länder* of Germany), teaching material developers and foreign language teachers. Hence, in this last thematic chapter, I will turn to applied linguistics, pinning down the inferences that can be drawn from the previous chapters' studies. I will discuss what can be learned from the frequency distributions observed, and what else should be taken into account when it comes to classroom teaching of interrogatives in FLE. In this context, I will also

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<sup>994</sup> English translation: 'What shall we do with the variation of interrogatives in teaching?'

<sup>995</sup> The French textbooks are certainly meant to be used in France, i.e. an L2 environment. Since foreign language learning typically occurs in non-target language environments (Kramsch (2002), it may be regarded as more adequate to speak in the latter case of French as a second language (FSL) than French as a foreign language (FFL). However, the term *FLE* is indeed mostly (though not exclusively) used in francophone contexts, which means that, strictly speaking, *FLE* is sometimes rather used as an equivalent of *FSL* (French translation *français langue seconde*) than of its literal translation of *FFL*. In order to minimise confusion, I will thus use *FLE* as a generic term, such as 'French as a non-native language (in French-dominant as well as non-French dominant areas)'.

analyse two German and two French beginners' textbooks regarding their choice and systematisation of interrogative forms.<sup>996</sup>

When designing teaching modules or learning activities, the target needs to be pre-set. In the case of language learning, such a target comprehends not only a detailed description of what the learner will be able to do after the unit, but also the selection (and in the long run also the ordering) of language forms. In other words, not only the communicative learning objective (e.g. 'The student can ask his French correspondent about personal information, such as their name, age and hobbies.')

has to be known, but also the formal means by which this communicative aim shall be reached (e.g. 'The student can formulate a question with *est-ce que*.').<sup>997</sup> An inventory of linguistic forms is thus taught with the purpose of enabling learners to communicate. This inventory has to be built up step by step and is hence – at least initially – very reduced. Therefore, progression has to be well thought-out and the need for a normative model arises. The term denoting such a model for the classroom teaching of a foreign language, introduced for FLE by Valdman in the 60s, is *pedagogical norm* ("norme pédagogique", Valdman 1967).<sup>998</sup> Although interrogatives may be one of the best studied variables in French (Valdman 2000: 659), there is no literature aiming at the development of a pedagogical norm for native-speakers of German.<sup>999</sup> The aim of this application-oriented last part of my thesis is thus to develop a scientifically-based pedagogical norm for teaching French interrogatives in German secondary schools (*Gymnasien*), and to compare it to the actual state of how this is done.

## 7.2 The notion of pedagogical norms

While a pedagogical norm in a narrow sense may pre-eminently define the target variety, i.e. what kind of French should be selected (Valdman 2000: 648), what is ultimately taught is also defined by

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<sup>996</sup> For some additional remarks on further teaching materials, see appendix (p.409).

<sup>997</sup> NB: The communicative goal of eliciting personal information is in fact rather not linked to *est-ce que* questions. Although *Comment est-ce que tu t'appelles ?* or *Quel âge est-ce que tu as ?* are not ungrammatical, they are not the typical formal means of expression.

<sup>998</sup> NB: The terms *pedagogical* and *didactical* seem to be often used interchangeably in English (cf. the Merriam Webster online dictionary), whereas they are sometimes differentiated in German works of educational literature (see e.g. Decke-Cornill & Küster 2014; Haß 2014). While the German term *Pädagogik* ("Wissenschaft der Erziehung und Bildung" 'the science of education', Duden Online Dictionary) usually refers to more general educational principles, such as coping with discipline problems or encouraging students to become independent thinkers, *Didaktik* ("Unterrichtslehre" (Decke-Cornill & Küster 2014) 'the teaching of teaching', particularly *Fachdidaktik* 'subject didactics') is sometimes used to emphasise the more concrete teaching-orientation and methodological approaches (i.e. how something is taught, including the whole planning and execution regarding social form, time management, and so on). Nevertheless, a sharp delineation is very difficult if not impossible. In this thesis, I will thus simply follow the English habit of using the term *pedagogical norm*, although, coming from a German perspective, it may be considered more of a *didactical norm*. Similarly, one could wonder whether the term of *teaching standard* would not be more telling and intuitive.

<sup>999</sup> At least not to my knowledge; since textbooks always follow a pedagogical norm (e.g. when deciding which structure to introduce first), there do nevertheless exist implicit teaching norms.

general approaches to learning and teaching. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the eradication of grammatical errors was the main aim, whereas ever since the spread of the communicative approach (i.e. from the 70s on, see Magnan & Walz 2002: 19, Haß 2014: 18 and Nieweler 2017: 68–73), the enablement of learners to interact with the target-language community was (or should be) to the fore. Accordingly, the key concept of communicative ability<sup>1000</sup> replaced the idea of linguistic perfectionism. Instead of translating literary texts or reproducing native speech, learners have since then been trained for real-life interaction. Ordering a beverage in a restaurant has become as high in regard as it once used to be the understanding of works from the literary canon or the imitation of faultless sentences. In other words, sophisticated use is no longer as important as reaching communicative goals. Accordingly, a certain error tolerance is implied, and there is no more need to focus on the most prestigious linguistic forms. Instead, any form enabling learners to successfully interact with native speakers is worth to be considered for teaching. However, such a wide range of forms brings about the necessity to reduce “the variation inherent in native speech”, using a “simplified but acceptable version of the language” (Ramsey 2002). This is precisely what pedagogical norms do. As Magnan and Walz (2002: 15) put it, “[p]edagogical norms are abstractions that mediate the complex realities of linguistic variation and typical language learning difficulties experienced by foreign language learners”. Strictly speaking, the shift in focus was thus the trigger for pedagogical norms, for real communication gives rise to greater formal variability.<sup>1001</sup>

As mentioned before, a variation-including pedagogical norm is no mere echo of a variable linguistic system. According to Valdman (1967: 3), teachers should especially take into consideration *frequency* in authentic language use, *complexity* in form, and *extensivity* in use. More precisely, as he added in later publications, one can take into account three dimensions of criteria when developing a pedagogical norm: *sociolinguistic*, *epilinguistic* and *acquisitional* ones (Valdman 2000: 657f., see also Magnan & Walz 2002: 31f.). The first ones are linked to the reflection of authentic language use (the more native-like the better), the second ones to the attitudes of native speakers (the more appropriate in the eyes of native speakers the better), and the third ones to learning processes (the easier to learn

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<sup>1000</sup> The notion of *communicative ability* is certainly linked to the more general concepts of *action-* and *competence-orientation*. As the Council of Europe (2001) defines it in the CEFR, a competence is “the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions”. Hence, linguistic means are seen as tools for social actions. More generally speaking, a competence is the possibility to master a situation (Tschekan 2014: 46). Hence, the possibility to choose something from a menu, and to order it, is a competence.

<sup>1001</sup> It has certainly been the variationist approach which led to the notion of a multi-target norm as opposed to the single target of “educated native speech”. Whereas in former times, it was common to reduce variation to zero, newer trends go to reducing “variation to the most widely used variant and [to] slowly introduce[...] variants that native speakers would likely most expect in speech” (Magnan & Walz 2002: 24). On the other hand, there is also the view that “near-native proficiency in a foreign language should entail the capacity to perceive the total repertoire of target speakers rather than a particular norm” (Magnan & Walz 2002: 25).

the better).<sup>1002</sup> Valdman phrased those dimensions into four principles, whose most often cited version is (according to Magnan & Walz 2002: 29, citing Valdman 1989a: 272; see also Valdman 1988) as follows:

1. They [= pedagogical norms] should reflect the actual speech of target language speakers in authentic communicative situations.
2. They should conform to native speakers' idealized view of their speech use.
3. They should conform to expectations of both native speakers and foreign learners concerning the type of linguistic behavior appropriate for foreign learners.
4. They should take into account processing and learning factors.

Consequently, not only the present state of linguistic variation, but also the perception of different variants as well as foreign language acquisition principles should be known and considered when thinking out the pedagogical ordering of variants. Framing these notions in even more precise terms, I will base the selection and ordering of linguistic forms on the following 5 criteria (inspired by, but not directly borrowed from, Magnan & Walz 2002):

1. authenticity (reflection of native-speaker language use, frequency distributions comparable)
2. acceptability (non-stigmatization and non-offensiveness).
3. simplicity (favouring inherently non-complex forms, elimination of redundancy)
4. regularity (simplifying generalisations, reduction of variation)
5. learnability (adaptation to progression, no inhibition of later acquirable structures)

Those criteria could be ranked in different ways, but all of them have the potential to become very important or even to disqualify a structure from being taught if their values are low: If a structure is not part of the target language, it is undesirable being taught – even though learners might be able to communicate by means of an inaccurate structure, such as unconjugated verb forms. If a structure is very complex and, on top of that, redundant in use (for learners can avoid it by simpler linguistic forms), teaching it would be very time-consuming and exhausting without any real profit. If there are many idiosyncratic linguistic forms, it will be impossible to learn all of them because the amount of input during lessons is too limited. If a certain feature of a language is virtually unlearnable, teachers will have to choose between not treating the feature and making it artificially more regular (and thus less authentic). If a structure is stigmatized and offends native speakers, its use in real communication will arise non-linguistic problems resulting in failure of communication, such as the refusal of a response or a thematic shift to focus on form. The interplay of all five criteria is therefore of great importance for the development of a pedagogical norm.

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<sup>1002</sup> As becomes apparent when looking at the four principles cited below, epilinguistic criteria can also concern the attitudes of non-native speakers.

However, while all five criteria are essential to the selection of input in beginners' courses, criteria three to five will be more and more negligible with increasing proficiency. After all, pedagogical reduction is generally more important for beginners' level (i.e. A1 and A2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, henceforth CEFR) since advanced learners (i.e. C1 and C2 in the CEFR) will have encountered enough input to have been gotten used to linguistic variation.<sup>1003</sup> Moreover, near-nativeness implies a certain flexibility regarding diaphasic (i.e. situational) and diamesic (i.e. medial) subtleties (for the notion of diasystematic variation, see Koch & Oesterreicher 2011). To put it in a nutshell, a pedagogical norm for beginners' courses should ideally select the most easily learned most authentic and most "acceptable forms of reduction" (Magnan & Walz 2002: 21) which do not hinder the learner to approach native-likeness later on. In contrast, advanced courses should focus on target-like linguistic variation, at best limited by the structures' acceptability. The mentioned considerations shall be used in the next subsection to develop a dynamic pedagogical norm consisting of three main stages – one for beginning (i.e. A1 and A2 in the CEFR), one for intermediate (i.e. B1 and B2 in the CEFR), and one for advanced (i.e. C1 and C2 in the CEFR) learners. The different stages should reflect the special needs of *basic*, *independent* and *proficient users* (see Council of Europe 2001) respectively.

### 7.3 Developing a pedagogical norm for French interrogatives

As Valdman ((2000) observed, alloglot learners of French produce many deviant structures when asking questions. He attributes this observation to the quantity of different interrogative forms in French as well as to the complexity of some variants. Accordingly, the assumption that introducing all morphosyntactic and intonational forms at once would overtax students is certainly justified. This raises the question of which interrogative forms should be used from the beginning, and how the range of morphosyntactic and prosodic patterns should be extended over time. Based on the criteria developed in the previous section, I will first draw up a pedagogical norm for treating word-order variation in interrogatives (see 7.3.1). In this context, I will also sum up previous proposals. After that, I will deal with suggestions for the teaching of intonation and adjust them to my own observations and reflections on sentence-melody variation (see 7.3.2).

Before doing so, I will present three more general ordering principles of L2-acquisition, which shall be presupposed in the following norms:

1. **Formulas before formation:** It is a reputable principle to use chunks, i.e. formulas as ready-made means of expression, at the beginning of FLE-acquisition. As has been shown, learners

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<sup>1003</sup> Of course, one should not misunderstand the decline of reduction as the use of arbitrary input. Even the linguistic material near-native speakers of French are exposed to needs to be carefully selected according to the set learning objectives.



use chunks as the base for their learning process. Accordingly, learners use the chunks learned in the early stages “as a springboard for creative construction”, and learners who do not learn chunks, “become stuck in a pregrammatical stage” (Myles et al.).

2. **Spoken forms before written forms:** It is crucial to teach spoken forms before written forms if one wants to maintain the natural order of acquisition (see Joseph 1988; Myles et al. 1999). Spoken language normally precedes writing – in general, as well as in language acquisition. Accordingly, written codes were/are developed on the base of speech, and children learn to speak before they learn to write. Hence, it would be highly artificial to start with variants used in formal speech and writing.<sup>1004</sup> Since written forms are yet important for academic and professional purposes, they should not be completely abandoned but rather be regarded as secondary forms. Spoken (i.e. primary) and written (i.e. secondary) forms are thus to be introduced consecutively. As a consequence, during the very first stage of acquisition the focus will be on speaking.<sup>1005</sup>
3. **Reception before production:** As Ramsey (2002: 159) points out, “[i]t is a sound pedagogical practice to have students listen to French speech and recognize patterns before attempting to produce these patterns themselves.” Before teaching a form explicitly, it should thus have been presented in the input. However, including a structure into the input does not automatically entail its productive training either. In fact, some variable features will not have to be actively mastered, and a mere sensitisation to them may be enough to satisfy learners’ needs (Galazzi & Paternostro 2016). Consequently, each of my teaching norms will differentiate between active and passive competences, and whatever shall be used in production is used in reception first.

### 7.3.1 Morphosyntactic variation in question forms

Although morphosyntactic variants of French interrogation are certainly one of the most often used subjects for pedagogical norms, concrete suggestions for ordering their introduction seem to have a longer tradition in wh-interrogatives (see Valdman 1967, 1988, 2000). Valdman’s ordering is, however, easily transferable to yes/no-questions as well. Also, later works (Étienne & Sax 2009; Antes 2016) did

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<sup>1004</sup> What is more, L1-learners of both French and English initially use declarative order for asking questions (Myles et al. 1999: 61f.; Strik 2012: 138). Thus, there seems to exist a natural preference for {s/S}V-structures in language acquisition, which can also be used as an argument for the justification of this order. On the other hand, it remains an open question whether “natural-acquisition-like” learning is more efficient than an artificial approach.

<sup>1005</sup> By postponing the training of writing, I am by no means proposing the exclusion of writing from classroom teaching. Media between written and spoken conception, such as postcards or SMS, can very well be trained and their production can be regarded as a learning objective (e.g. ‘The learners can write an SMS-invitation for a film evening.’). Also, writing can be used as a means of memorisation. It will, however, not be the primary target-competence.

include both semantic types. To keep the chronological order, my norm for *wh*-interrogatives (7.3.1.1) will precede my norm for *yes/no*-interrogatives (7.3.1.2). In both subsections, I will start with previous suggestions, discuss them, and finally bring them up-to-date.

### 7.3.1.1 Morphosyntactic variation in *wh*-questions

Originally, Valdman (1967) advocated *est-ce que* “as the pedagogically primary interrogative structure [...], [while *i*]nversion and other less extensive syntactic processes should not be neglected [...] [but] introduced gradually in a ‘spiralling’ progression i.e., at first for passive recognition only and only later for active drill when the most extensive structure has been internalized by the learner.”

After conducting a study on the French interlanguage of American native speakers, he changed his opinion on which structure to introduce first. Having seen that *wh*-fronted structures even occur as a creative form in students’ interlanguage (i.e. they used that form without even having been exposed to it in the classroom), he suggested to use *wh*-fronted structures in the initial stage and to replace them by *est-ce que* and inversion later on (see also Valdman 1975; Kerr 2002):

In the specific case of French *WH*-questions, *FRONTING* would be selected as the first target feature. It would be replaced by *EST-CE QUE* as soon as the learners would have acquired control of *WH*-words. *INVERSION* would be introduced in written discourse and, in the final stage, all four constructions would be presented for recognition and active control in appropriate situational contexts.

(Valdman 1988)

As Magnan & Walz (2002) observe, the criterion of acceptability may thus be suspended in favour of the criterion of learnability. The authors add though that stigmatized structures can be provided only under the condition of not inhibiting the subsequent acquisition of more acceptable variants.<sup>1006</sup> Ideally, the stigmatized form facilitates the learning of more prestigious variants. In the case of *wh*-questions, it is conceivable that a *QSV*-structure (question word – subject – verb) facilitates the acquisition of *QESV*-structures (question word – *EST-CE QUE* – subject – verb). In other words, the fronted structure would be used as a catalyst for the acquisition of sociostylistically higher variants.

Such a suspension of sociostylistically higher forms is put into practice in Valdman (2000). It is also kept in more recent theoretical work, where he added the notion of learning unanalysed units in the

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<sup>1006</sup> Valdman clearly dislikes the idea of establishing substandard variants, as the following advice indicates unequivocally: “teachers of FFL should avoid the two most frequent informal style variants because they are somewhat stigmatized. Instead, they should opt for *EST-CE QUE* because it is sociolinguistically neutral and, in addition, has fewer syntactic constraints than *INVERSION*.” (Auger & Valdman 1999: 410). I would, however, not go as far as Magnan & Walz (2002: 22), who interpret Valdman’s pedagogical norm as including the claim that less acceptable structures should be slowly eliminated. On the one hand, I think that unlearning a structure is harder than learning it. If I am right, acquisitional factors (i.e. my fifth criterion of learnability) are a reason against this procedure. On the other hand, stigmatized structures do not have to be eradicated because they are part of the target language system. Their use just needs to be restricted, since they should be avoided in more formal situations.

beginning (cf. the above-mentioned principle of *formulas before formation*): “In a first state (*stade 1*), interrogatives are learned as chunks and anteposition is tolerated. In the second state, *est-ce que* is introduced for oral speech, and after that inversion for written speech. Finally, other forms can be explained and discussed.” (Valdman 2000: 661–664) Interestingly, Valdman still seems to plead for delaying in-situ questions (which he called *pronominalization[s]* in earlier publications) until learners are sufficiently advanced to differentiate between formal and informal language use. While fronted wh-questions would be introduced as the first linguistic means for posing questions, in-situ ones would not be mentioned in that early stage of foreign language learning<sup>1007</sup>. To sum up Valdman’s pedagogical norm, the four stages he describes are:

CHUNKS AND WH-FRONTED STRUCTURES > INTRODUCTION OF *EST-CE QUE* FOR SPEAKING > INTRODUCTION OF INVERSION FOR WRITING > DISCUSSION OF ALL FORMS

This norm shall now be adapted to the results discussed in the previous chapters, as well as some more general thoughts. Additionally, I will take into account the guidelines provided by the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001), and adjust the pedagogical ordering accordingly. The three adaptations I will put forward are the replacement of wh-fronted by wh-in-situ structures, a restriction of delaying inverted forms to oral speech only, and the limitation of productive use of *est-ce que* to *Qu’est-ce que/i/’*.

While in Valdman’s norm the first target feature is the wh-fronted variant, mine will follow Antes’ (2016) proposition of introducing first the wh-in-situ variant.<sup>1008</sup> As for the five criteria mentioned above, this ordering seems not only compatible with them, but even preferable: First of all, it is – like wh-fronting – one of the most frequent forms in spoken French (see Coveney 2002; Myers 2007; Antes 2016). In my corpora, wh-in-situ was even more often used than wh-fronted structures. As we have seen in chapter 5, this variant was clearly preferred in direct (and pseudo-direct) interactions in reality TV. Correspondingly, it has been claimed to be the prototypical form of direct interaction and can therefore be regarded as the most authentic<sup>1009</sup> form (cf. criterion 1, p.313) of posing a question in face-to-face interaction. Secondly, wh-in-situ structures are generally less stigmatized than wh-ex-situ structures without additional morphosyntactic marking (cf. criterion 2, p.313). According to Coveney (2011), SVQ-structures are colloquial, but not stigmatized in spoken language, whereas QSV-structures

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<sup>1007</sup> According to Magnan & Walz (2002: 32), Valdman has, however, also advocated the early use of wh-in-situ structures. Since he does not mention the introduction of wh-in-situ forms in the work I had access to, I can only stress the fact that he does not mention forms with postverbal question words in his claims.

<sup>1008</sup> Antes norm is the following: Wh-in-situ > fronted & *EST-CE QUE* > inversion.

<sup>1009</sup> Although “authentic” may refer to an all-or-nothing principle (i.e. either it exists in native-language use or it doesn’t), I use this adjective in a gradable way for being able to include frequency into its concept.

are a rather low form of colloquial speech, which can already be counted as *langue populaire*.<sup>1010</sup> This is also consistent with the fact that my questionnaire item 1.2 has obtained a higher acceptability rating for *Ils sont où, tes fruits ?* (86.9%) than for *Où il sont, tes fruits ?* (71.6%) (see p.93)<sup>1011</sup>. As for its simplicity, regularity and learnability (cf. criteria 3-5, p. 313), the wh-postverbal structure does not show any disadvantage compared to the wh-preverbal structure. They are structurally equally simple (QSV vs. SVQ), diverging in the position of the question word only. Each of the structures seems to have some inherent advantage with regard to learnability, but they will compensate for one another: On the one hand, wh-ex-situ seems to follow the intuition of focus fronting. By this term, I mean the reflex of putting the question word sentence-initial because it is perceived as the semantically focussed element of the sentence<sup>1012</sup> – which I would also claim to be the reason for the creative use of this structure observed by Valdman (1975), as well as for Strik's (2012) findings that 4-8-year-old French-Dutch bilingual children favour QSV-structures. On the other hand, wh-in-situ follows the usual declarative sentence construction (the undetermined constituent is expressed by the question word in the constituent's usual position), which means that no additional structure has to be learned. Besides, both structures can easily be generalised, although they both have some exceptions. On the one hand, wh-in-situ is much rarer with *pourquoi* ('why'). This fact can also be supported by the results of my questionnaire item 1.4, in which the acceptability of *Pourquoi il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles?* is almost double as high (60%) as for *Il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles pourquoi?* (30%).<sup>1013</sup> On the other hand, *QUE/QUOI* ('what') is not possible as a wh-fronted variant without question particle (see item 1.2 of my questionnaire).<sup>1014</sup> This is problematic because even beginning learners need to have the skills to ask and answer questions on what they have, do, see, etc. (cf. CEFR, see below). Hence, either wh-in-situ or *Qu'est-ce qu*-structures are unavoidable during the first stage of language acquisition. As there are currently no studies on whether QSV or SVQ is more easily taken in (e.g. by comparing error rates and the respective time needed for their complete acquisition), it can only be presumed that, based on the before-mentioned, both structures will be rather easy to learn. To conclude this paragraph, declarative structures are to be favoured in beginners' classes. Since wh-in-situ seems to

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<sup>1010</sup> Even though the adjective *familier* and *populaire* may overlap and are thus difficult to distinguish, only *langue populaire* comprises variants that may be classified as 'slang' or even 'vulgar'. Although I doubt that QSV-structures are vulgar, they may be slightly more colloquial than SVQ-structures.

<sup>1011</sup> The participants had to state for each of the proposed variants whether they thought it to be possible (in the particular context) or not. While both variants were judged to be possible by the majority of participants, there still seems to be a significant difference between the structures' acceptance rates.

<sup>1012</sup> Of course, such an intuition will only exist for learners of an L1 in which focus is expressed by fronting. At least for English and German, this is the case.

<sup>1013</sup> However, in this precise example, I am tempted to (at least partly) attribute the difference to the discourse-function of a self-question.

<sup>1014</sup> This goes at least for hexagonal French (see e.g. Étienne & Sax 2009: 600). As Valdman (1967) points out, it does exist in Canadian French.

be slightly more common and regular, as well as less stigmatized, it is to be favoured as the first target variant of *wh*-interrogatives.

The next point I want to address regards the use of inverted forms. Like Valdman, I support a delayed introduction of inverted forms, but I do so only with regard to spoken language. As far as I am concerned, written texts which are no transcriptions of conversations or other forms of scriptural orality (e.g. SMS or advertising slogans) should contain inverted structures from the beginning. Accordingly, instructional questions, such as questions in reading-comprehension tasks or interrogatives in questionnaires should contain subject-verb inversion. I believe this to be justified because of several reasons: First of all, declarative structures are generally unauthentic in this context. This can be supported by the morphosyntactic forms of the off-voice comments in the reality-TV shows (oralised written interrogatives, see chapter 5) and the narrative parts of the detective novels (truly written interrogatives, see chapter 6). In these subcorpora, virtually all variable question forms are inverted. As stated above (cf. criterion 1, p.313), no structure which is practically impossible (even though it's impossibility might be merely linked to the medium and/or concept of orality) should be taught. Teaching spoken forms for written instruction is therefore ruled out.<sup>1015</sup> Secondly, I seriously doubt that, at least for native speakers of German, the reception of written inverted structures is more complicated than the one of non-inverted ones. I do not see how the understanding of an inverted structure could lag: the lexical content of the sentence is the same, the question mark indicates the questioning character of the sentence in both cases, and inversion is not used in many other structures than interrogatives anyway (hence, there is no potential of confusion). On top of that, canonical German interrogatives always show subject-verb inversion, so inverted forms are even closer to L1-grammar than non-inverted ones. It seems thus extremely unlikely that there will be acquisitional disadvantages if inverted structures are used in written input from the very beginning.<sup>1016</sup>

Another suggestion I would like to elaborate on, is Valdman's attempt to include discourse functions in the teaching of French interrogation. For this purpose, he suggests the teaching of *wh*-in-situ or *EST-CE QUE* structures for information-eliciting questions in direct interaction, and the use of *EST-CE QUE* and fronting for rhetorical and self-questions (Valdman 2002). While I fully agree on his general claim and his suggestion for non-direct interaction, I would be more cautious in suggesting *EST-CE QUE* structures for information elicitation. As we have seen in the previous two chapters, *wh*-questions with *EST-CE QUE* are scarce with questions words other than *QUE* (see pp.150, 160, 262). Interestingly, even the often

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<sup>1015</sup> Although periphrastic structures might be less shocking for native speakers, they are still very uncommon (if not inexistent) in written instructions and should thus not be used either.

<sup>1016</sup> The only possible disadvantage could be that *wh*-in-situ structures are presented less often and will thus be less recurrent. In German, one could speak of less possibilities for implicit *Einschleifung* ('repetition', lit. 'looping'). However, I do not believe this to be a problem as long as enough oral input is offered.

cited 'who'-question *qui est-ce qui* did neither occur in the reality TV show nor in the audio book corpus. Following these observations, I plead for restricting drill exercises to *Qu'est-ce que* ('what' as attributive or direct object without preposition) and *Qu'est-ce qui* ('what' as subject). In the input, other forms with *EST-CE QUE* (e.g. *Où est-ce que tu vas ?*) do by no means have to be excluded, but they should not give the misleading impression that periphrastic questions would be "[t]he most neutral way to ask questions" (Magnan & Walz 2002: 22). They may be neutral from a perceptive point of view, i.e. they are perceived as belonging neither to a very formal nor to a very informal register, but they are certainly not neutral from a productive point of view, i.e. they are not 'unmarked'/'usual' when looking at their frequency of occurrence.

Before putting together my pedagogical norm for wh-interrogatives, I would like to have a closer look at the guidelines provided by the CEFR. As becomes clear, it is necessary to separate speaking and writing as well as reception and production (see also the above-mentioned principle of *reception before production*, and Paternostro 2017: 282) if the pedagogical norm is supposed to be competence-oriented. While some interrogatives are needed as a means of expression (e.g. for asking for personal information), others only need to be understood (e.g. for answering feedback questionnaires). At the *breakthrough* level (A1), posing questions is an explicitly required production competence: At this stage, learners "can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has." (Council of Europe 2001) In this respect, one could determine a list of questions that have to be acquired. As a consequence, questions can be learned as unanalysed structures<sup>1017</sup> (cf. the above-mentioned principle of *formulas before formation*) at this early stage. One level higher, at *waystage* (A2), the structural analysis and creative use of interrogatives gains importance because learners should be able to "communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters." (Council of Europe 2001) As the focus is still on direct interaction, mostly spoken forms are demanded. Yet, at the latest at the *threshold* level, B1, the receptive inventory of question forms should have been completed with some written interrogatives because learners are supposed to be able to "deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken." (Council of Europe 2001) For instance, filling out a visa application or giving feedback by answering the questionnaire of a hotel will require the reception of questions with subject-verb inversion. Similarly, learners at this stage need to comprehend instructions ("Can understand and ask questions concerning the tasks to be performed on starting work." (Council of Europe 2001). Such a receptive competence of inverted structures is still sufficient at the *vantage* level (B2), where communication shall be possible "with a

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<sup>1017</sup> By the term "unanalysed structures" I do not want to exclude the possibility of decomposing the sentence into its constituents. In fact, I even believe this to be helpful for its memorisation. I have used this term to stress the fact that the question form is not decomposed with the aim to develop a rule and to apply this rule creatively.

degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party” (Council of Europe 2001). It is thus not until *Effective Operational Proficiency* (C1) that the production of inverted structures is required: Only when using “language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes” (Council of Europe 2001), learners will have to produce truly written interrogatives.<sup>1018</sup> When drawing up their own questionnaires, using interrogatives as titles in academic papers or writing professional e-mails, learners will finally have to make active use of inverted structures.

Reconciling the CEFR with my previous comments, a pedagogical norm for the morphosyntactic variation in French wh-interrogatives could accordingly be:

Table 54: My three-stage pedagogical norm for morphosyntactic wh-interrogative variants

		Reception	Production
<b>Stage 1a:</b> complete beginners (A0)	Spoken	Chunks only (e.g. <i>Tu t'appelles comment ? Où/Qui est/sont... ? , C'est qui/où ? Qu'est-ce que c'est ?</i> )	Chunks
	Written	- (dialogue transcriptions only)	-
<b>Stage 1b:</b> beginners (A1)	Spoken	More chunks (e.g. <i>Comment ça ... ? / Quel(le)(s) est/sont... ?</i> ) + wh-in-situ (with all question words)	Chunks (including <i>Qu'est-ce que</i> )
	Written	Simple inversions (stylistic & clitic) + <i>où est/sont</i> (as chunk)	-
<b>Stage 1c:</b> advanced beginners (A2)	Spoken	More chunks (e.g. <i>Qu'est-ce que le/la ... ?</i> ) + wh-in-situ + <i>Qu'est-ce que/i' ?</i> + variants for special discourse-functions (e.g. wh-fronted for rhetorical)	Chunks + wh-in-situ + <i>Qu'est-ce que/i' ?</i> + <i>Quel(le)(s) est/sont... ?</i>
	Written	All inversions (stylistic, clitic & complex)	<i>Quel(le)(s) est/sont... ?</i> + Chunks <sup>1019</sup>
<b>Stage 2:</b> intermediate learners (B1-B2)	Spoken	All variants	Chunks + wh-in-situ + <i>Qu'est-ce que/i' ?</i> + <i>Quel(le)(s) est/sont... ?</i> variants for special discourse-functions (e.g. <i>est-ce que</i> as means of reinforcement)
	Written	All inversions (stylistic, clitic & complex)	Most frequent inversions
<b>Stage 3:</b> advanced learners (C1-C2)	Spoken	All variants	All/Several variants
	Written	All inversions (stylistic, clitic & complex)	All inversions

<sup>1018</sup> By 'truly written', I mean forms that are not only medially, but also conceptually written (cf. the continuum of written and spoken language proposed by Koch & Oesterreicher (2011)).

<sup>1019</sup> The chunks to be used will depend on the exercise. Chunks used in an e-mail for making enquiries on a hotel room could example be *Avez-vous... ? / Pourriez-vous... ? / Serait-il possible de... ?*.

### 7.3.1.2 Morphosyntactic variation in yes/no-questions

As for yes/no-interrogatives, Valdman does not seem to have developed an explicit pedagogical norm. Yet, one can assume that a purely intonationally marked structure (e.g. *Tu vas à Paris ?* ↑) would take the place of the wh-fronted variant as the very first target form.<sup>1020</sup> Since the use of *EST-CE QUE* and inversion has been shown to be of secondary importance in contemporary spoken French (Coveney 2002; Hansen 2001), morphosyntactically unmarked interrogatives are the first variant to be taught according to the first criterion of authenticity. As in Valdman's suggestion for wh-interrogatives, *EST-CE QUE* could be second, and inversion could be introduced later on in written discourse, followed by the presentation of all three structures in order to raise awareness for situational variation.

A pedagogical norm following Valdman's notions could thus probably be summed up as:

CHUNKS AND NON-INVERTED STRUCTURES WITHOUT *EST-CE QUE* > INTRODUCTION OF *EST-CE QUE* FOR SPEAKING > INTRODUCTION OF INVERSION FOR WRITING > DISCUSSION OF ALL FORMS

This ordering also conforms with Antes' (2016) proposal. By and large, I will follow these suggestions. However, I would like to give one last precision regarding the semantic types when introducing the question particle *EST-CE QUE*. In Valdman's college textbook *Langue et culture*, *EST-CE QUE* is introduced in wh-questions before it is used in yes/no-questions (Magnan & Walz 2002). This does clearly not conform with the first criterion of authenticity, since *EST-CE QUE* is much more frequent in yes/no-interrogatives than in wh-interrogatives if *Qu'est-ce qu-*structures are left out (see chapters 5 and 6). What is more, such an ordering cannot be due to criteria two to five either: The previous data do not suggest that the acceptability of *EST-CE QUE* in yes/no-questions would be lower than in wh-questions.<sup>1021</sup> Likewise, periphrastic yes/no-interrogatives are at least as simple as wh ones as they only consist of *EST-CE QUE* followed by a declarative sentence. They may even be more easily learned because wh-questions also contain a question word, which needs to occur to the left of the question particle. Besides, *EST-CE QUE* is never adapted, which is an advantage compared to periphrastic 'what'- and 'who'-questions (cf. *Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ?* and *Qui est-ce qui a fait cela ?*). In short, a yes/no-question with *EST-CE QUE* is certainly not more difficult to be learned than a wh one, and the introduction of *EST-CE QUE* should either be done for both semantic types at once, or, as opposed to Valdman's college text book, yes/no-interrogatives should precede wh ones.

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<sup>1020</sup> Since there is nothing comparable to wh-words to be learnt during the very first stage, also the periphrastic variant would be possible from the beginning. However, for the purpose of pedagogical reduction, it will be advisable to introduce the variants step by step. Hence, frequency distributions give priority to intonation questions and postpone structures with *EST-CE QUE*.

<sup>1021</sup> Nonetheless, perception experiments would have to be conducted if one wanted to obtain sound acceptability rates.



One possibility is to introduce *EST-CE QUE* in yes/no-interrogatives within the same stage as *Qu'est-ce qu*-interrogatives, knowing that both of the structures are fairly common in authentic language use (*QUE-E{S/S}V*-structures represent about a tenth of the wh-interrogatives and *E{S/S}V*-structures about a fifth of the yes/no-interrogatives in the reality TV corpus, see chapter 5). Since the CEFR-description of the A1-level explicitly states that learners have to know how to “ask and answer questions about [...] things he/she has”, it is imperative to teach the productive use of questions like *Qu'est-ce que tu as [dans ta trousse] ?* already at this early stage. As for yes/no-interrogatives, *EST-CE QUE* is not necessary for posing questions, but learners will encounter them from early on. Hence, periphrastic structures should be contained in the input, but there is no need to immediately practise them. Since *EST-CE QUE*-structures are not only frequent, but also simple, regular, easily learnable, and well-accepted, it is still sensible to introduce these constructions during the first stage of language acquisition.

Taking into account the above-mentioned, a pedagogical norm for the morphosyntactic variation in French yes/no-interrogatives could be the following:

Table 55: My three-stage pedagogical norm for morphosyntactic yes/no-interrogative variants

		Reception	Production
<b>Stage 1a:</b> complete beginners (A0)	Spoken	Chunks (e.g. <i>Ça va ?</i> ) + intonation questions	Chunks
	Written	- (dialogue transcriptions only)	-
<b>Stage 1b:</b> beginners (A1)	Spoken	More chunks (e.g. <i>Tu viens à... ?</i> ) + intonation questions + <i>est-ce que</i>	Chunks + intonation
	Written	Simple (i.e. clitic) inversions	-
<b>Stage 1c:</b> advanced beginners (A2)	Spoken	More chunks (e.g. <i>Qu'est-ce que le/la ... ?</i> ) + intonation questions + <i>est-ce que</i> + variants for special discourse-functions (e.g. intonation questions for echo questions)	Chunks + intonation + <i>est-ce que</i>
	Written	Simple (i.e. clitic) inversions	-
<b>Stage 2:</b> intermediate learners (B1-B2)	Spoken	All variants	Chunks + intonation + <i>est-ce que</i> + variants for special discourse- functions
	Written	All inversions (i.e. clitic & complex)	Most frequent inversions
<b>Stage 3:</b> advanced learners (C1-C2)	Spoken	All variants	All/Several variants
	Written	All inversions (i.e. clitic & complex)	All inversions

### 7.3.2 Intonational variation in question forms

There has also been an attempt to draw up a pedagogical norm for intonation: Ramsey (2002) developed a pedagogical norm for (declaratives as well as) yes/no- and wh-interrogatives.<sup>1022</sup> Her norm is meant to be an abstract and simplified form of French intonation, which is adjusted to the three stages of proficiency<sup>1023</sup>. It is based on two elicitation task exercises<sup>1024</sup>, “namely reading a dialogue aloud and participating in a conversation with the researcher. [...] [A]ll questions posed in the form of a complete sentence were counted. Contours were described with the terms ‘rising’, ‘falling’, ‘flat’, and ‘complex’; these words relate to patterns perceived by ear by the researcher.” (Ramsey 2002: 144) These two tasks were carried out in French by seventeen beginning learners, eighteen intermediate learners, and twelve native speakers of French. Besides, nine monolingual speakers of English performed the dialogue-reading task in English<sup>1025</sup>. Having this control group, Ramsay could compare the learners’ prosodic interlanguage<sup>1026</sup> to L1-French intonation (i.e. the target language) as well as to English intonation (i.e. their native language). The participants were (undergraduate or graduate) students aged between seventeen and thirty-eight years, and they were tested at Indiana University. Ramsey’s most interesting results were:

- 1) There was less intonational variation in native (midwestern) American English than in native French, but there was even more in (beginning) learners’ French.
- 2) (At least beginning) learners produce (significantly) more rhythmic groups per sentence because they pause more often and have a slower speech rate.
- 3) Sentence-final contours are acquired more easily than sentence-medial ones.<sup>1027</sup>

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<sup>1022</sup> Developing a pedagogical norm for intonation starts from the premise that suprasegmental interlanguage exists. As Ramsey (2002) found that learners had an intonational system which was not a mere copy of L1 patterns, and that features of this interlanguage seemed to evolve towards “nativeness” with increasing proficiency, this premise is justified.

<sup>1023</sup> Ramsey terms those three stages “beginning”, “advanced”, and “near-native”. As becomes clear from her descriptions, “advanced” is comparable to the CEFR’s notion of ‘independent’ (what I term *intermediate*) and “near-native” to ‘proficient’ (what I term *advanced*).

<sup>1024</sup> In her paper, Ramsey presents three tasks. However, the third one (a picture-description) did not contain any question forms and was thus used for the development of a pedagogical norm for declaratives only.

<sup>1025</sup> This is somewhat problematic because dialogue-reading and free conversation diverged in the degree of intonational variation.

<sup>1026</sup> For “prosodic interlanguage” one could even introduce *interintonation* in analogy to the well-established term of *interphonology* (and *interlanguage*). Although the prefix *inter-* (“between”) may in some cases be a misnomer (an *interintonation* does not have to be between the mother tongue and the target, it can also be independent from both of them), it describes well its preliminary and dynamic state, as well as its orientation towards the target language.

<sup>1027</sup> A contour was considered *final* when it ended the sentence. All pre-final contours were thus denoted *medial*. Ramsey (2002) also mentions “whole-sentence”-patterns. Unfortunately, it does not become clear how she distinguishes between the acquisition of ‘sentence-medial + sentence-final’ contours and the acquisition of ‘whole-sentence’ patterns. For instance, the whole-sentence yes/no-question patterns were indicated with a higher percentage of matching native patterns than sentence-medial ones. The question arises how the pattern of a whole sentence can be considered as a match if sentence-medial patterns are not target-like.

On the whole, from these observations we will keep in mind that learners first need to reduce their intonational variation as well as their amount of phrase boundaries. The latter is particularly important because phrase boundaries influence the overall sentence-melody and will thus prevent the learner from using a native-like whole-sentence pattern. Furthermore, it becomes clear that the acquisition of final contours will precede the ones of medial patterns. It will hence be advisable to integrate final contours at beginner's level, and medial ones not before intermediate level. However, since my own work did not take into account medial contours, I will focus on sentence-final patterns only.

Before looking at Ramsey's more concrete results for final contours in *wh* and *yes/no*-questions, let us have a look at the guidelines provided by the CEFR. Unfortunately, the CEFR's description of the learner's prosodic competences does not contribute many details because intonation remains almost unspecified. Apart from the descriptors concerning public announcements (Council of Europe 2001), *intonation* is mentioned just once, and what is more, only for more advanced levels. As the descriptors were developed for the purpose of defining general phonological competence, they are furthermore phrased in very general terms: At B2-level, learners have "acquired a clear, natural, pronunciation and intonation", and from C1 onwards, learners are able to "vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning." (Council of Europe 2001) One thing we can retain is that learners should be exposed to intonational patterns encoding meaning-nuances before C-level. Also, B2-learners are generally supposed to have a rather "natural" (which supposedly means native-like) intonation, so interrogative intonation should have been trained<sup>1028</sup> before that.

In the following subsections, I will sum up Ramsey's results on final contours in *wh* and *yes/no*-questions. Additionally, I will give an overview on previous descriptions of interrogative intonation in French and relate them to my own findings. Based on this, I will substantiate the pedagogical norm(s) I put forward.

### 7.3.2.1 Intonational variation in *wh*-questions

As Ramsey (2002) observed, final falls as well as final rises are possible, but falls seem to be more typical. My data from the reality TV shows as well as from the audio books confirm this observation: While sentence-final F0 can move in both directions, there are slightly more falls than rises, and clearly more falls than in *yes/no*-interrogatives. This may also (at least partially) explain why Delattre (1966) and Di Cristo (1998) claimed that *wh*-interrogatives would be falling. However, I do not think it is sensible to teach a rule such as '*wh*-interrogatives are falling'.<sup>1029</sup> As far as I am concerned, even rules

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<sup>1028</sup> As I do not know if this can be reached by mere exposure, I will have to leave open whether this training has to be explicit (e.g. by imitation exercises) or implicit (e.g. by merely including target features into audio material).

<sup>1029</sup> Likewise, I would step back from teaching rules generally associating a rising melody with French interrogatives (see e.g. Champagne-Muzar & Bourdages 1998).

taking into account tendencies with regard to morphosyntactic form should be avoided. To illustrate, here is an example of a rule not worth teaching:

In some wh-questions, the question word is sentence-initial. Those questions have a falling intonation. In the remaining cases, the question word is sentence-final. Those questions have a rising intonation.’ (own translation from German).<sup>1030</sup>

Not only is the morphosyntactic description inaccurate,<sup>1031</sup> but sentence-initial wh-words can still occur with a final rise and sentence-final wh-words are not systematically linked to rising patterns. This rule will therefore have many exceptions – and those exceptions will be difficult to describe.

In any case, rules with too many exceptions lose their utility. If, as Ramsey (2002) observed, rising, flat, and complex contours can equally occur at the end of a wh-question, a straightforward rule is simply not accurate and thus unnecessary cognitive load. Moreover, such a rule would only be helpful if it led to an intonational interlanguage which is either perceived as less accented or associated with more positive extralinguistic aspects (e.g. a more educated group of speakers). It is though very unlikely that native speakers perceive a rise as less native-like or sociostylistically higher than a fall. After all, rises and falls seem to be widespread in general. At any rate, if clear rules shall be used to teach intonation, intonational distinctiveness<sup>1032</sup> in wh-interrogatives needs to be determined more precisely. Until then, I would rather claim that the rule of emphasizing the question word by associating a high tone with it (cf. Delais-Roussarie et al. 2015) is all non-proficient FLE-learners need to know (and apply). Nonetheless, I find it crucial to incorporate intonational variation into the input. Being exposed to authentic language use, learners will hopefully get more target-like without explicit instruction. At any rate, they will be confronted and have to cope with variation once they interact with native speakers, so they should at least be trained with regard to reception.

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<sup>1030</sup> “Bei manchen Ergänzungsfragen steht das Fragewort am Satzanfang. Diese Fragen haben eine fallende Intonation. Bei anderen Ergänzungsfragen steht das Fragewort am Satzende. Diese Fragen haben eine steigende Intonation.” Example taken from *Découvertes 1, Série verte, Grammatikheft*, p.6, translated from German. For the scan of this rule, see p.376.

<sup>1031</sup> It is inaccurate in the sense that wh-in-situ questions do not necessarily have sentence-final question words, and that wh-ex-situ question words can still be preceded by prepositions, left dislocations, or connectors. Admittedly, this is not of great importance at the beginners’ level, but inaccurate descriptions are introduced without a real profit.

<sup>1032</sup> As the traditional reading of distinctiveness suggests, with regard to meaning, but maybe also to style or other factors.

An intonational norm for the teaching of wh-interrogatives could thus be the following:

Table 56: My three-stage pedagogical norm for final contours in wh-interrogatives

	Perception	Production
<b>Stage 1:</b> beginning learners (A1-A2)	Several final contours (with high tones on wh-words, starting with the most prototypical one, i.e. a simple fall)	- (no prescription)
<b>Stage 2:</b> intermediate learners (B1-B2)	Meaning-related distinctions (echo questions always rising)	Wh-word with a high tone <sup>1033</sup>
<b>Stage 3:</b> advanced learners (C1-C2)	All final contours (i.e. rises, falls, rise-falls, fall-rises, plateaus)	Meaning-related distinctions (echo questions always rising), training with visual means like Praat <sup>1034</sup>

### 7.3.2.2 Intonational variation in yes/no-questions

In Ramsey's (2002) study, there were seven intonational patterns for the morphosyntactically unmarked yes/no-question (*Tu as aimé ce film ?*). All intonational realisations of this structure contained a final rise (or a pre-final rise with a plateau). Interestingly, even beginning learners always used such an intonational ending. However, this seems to be the case for this token only: The author reports a percentage of native-matching final contours in only slightly over a third and a half (beginning and intermediate learners respectively) of the yes/no-questions (Ramsey 2002)<sup>1035</sup>. As the "[t]otal number of different patterns produced per sentence" amounts to 30, it is possible that in other interrogatives there were falls, rise-falls and/or fall-rises. As we have seen in the previous chapters, all of them exist in authentic French language use.

However, according to Ramsey (2002: 155f.), gradual rises from the beginning and flat contours with a rise at the end account for over 70% of the native contours produced in the dialogue-reading task. Consequently, those two patterns will be the best primary target.

<sup>1033</sup> Even here, there exist some exceptions. For instance, wh-final questions can occur with falling patterns. However, generally stressing other words than the question word is clearly perceived as unnatural (cf. *Où est-ce que TU vas?* or *Mais C'EST quand ton anniversaire ?*).

<sup>1034</sup> According to Ramsey (2002), audio-visual methods have been demonstrated as the most effective way of teaching intonation.

<sup>1035</sup> From the same table, it can be inferred that final contours and whole sentences of yes/no-questions seemed to be easier than the final contours of wh-questions. On the other hand, medial contours seem to be easier in wh-questions than in yes/no ones.

A pedagogical norm for yes/no-interrogatives could accordingly be:

Table 57: My three-stage pedagogical norm for final contours in yes/no-interrogatives

	Perception	Production
<b>Stage 1:</b> beginning learners (A1-A2)	Several final contours (starting with gradual rises and flat contours with a final rise as these seem to be the two most prototypical ones)	Rising {s/S}V-structures
<b>Stage 2:</b> intermediate learners (B1-B2)	Meaning-related distinctions (e.g. falls for self-questions with <i>est-ce que</i> )	First meaning-related distinctions (e.g. counter-expectational questions with rise-fall)
<b>Stage 3:</b> advanced learners (C1-C2)	All final contours (i.e. rises, rise-falls, fall-rises, plateaus)	Meaning-related distinctions (e.g. falls for self-questions with <i>est-ce que</i> ), training with visual means like Praat

## 7.4 Interrogatives in textbooks

In this section, the input on interrogatives in four FLE-textbooks is described and discussed. By analysing two German and two French A1-level textbooks, general teaching practices as well as cultural differences shall be revealed. Morphosyntactic and intonational variation will be both taken into account, and the results will be compared to the pedagogical norms I developed in the last section.

### 7.4.1 Research interest and expectations

According to Valdman (1967: 6) and Antes (2016), the two mostly used interrogative variants in American textbooks are inverted and periphrastic structures. Since this observation does not conform with my own (teaching and learning) experience, the analysis of a selection of recently published European textbooks is of scientific interest. Moreover, previous studies on the teaching of interrogatives in FLE seem to have focused on morphosyntax, leaving intonation aside. The only study on teaching interrogative intonation (Ramsey 2002), on the other hand, did not take into consideration input nor did it link intonational patterns to morphosyntactic variation. My own study should thus fill these gaps by analysing both levels of interrogative variation in European textbooks. As a pedagogical norm for interrogative variation has been developed in the last section, such a textbook analysis will also allow a comparison of my proposal with the actual state of teaching materials.

As FLE-textbooks in France are not designed to suit native speakers of German, there may be expected differences due to the different target groups (German-dominant learners vs. alloglot learners), but there may also be intercultural differences in didactics. For this reason, German as well as French textbooks were to be consulted. As the input provided would most certainly depend on the book series as well, the analysis of a single textbook per country would not have sufficed. Rather, for each country

the analysis had to include at least two textbooks from different publishing houses and authors. As a consequence, the minimal sample consisted of four textbooks.<sup>1036</sup>

The analysis of those four textbooks should bring to light how interrogative variation is treated in German and French teaching materials respectively. More precisely, the aim of this study was to detect similarities and differences concerning pedagogical reduction and ordering, as well as explicit and implicit suggestions on what regularities can be found in interrogative variation.

With regard to morphosyntactic variation, the distribution and ordering of structures was expected to be different from Valdman's and Antes' observations. Knowing that German syllabi put special emphasis on spoken language (cf. the demand for participation in face-to-face conversations, language mediation, and audio-visual comprehension of authentic film sequences in the *Bildungsplan* of *Baden-Württemberg* 2016), I hypothesized that, at least in the German textbooks, declarative structures would precede and outnumber inverted ones. Additionally, it was assumed that written and spoken language would be differentiated, as previous studies (see also chapters 5 and 6) had shown that written interrogatives are usually inverted, whereas spoken interrogatives rather tend to appear with straight word order.

As intonation usually has a more marginal status in foreign language teaching, expectations regarding the treatment of intonational variation were less straightforward. Since certain correlations between morphosyntax, pragmatics and intonation were observed in authentic language use (see chapters 5 and 6), it was likely that the choice of a final intonation pattern would depend on these factors in textbooks as well. However, as it had also been shown that none of these factors allows any direct mapping, it would be difficult to formulate any rules. Nonetheless, it is a well-known fact that teaching materials sometimes incorporate rules mapping prosody to semantic types, as for instance 'the curve of questions without *wh*-word is always rising' (see e.g. Abry & Veldeman-Abry 2007; Abry & Chalaron 2011, 2015), or to morphosyntactic types, as for instance 'if a question contains a sentence-final *wh*-word, it is pronounced with a final rise' (see e.g. Abry & Veldeman-Abry 2007). One goal is thus to reveal whether such inaccurate categorical associations are suggested in the German and/or French teaching materials. Besides, it will be interesting to see not only what explicit rules are indicated but also whether the implicit input suggests systematic links or not.

#### 7.4.2 Method

The textbook analysis was carried out in several steps. First, I carried out a quantitative examination of the two different levels of interrogative variation (see 7.4.3.1). In this context, morphosyntactic

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<sup>1036</sup> Of course, a sample bigger than the minimal number would have been more representative. Due to reasons of time and space, such an extensive analysis was unfortunately not possible.

forms were classified and counted. Besides, a sample of 500 interrogatives was also investigated perceptually and acoustically. After that, the training material of exercises on interrogatives was examined (see 7.4.3.2). In a last step, the rules on interrogative formation which are taught explicitly were collected and compared (see 7.4.3.3).

At the beginning, the **textbooks** to be analysed had to be **selected**. Since I was particularly interested in the teaching of FLE in southern German schools, or more precisely in *Gymnasien*<sup>1037</sup> in *Baden-Württemberg*, I decided to analyse the two most recently published textbooks typically used at these schools. As I have been told, and as I too know from personal experience, the two most common book series are *À plus* (Cornelsen 2012) and *Découvertes* (Klett 2012). Since I was also interested in intercultural differences in didactics, I decided to include two French textbooks. Unfortunately, there were no textbooks for the same learner group (i.e. students of secondary schools) available. One of the main reasons for this will certainly be that French publishing houses tend to develop material either for primary-school children (*enfants*, aged 7-10) or for older youth (*grands adolescents*, aged 16-18) (see the homepage of CLE international). Hence, there are virtually no teaching materials for the same age group as FLE-beginners in Germany (who are usually aged 10-13 years). Moreover, textbooks from Germany are mostly conceived for L1-German learners, whereas textbooks from France clearly target alloglot learner groups. Diverging in these aspects, the French textbook pair should at least be comparable with regard to date of publication and curriculum. Moreover, for all of the four textbooks, audio material had to be available if intonational analyses should be carried out as well. The best opportunity sample I could obtain consisted in the two college/university textbooks *Écho* and *Rond-Point*.<sup>1038</sup> As pedagogical reduction will fade out when learners reach advanced language proficiency, I decided to focus on the teaching of interrogatives to beginners. Consequently, I mainly used the first textbook of the respective series for my analysis.

Once the four textbooks had been chosen, they were explored and all sentences ending in a question mark were extracted manually.<sup>1039</sup> All interrogatives from the first unit till the end of the vocabulary section were included for **morphosyntactic analysis**.<sup>1040</sup> When interrogatives were part of closed ordering, transformation or insertion exercises, the target sentences were included as well, marking any added material by square brackets. The written interrogatives were copied into a text file and

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<sup>1037</sup> *Gymnasien* are comparable to British grammar schools. They are secondary schools of the highest performance level, and they are the only school type leading to a university-qualifying graduation.

<sup>1038</sup> As Valdman's college textbooks, these may certainly be adapted to the "increased cognitive abilities of more mature students" (Magnan & Walz 2002: 29), i.e. they may provide more reflection on authentic language use. Also, the unit texts will present different life situations. Nonetheless, the acquisition of basic communicative skills, including questions formation, should be comparable.

<sup>1039</sup> The possibility that single interrogatives have been overlooked should be acknowledged.

<sup>1040</sup> The vocabulary section was included because it is an important source of chunks, which learners even tend to revise several times.



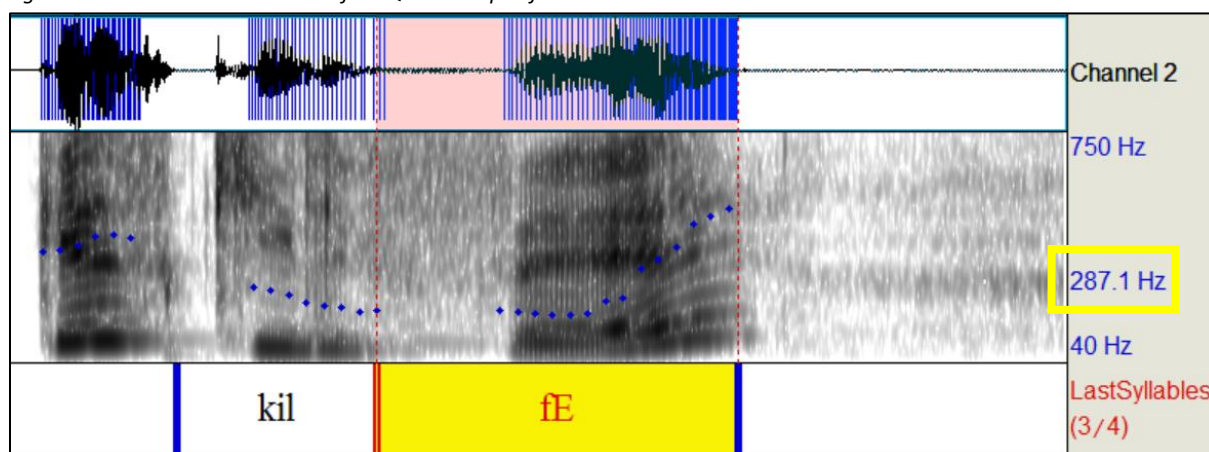
annotated semantically as well as morphosyntactically by adding abbreviations of three letters (see example (618), which is a yes/no-interrogative (YNI) with declarative structure (DEC)).

(618) YNI\_DEC: Salut, ça va?

The counting was done by a Perl script, which I wrote especially for this purpose. By automating the quantification, I could not only save time but also prevent mistakes. Also, calculations of proportions as well as comparisons and chi-squared test R-codes were integrated. The results were printed in a self-explanatory text. In order to complete these quantitative results of the implicit input by some qualitative data, I also collected exercises and rules about interrogative structures.

Likewise, for the **intonational analysis**, I collected cases in which the intonation of interrogatives was trained, or an explicit rule was mentioned. For the quantitative analysis, the first 125 recorded multisyllabic interrogatives of each textbook were chosen.<sup>1041</sup> This was decided because the focus of this study was on possible pedagogical reduction, and simplification might decrease across time. Also, this technique would give a good general impression on which types of interrogatives are most encountered during the first lessons. Monosyllabic interrogatives were ignored because acoustic measurements should be obtained by comparing the mean-F0 of the last stressed syllable (and where applicable the following schwa) with the one of the penultimate. The interrogatives selected were written into a spreadsheet, and the equivalent recordings were cut out from the audio material. Then, the audio files were analysed acoustically with Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2013), manually segmenting the last syllables and measuring their mean-F0 (see figure 93).

Figure 93: Mean-F0 measurement for “Qu’est-ce qu’il fait ?”



The values were added in the spreadsheet, where they were used to calculate the first dependent variable, namely the mean-F0 difference in semitones.<sup>1042</sup> Also, nuclear configurations were

<sup>1041</sup> The textbooks do not give any details about the speakers, but in all textbooks series, there are a couple of different speakers (of different age and sex).

<sup>1042</sup> The formula used was  $=12 * \text{LOG}(\text{mean-F0}_{\text{ultimate}} / \text{mean-F0}_{\text{penultimate}}); 2$

determined (mainly on the base of perception, but in indeterminate cases, F0-measurements were taken into account as well) and annotated as the second dependent variable. In the example given in figure 93, the nuclear configuration was determined as L\*H% because there was a low tonal target (i.e. an F0-minimum in the stressed syllable, aka a low pitch accent) before a final rise (i.e. a rising movement towards the end of the last syllable, aka a high boundary tone). To illustrate all four nuclear configurations possible in French interrogatives, one prototypical example of each of the four final contours is given hereafter.

Figure 94: H\*H% illustration (Rond-Point 1) Figure 95: H\*L% illustration (Écho 1)

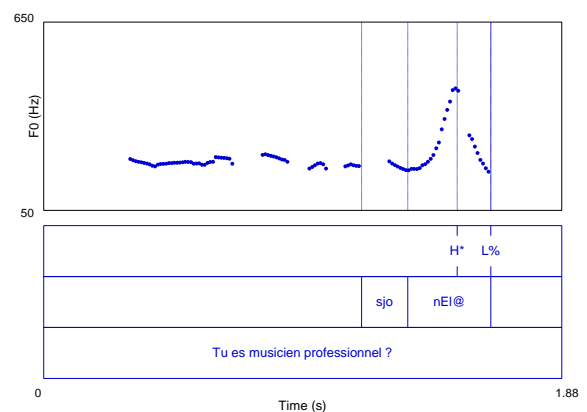
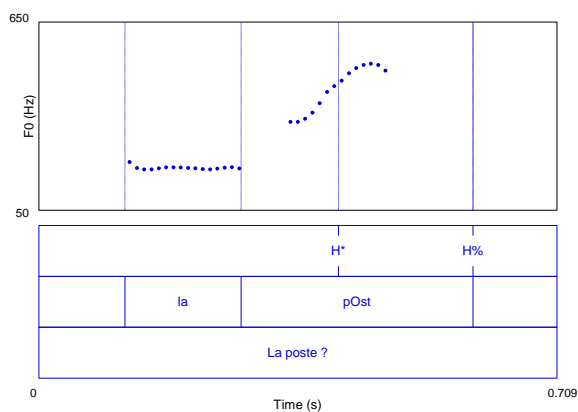


Figure 96: L\*L% illustration (Découvertes 1)<sup>1043</sup>

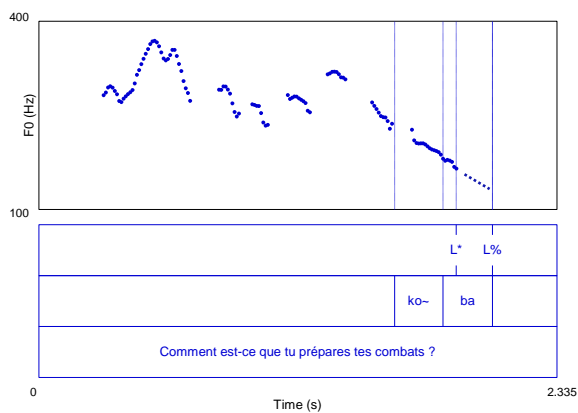
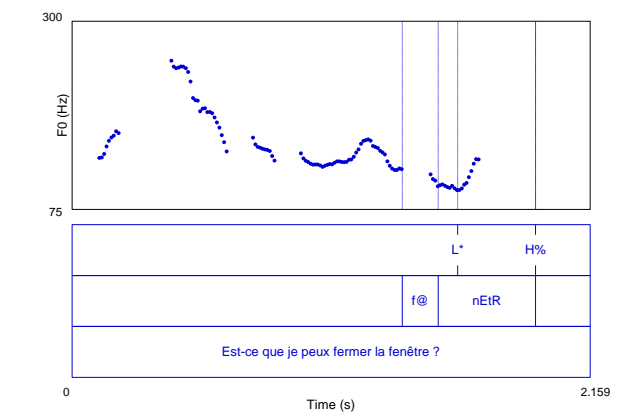


Figure 97: L\*H% illustration (À plus 1)



Additionally, the country of publication and the morphosyntactic type were added as independent variables. The counting, boxplot drawing and statistical evaluation were carried out by means of R 3.3.3. (R Core Team 2016).

### 7.4.3 Results

In this subsection, the results of my quantitative and qualitative analyses will be presented. At first, the quantitative outcomes of the morphosyntactic and intonational investigations will be discussed

<sup>1043</sup> The [a]-sound was creaky and could thus not be visualised accurately. For the purpose of illustration, I inserted the continuation of the dotted line manually.

(see 7.4.3.1). After that, I will give an insight into the explicit training of interrogatives (see 7.4.3.2). Finally, rule indications will be pointed out and compared (see 7.4.3.3).

#### 7.4.3.1 Results on implicit input

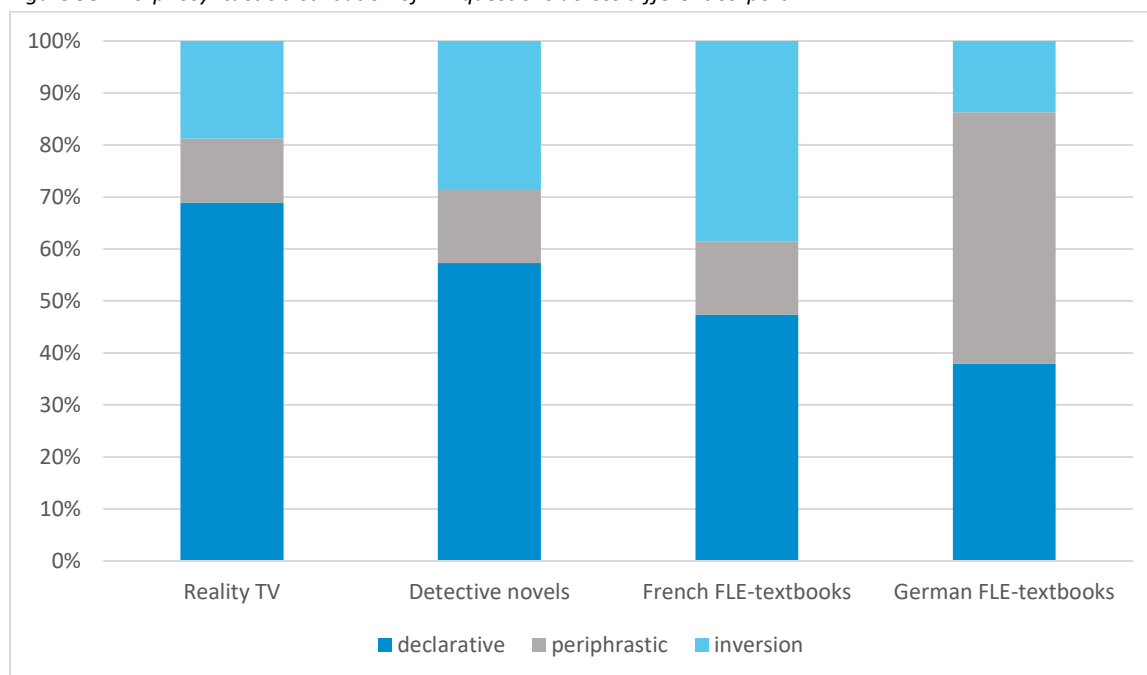
In the following, the results of the analysis of implicit input are presented. As in the previous chapters, the description of morphosyntactic variation will precede the one of intonational variation, and within the levels of variation, *wh*-questions will be described before *yes/no*-questions. In all cases, I will start by summarising traditional (socio)linguistic descriptions, go on with indicating the totals and proportions of the forms, continue with possible influence factors (including, when the possibility arises, statistical significance tests), and conclude my observations with a short discussion.

##### Wh-questions

##### Morphosyntax

In sociolinguistic works, inverted structures are usually considered as ‘formal/written’, periphrastic ones as ‘neutral’, and forms which are neither marked by word order nor by a question particle as ‘informal/spoken’ (see e.g. Coveney 2011). This traditional view was partially confirmed by the studies presented in chapters 5 and 6, but more importantly, it was revealed that there are significant differences across semantic types and question words (see also Coveney 2002; Myers 2007; Druetta 2009). Compared to *yes/no*-interrogatives, *wh*-interrogatives showed significantly more inversion, and *EST-CE QUE* was very scarce with question words other than *qu’*. Accordingly, morphosyntactic forms in the two corpora – which are neither purely written nor purely spoken in conception – were dispersed similarly: Most forms contained neither inversion nor *EST-CE QUE*, and inversion was slightly more common than the question particle structure (cf. the two left columns in figure 16). This last tendency was even stronger when *Qu’est-ce qu’*-structures were excluded from the counting. Consequently, it seemed sensible to restrict the teaching of *EST-CE QUE* in *wh*-questions to ‘what’-questions (cf. 7.3.1.1). Yet, the German textbooks clearly refute this idea. As the morphosyntactic distribution of *wh*-interrogatives in the two textbooks suggests, periphrastic structures are rather presented as the most usual form of a *wh*-question: Every other *wh*-question is formulated with *EST-CE QUE* (cf. right column in figure 16).

Figure 98: Morphosyntactic distribution of *wh*-questions across different corpora



As for subject-verb inversion, the **German textbooks** use though – at least at first sight – a similar strategy to what I suggested in my pedagogical norm (see 7.3.1.1): They mostly present non-inverted forms. Indeed, they restrict inversion to a few ready-made formulations. In *Découvertes 1*, the linguistic forms *Où est/sont... ?*, *Qui est-ce ?* *Que fait/ont/va faire... ?* *Que cherche... ?* *Quelle heure est-il ?* *Quel temps fait-il ?* *Comment allez-vous ?* and *Comment s'appelle... ?* are the only ones containing subject-verb inversion. The textbook *À plus 1* goes even further: Here, only one inverted structure is presented, namely the stylistic inversion pattern *Où est/sont... ?*. This is, however, problematic with regard to instructions. As instructions are authentically realised as inverted structures (see any French secondary school material such as *SVT 5<sup>e</sup>* provided under [www.livrescolaire.fr](http://www.livrescolaire.fr)), such a simplification leads to a deviation from natural language use. Accordingly, the German textbooks replace these forms initially by the German equivalent (see (619) and (620)), and later by *wh*-in-situ structures (see (621) and (622)) or structures with the question particle (see (623) to (625) & figures 99 and 100).

(619) *Écoutez la chanson. Die Wörter des Refrains sind unten erklärt. Was könnt ihr außerdem noch verstehen ?*<sup>1044</sup>

(620) *Ferme ton livre et écoute. | Jugendliche sprechen über ihre Hobbys. Welche Hobbys hörst du heraus ?*<sup>1045</sup>

(621) *Écoutez. Vous arrivez où ?*<sup>1046</sup>

(622) *C'est où ? Écoute et réponds.*<sup>1047</sup>

<sup>1044</sup> English translation: 'Listen to the song. The words of the chorus are explained below. What else can you understand?' (*Découvertes 1*, p.74)

<sup>1045</sup> English translation: 'Close your book and listen. Youth speak about their hobbies. What/Which hobbies do you hear/recognise?' (*À plus 1*, p.66)

<sup>1046</sup> English translation: 'Listen. Where do you get to ?' (*Découvertes 1*, p.82)

<sup>1047</sup> English translation: 'Where is it/that? Listen and answer.' (*À plus 1*, p.156)

- (623) *Pourquoi est-ce que tomber ne fait pas mal, en judo ?*<sup>1048</sup>  
 (624) *Quels vêtements est-ce que vous aimez ? Quels vêtements est-ce que vous n'aimez pas ?*<sup>1049</sup>  
 (625) *Quel temps est-ce qu'il fait à Marseille, à Strasbourg et à Gavarnie ? Wie ist das Wetter in Marseille, in Straßburg und in Gavarnie ?*<sup>1050</sup>

In contrast, the **French textbooks** show roughly the same tendencies as the corpora of authentic language use (cf. the three left columns in figure 16).<sup>1051</sup> The only difference lies in the textbooks' somewhat even higher proportion of inverted structures (see (626) to (630) & figures 101 and 102), which may though be attributed to the frequency of written questions in instructions and reading comprehension.<sup>1052</sup>

- (626) *COMMENT S'APPELLENT-ILS ?*<sup>1053</sup>  
 (627) *Quel âge ont-ils ?*<sup>1054</sup>  
 (628) *Quelles questions aimeriez-vous poser sur ce forum ?*<sup>1055</sup>  
 (629) *Que pensez-vous de ces affirmations ?*<sup>1056</sup>  
 (630) *Pourquoi le poème ci-contre a-t-il pour titre « Recette » ?*<sup>1057</sup>

Figure 99: Reading comprehension questions in *À plus*, p.92

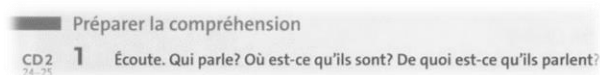


Figure 100: Reading comprehension questions in *Découvertes*, p.100

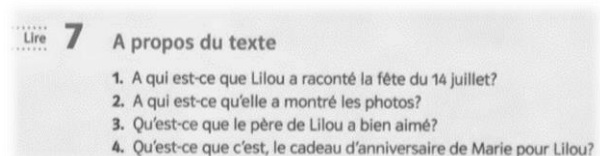
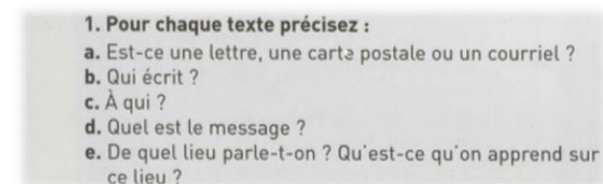


Figure 101: Reading comprehension questions in *Écho 1*, p.28



<sup>1048</sup> English translation: 'Why does falling not hurt in judo?' (*Découvertes 1*, p.84)

<sup>1049</sup> English translation: 'Which cloths do you like ? Which cloths don't you like?' (*Découvertes 1*, p.100)

<sup>1050</sup> English translation: 'What's the weather like in Marseille, Strasbourg, and Gavarnie?' (*À plus 1*, p.142)

<sup>1051</sup> Having seen that the distributions clearly diverge from one another, a chi-squared test of independence seems superfluous. For the sake of completeness, I would like to add nonetheless that it is virtually excluded that the two samples of textbooks, the German textbooks and the authentic corpora or the French textbooks and the authentic corpora are taken from the same population ( $p < 2.2e-16$  for each).

<sup>1052</sup> At first sight, one might think that the difference across countries of publication could also be due to the fact that college or university students will have different linguistic needs than secondary-school pupils. It is certainly true that the number of situations in which 10-year old high school students usually come across formal speech are still limited, while young adults encounter formal speech on a regular basis. However, textbooks for schoolchildren still use the same kind of written (and thus formal) instruction, so this additional reasoning may only be relevant for the presentation of spoken language.

<sup>1053</sup> English translation: 'What's their name?' (*Rond-Point 1*, p.25)

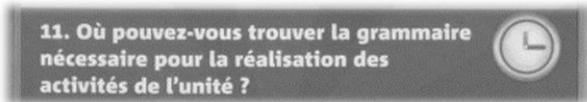
<sup>1054</sup> English translation: 'How old are they?' (*Rond-Point 1*, p.35)

<sup>1055</sup> English translation: 'What questions would you like to ask about that forum?' (*Écho 1*, p.63)

<sup>1056</sup> English translation: 'What do you think about these affirmations/statements?' (*Écho 1*, p.76)

<sup>1057</sup> English translation: 'Why does the poem next to this have the title *Recette* ('recipe')?' (*Écho 1*, p.83)

Figure 102: Reading comprehension questions in *Rond-Point 1*, p.17



Similarly, the French textbooks include written communication (such as letters or e-mails, see figure 103) which contain inverted questions, while the German ones principally exclude inversion even in that kind of texts (see figure 104).<sup>1058</sup>

Figure 103: Letter in *Écho 1*, p. 102

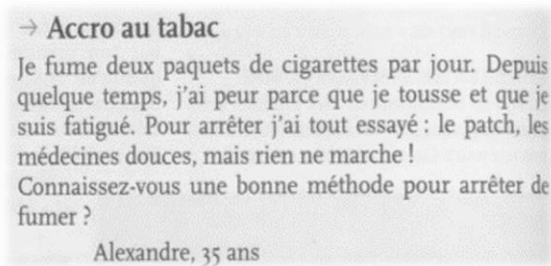
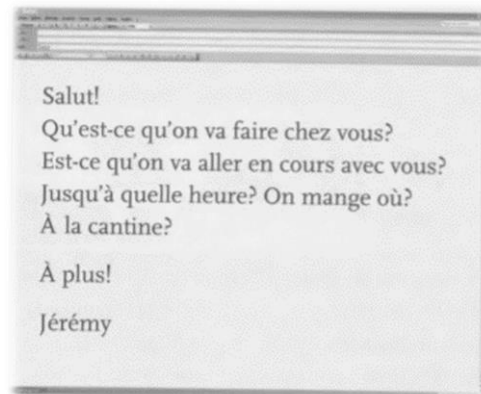


Figure 104: E-Mail in *À plus 1*, p. 102



As for spoken language, which is presented in the form of dialogues, all textbooks seem to favour straight word order. Nonetheless, there is a proportional difference: The German textbooks use *est-ce que* in more cases than the French ones (cf. figures 105 and 106).

Figure 105: Dialogue in *Découvertes 1*, p.63

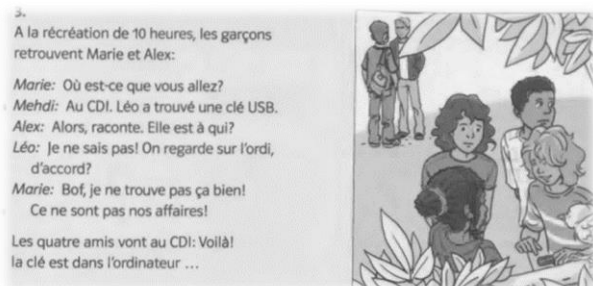


Figure 106: Dialogue in *Rond-Point 1*, p.42



**To sum up**, in the German textbooks, the use of inverted structures is artificially restricted whereas the use of *est-ce que* is artificially expanded. In contrast, the French textbooks are oriented towards a naturalistic language use.

<sup>1058</sup> There are only few exceptions to this in *Découvertes 1*. On page 109, for example, the question *comment allez-vous ?* appears in the text of a post card. Since the learners in Germany are very young, it is certainly justified to generally present more informal writing, but one may wonder whether a strict avoidance of inverted forms is useful.

## Intonation

Traditionally, *wh*-questions have been described as falling (see above). This description could have led to a pedagogical reduction, namely the restriction of intonational patterns to simple falls. In order to see whether this semantic type can actually be mapped to a certain final contour, the distribution of nuclear configurations has been drawn up. The counts are presented hereafter.

Table 58: Distribution of nuclear configurations in *wh*-interrogatives in the four FLE-textbooks

	H*H%	H*L%	L*H%	L*L%
Total (n = 201)	80	38	46	37
Percentage (rounded)	40%	19%	23%	18%

As the distribution of nuclear configurations shows, there is no direct link between the semantic type of *wh*-questions and a certain final F0-movement. However, there can be observed a tendency. Surprisingly, the *wh*-questions analysed were twice as many times rising as falling. Considering the traditional description of *wh*-questions as being falling, it is striking that simple falls were the least frequent pattern. As a consequence, any traditional rule indication would not only be superfluous, but even non-conform with the input learners are exposed to.

These results are confirmed acoustically by the F0-measurement differences between the last syllables. While the mean F0-difference is slightly positive (0.7st), positive as well as negative values were observed (see figure 107). To support this even further, utterances can be classified according to their mean-F0 differences into the three categories of *rising* (i.e. the last syllable's mean F0 is at least 1st higher than the second-last's), *falling* (i.e. the last syllable's mean F0 is at least one semitone lower than the second-last's), and *flat* (i.e. the last syllable's mean F0 is less than one semitone lower or less than one semitone higher). As comes to light (see figure 108), the most widespread mean-F0 difference is a rise (89 out of 201, i.e. 44%). In contrast, the traditionally associated final fall is realised in only slightly more than a quarter (56 out of 201, i.e. 28%) of the *wh*-questions. Equally often, there was neither a clear rise nor a clear fall. In seven cases, measurements of the last syllables didn't even show any difference at all.<sup>1059</sup> In sum, there was a tendency for a higher mean-F0 in the ultimate, but constant and lower mean-F0 values were not marginal either.

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<sup>1059</sup> This is though also due to the fact the mean-F0 measurement were rounded to integrals.

Figure 107: Boxplot of intonational movement in last syllables of *wh*-interrogatives

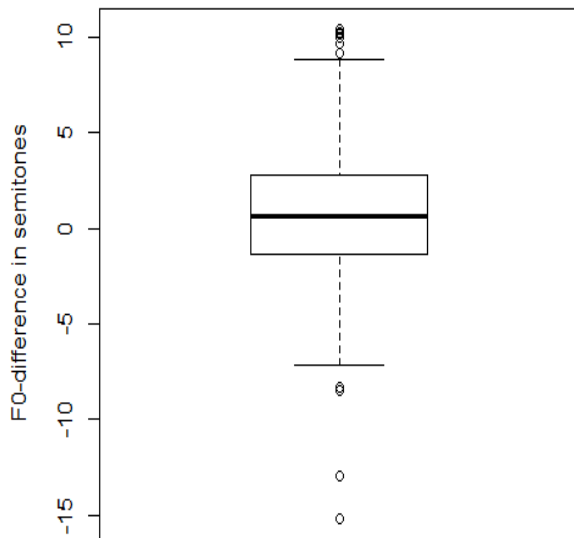
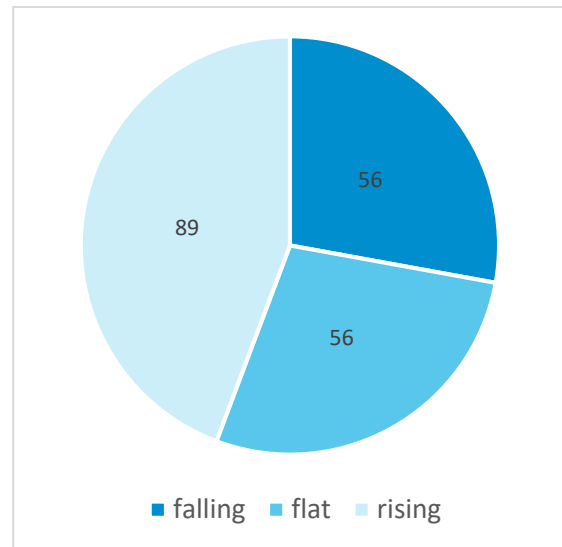


Figure 108: Distribution of mean-F0 difference classes in *wh*-interrogatives

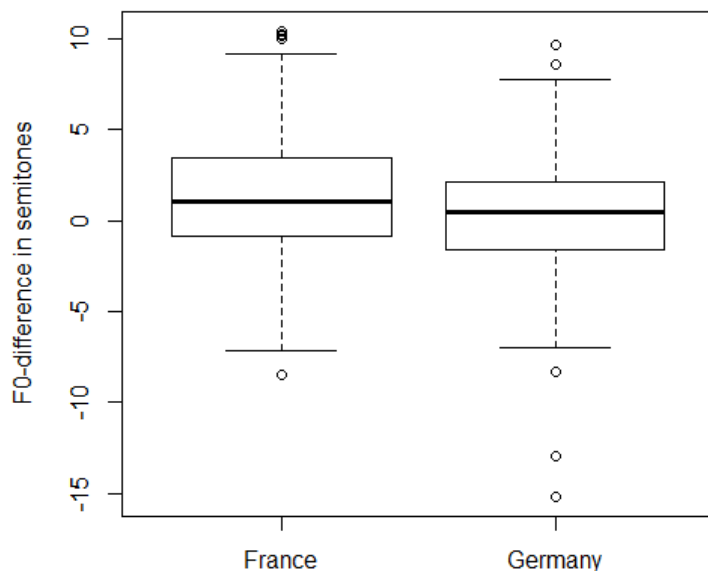


Consequently, one may wonder if the observed variation can be systematised. The first factor that will be taken into account is the impact of **publication country**. Since there were clear differences in the reduction of morphosyntactic variation (see above), one could assume that intonational variation will be presented differently as well. In that case, German textbooks might be inclined to orient intonational patterns towards the traditional norm. On the other hand, intonational variation is certainly less conscious than morphosyntactic variation because the former is not orthographically transcribed. Hence, one could also expect that pedagogical reduction is less likely to take place because intonational realisations are produced unconsciously whereas the authors of textbooks are aware of morphosyntactic variation.

At first appearance, the range and mean of the F0-measurements do not display great differences (see figure 109).



Figure 109: Mean-F0 difference in wh-interrogatives across countries



Yet, appearances can be deceptive: When calculating a linear regression model<sup>1060</sup>, the factor of publication country is revealed as significant. The wh-interrogatives in the audio material from the two German textbooks do indeed show less rising patterns. On average, wh-interrogatives were one semitone less rising in the German teaching materials than in the French ones ( $\beta=-1.1$ ,  $SE=0.5$ ,  $p=0.04$ ). However, if one investigates the intonational differences in perception categories, as was done for the whole data set in table 58, it is revealed that both countries present rather similar intonational variation: The percentages in table 59 show comparable proportions of simple rises, rise-falls, fall-rises and simple falls.

Table 59: Nuclear configurations in wh-interrogatives in the four FLE-textbooks across publication countries

		H*H%		H*L%		L*H%		L*L%	
		F	G	F	G	F	G	F	G
Total (n = 201)		37	43	15	23	17	29	17	20
86	115								
Percentage (rounded)		43%	37%	17%	20%	20%	25%	20%	17%

Since the difference in their means is nonetheless significant, it is reasonable to ask in which cases mean values actually vary. Reusing the three-tier classification from figure 108, it becomes obvious that there are – as was also suggested by the higher proportion of H\*H% configurations – more rises in the French textbooks. More precisely, the two distributions are divergent regarding the degree of prevalence of mean-F0 rises: While every other wh-interrogative of the French textbooks was classified

<sup>1060</sup> The R-code used was `lm(DifferenceLastSyllables~Country)`

as rising, the wh-interrogatives of the German textbooks were so in only 40% of the cases (see figures 110 and 111).

Figure 110: Distribution of mean-F0 difference classes in wh-interrogatives in French textbooks

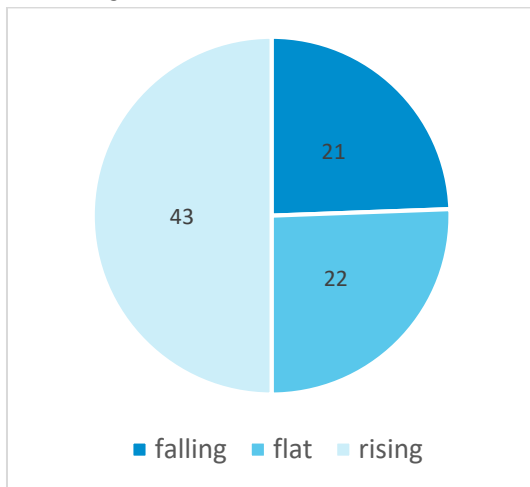
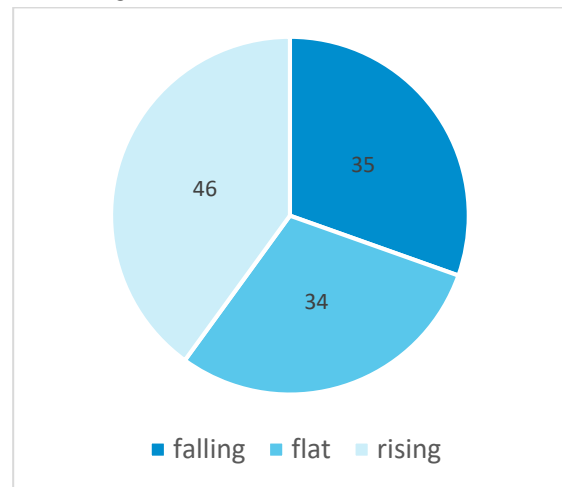


Figure 111: Distribution of mean-F0 difference classes in wh-interrogatives in German textbooks



This suggests that the nuclear configurations are related to different mean-F0 differences. To verify this, mean-F0 differences were plotted across nuclear configurations (see figures 112 and 113 below). From the boxplots, it becomes clear that the main difference lies in the rise-falls (i.e. H\*L%). While the rise-falls in the German textbooks tended to be linked to a mean-F0 difference around zero (mean = -0.45st), the ones in the French textbooks were visibly rising (mean = 2.32st). Additionally, all other configurations are generally lower in the German than in the French material (means: 3.10st vs. 3.57st in simple rises, -1.07st vs. -0.39st in fall-rises, and -3.35st vs. -2.66st in simple falls).<sup>1061</sup>

Figure 112: Mean-F0 difference in wh-interrogatives from French textbooks across nuclear configurations

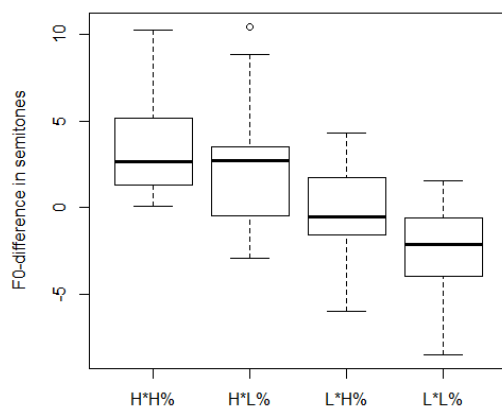
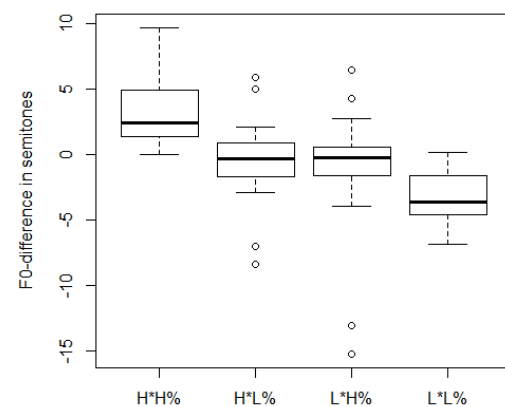


Figure 113: Mean-F0 difference in wh-interrogatives from German textbooks across nuclear configurations



Accordingly, this factor seems indeed to have the potential to predict some of the variation observed. On the other hand, one should add that the calculated linear regression model has an extremely low coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 0.02042$ ), so it can by long way not explain the whole data set. Hence,

<sup>1061</sup> Knowing that intonation in wh-interrogatives is traditionally described as falling, I am tempted to interpret German material input as more conservative. This is partially contradicted, however, by the fact that even German materials use more rises than falls.

although there is a difference between the two pairs of books, there will be other (and possibly more important) factors involved. Furthermore, the data set is very small and produced by few speakers, so the differences observed may also be linked to speaker-dependency. Apart from that, it would be interesting to have a closer look at details about the recording procedure in future research.

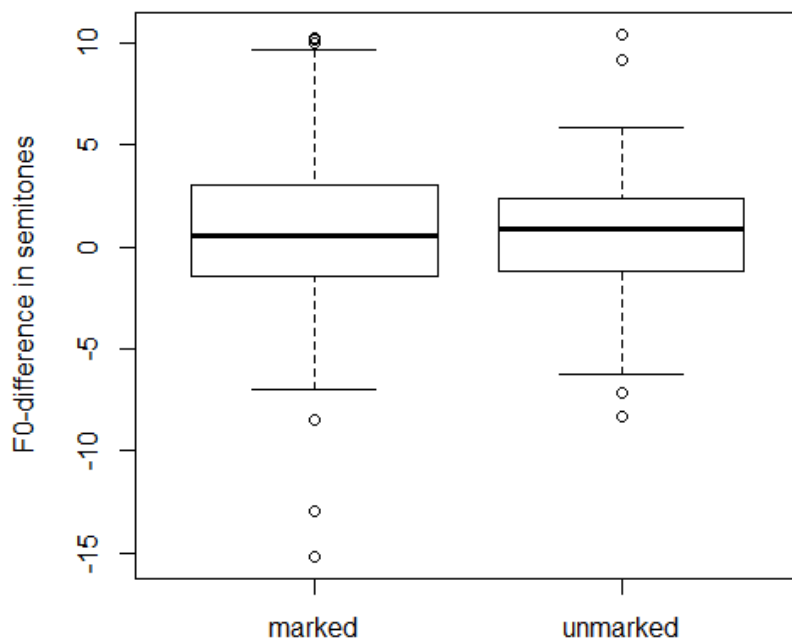
The second factor which shall be investigated is **additional morphosyntactic marking**. Based on previous studies on authentic language use, one could presume that there will be correlations between morphosyntactic form and intonational contour. As will be shown, it cannot be excluded that this factor has the potential to (partially) explain the variation observed. But even more importantly, it will be shown that, on no account, intonation can be directly mapped to morphosyntax. A French interrogative can be structurally marked by the question particle *EST-CE QUE* or by subject-verb inversion. The interrogative meaning already encoded in the question particle or the word order, intonational marking becomes superfluous. Hence, there may be expected a tendency to use rising melodies especially in morphosyntactically unmarked structures. However, in the vast majority of wh-interrogatives, there is also a question word marking the structure as an interrogative.<sup>1062</sup> Therefore, it would also be conceivable that the presence of the question particle or inversion does not play a role for the intonation of wh-interrogatives.

A first exploration of the data does not lead to clear results. While wh-interrogatives without *EST-CE QUE* and inversion (i.e. wh-in-situ, wh-fronted, elliptical, and wh-subject ones) are generally more rising (see figure 114), the divergence in mean is very small (0.7103st vs. 0.6764).

---

<sup>1062</sup> The only exception are complementary questions (cf. Bolinger 1957). In the 500 questions from the four textbooks, only two complementary questions occur: *Vous vous appelez ?* and *Vous voulez ?*. As expected, both of them are clearly rising.

Figure 114: Mean-F0 difference in wh-interrogatives across morphosyntactic marking



Likewise, the classification according to mean-F0 differences displays a slight but not very pronounced promotion of rises by the unmarkedness of structures (see figures 115 and 116). In order to find out whether this is significant, I calculated a second linear regression model<sup>1063</sup>. Interestingly, morphosyntactic marking approached significance, but did not quite reach it ( $\beta = 1.5$ ,  $SE = 0.8$ ,  $p < 0.08$ ). However, there seemed to be an interaction between morphosyntactic marking and the country of publication: Unmarked wh-interrogatives were pronounced with a final mean-F0 difference which was more than two semitones higher in the German materials than in the French ones ( $\beta = 2.2$ ,  $SE = 1.2$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).<sup>1064</sup>

<sup>1063</sup> The R-code used was `lm(DifferenceLastSyllables~Country*MorphosyntacticType_binary)`

<sup>1064</sup> Admittedly, the statistical model is still not a good one, but adding this interaction has certainly improved it ( $r^2 = 0.04083$ ).

Figure 115: Distribution of mean-F0 difference classes in marked wh-interrogatives

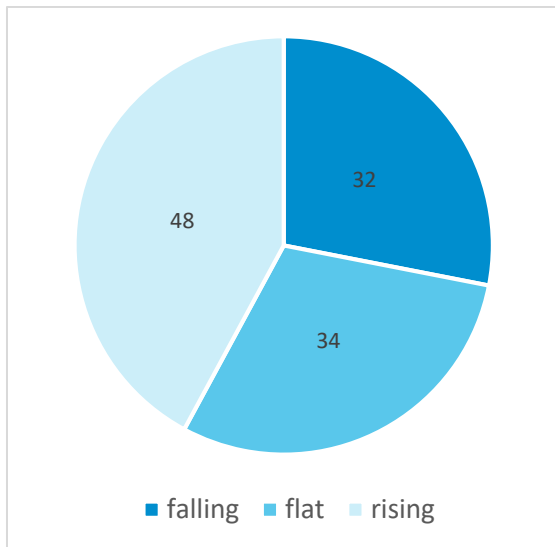
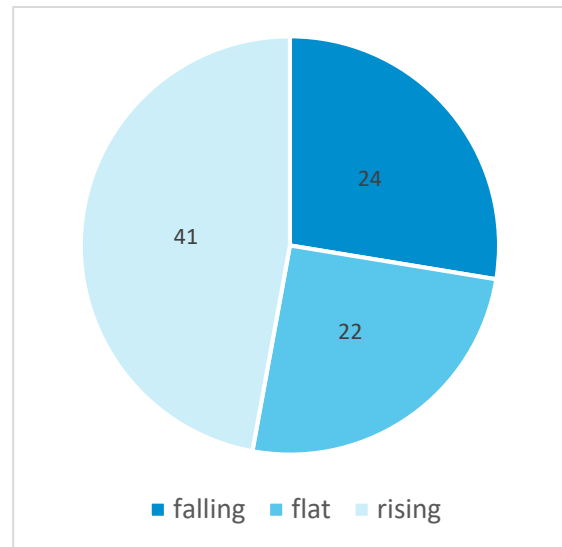


Figure 116: Distribution of mean-F0 difference classes in unmarked wh-interrogatives



The most important result is, however, that the teaching materials do not reduce intonational variation to a certain pattern. This becomes even more evident when looking at specific morphosyntactic structures (see figures 117 to 120, as well as table 60).<sup>1065</sup> All of the structures are presented with falling as well as rising patterns, and all but wh-fronted non-inverted structures occur with all possible nuclear configurations. Hence, in the audio input, intonational variation does not seem to be reduced at all, and it is reasonable to assume that the speakers and producers did not pay any particular attention to intonational variation when recording the data.

Figure 117: Mean-F0 difference in last syllables of wh-in-situ interrogatives

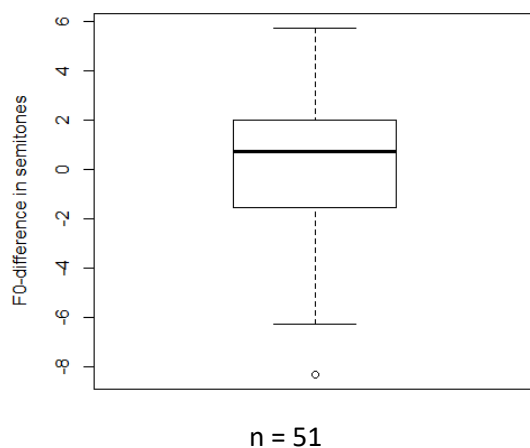
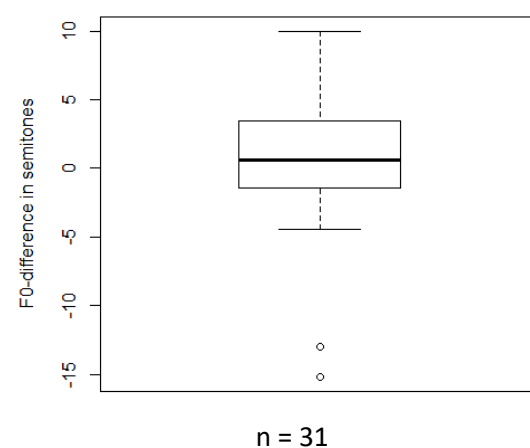


Figure 118: Mean-F0 difference in last syllables of inverted wh-interrogatives



<sup>1065</sup> This should only be done under the premise that no generalisations can be drawn. Due to the small number (especially fronted structures), it will be no more than a first impression.

Figure 119: Mean-F0 difference in last syllables of wh-fronted (non-inverted) interrogatives

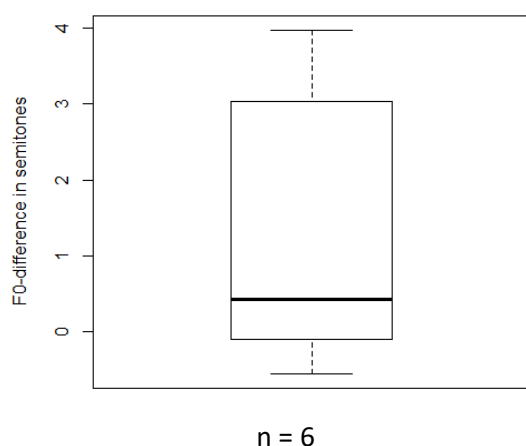


Figure 120: Mean-F0 difference in last syllables of wh-interrogatives with 'est-ce que'

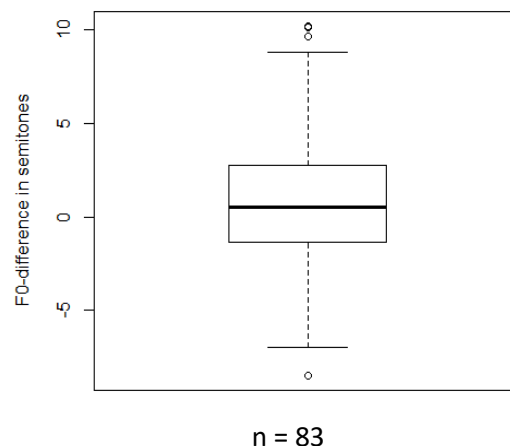


Table 60: Details on intonation in specific morphosyntactic wh-interrogative types

	<i>Est-ce que</i>				Inverted				Wh-fronted				Wh-in-situ			
<b>mean</b>	0.7305				0.6561				1.1988				0.0019 <sup>1066</sup>			
<b>median</b>	0.5283				0.5950				0.4244				0.7290			
<b>NC<sup>1067</sup></b>	HH	HL	LH	LL	HH	HL	LH	LL	HH	HL	LH	LL	HH	HL	LH	LL
	33	17	16	17	10	8	7	6	3	2	1	0	21	6	15	9

## Yes/no-questions

### Morphosyntax

As in wh-questions, inverted structures are described as ‘formal/written’, periphrastic ones as ‘neutral’, and morphosyntactically unmarked forms as ‘informal/spoken’ (see e.g. Coveney 2011). Yet, there can be found clear differences between wh- and yes/no-questions: In yes/no-interrogatives, the prevalence of declarative structures without any morphosyntactic marker is more pronounced than in wh-interrogatives. This goes for the two sets of textbooks as well as for authentic language use.<sup>1068</sup> In all corpora, morphosyntactically unmarked forms amount to approximately 75% (cf. figure 121). Inverted and periphrastic structures are rarer but existent. With regard to *EST-CE QUE*, it is interesting that the two authentic corpora differed significantly: While more than 1 in 10 yes/no-questions contained *EST-CE QUE* in the reality TV shows, there were only single occurrences of this structure in the detective novels. The proportions of periphrastic questions in the FLE textbooks are within this range

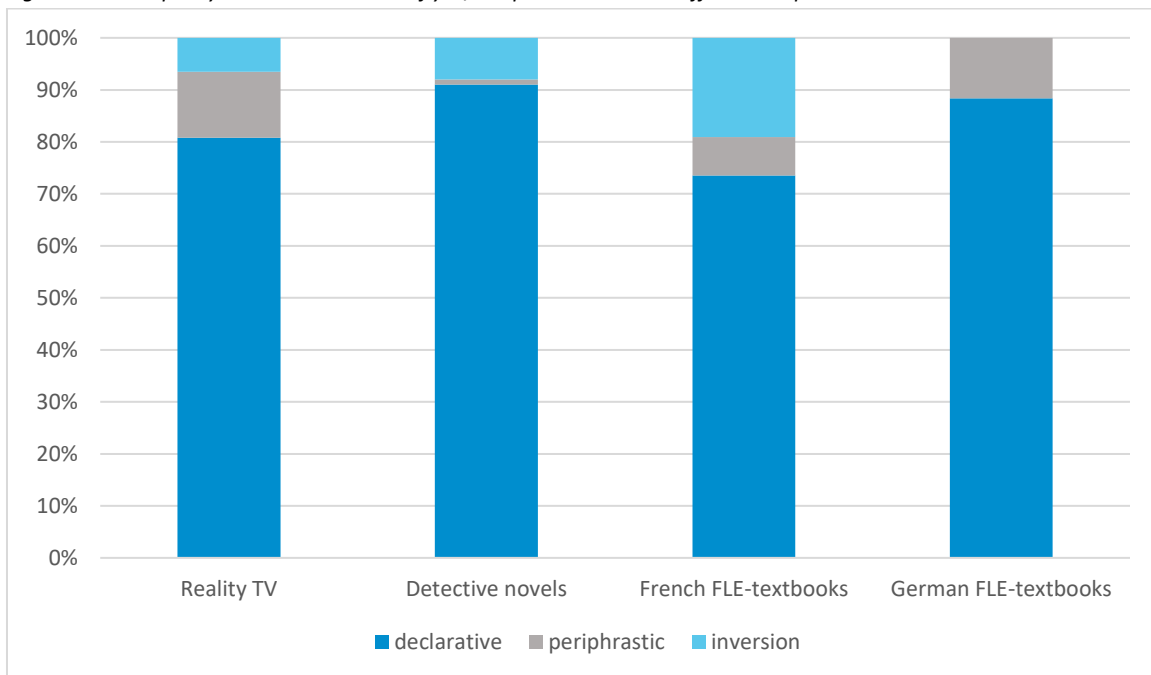
<sup>1066</sup> Such a low mean may seem surprising. However, the median and the distribution of nuclear configurations clarify that there were still more rises than falls, as would be expected by previous studies on wh-in-situ (see previous chapters).

<sup>1067</sup> The symbols of the nuclear configurations are left out for reasons of space. The first letter should be followed by an asterisk (\*), and the second by a percent sign (%).

<sup>1068</sup> Of course, morphosyntactically unmarked questions are rare in written communication, but oral communication represents the major part of authentic language use.

of authentic use, so they are not really conspicuous. What is really conspicuous, is the use of inverted forms. Strikingly, there is not a single inverted yes/no-interrogative in the two German textbooks whereas there are over double as many cases of subject-verb inversion in the two French textbooks than in the authentic corpora. This can be explained by the fact that the use of inversion in truly written speech such as instructions is inevitable if one wants to present authentically used forms. Accordingly, French textbooks do use inverted structures. As I mentioned above (see p.319), I completely agree that the active acquisition of inversion can be postponed. However, I doubt that it is useful to avoid inverted yes/no-structures in the input.

Figure 121: Morphosyntactic distribution of yes/no-questions across different corpora<sup>1069</sup>



There is thus a major difference across countries of publication. When looking more closely at the use of interrogatives, it becomes clear that this difference does though not arise from the representation of spoken language: In Dialogues, yes/no-questions are generally realised as {s/S}V-structures regardless of the country of publication (cf. figures 122 to 125).

<sup>1069</sup> As expected, chi-squared tests show significant distributional differences (between the two countries of publication, between the French textbooks and the authentic corpora, as well as between the German textbooks and the authentic corpora;  $p < 2.2e-16$ ).

Figure 122: Dialogue in À plus, p. 44

Le verbe *être* et les pronoms personnels

7 Complète. | Ergänze mit der richtigen Form von *être*.

- Il ? là, Monsieur Martel?  
– Oui, il ? dans la cour.
- Et Lukas et Théo?  
– Ils ? aussi dans la cour.
- Karim et Noah, vous ? en sixième?  
– Non, nous ? en cinquième.
- Et Clara et Yasmine?  
– Elles ? en sixième.
- Théo, tu ? en sixième B?  
– Non, je ? en sixième A.
- Où ? Clara et Yasmine?  
– Elles ? dans la cour.




Figure 123: Dialogue in Découvertes, p. 45

Approche 1 Des idées pour un cadeau (G7, 8)

53 Alex et Marie cherchent un cadeau pour Léo à la FNAC.

C'est bientôt l'anniversaire de Léo! Tu as une idée de cadeau?

On cherche un cadeau ensemble?

Une BD pour Léo, c'est une super idée. On regarde d'abord à la Maison de la presse ou à la FNAC?

A la FNAC, bien sûr!




Figure 124: Écho 1, p. 10

1 Paris, le 2 juillet, à la Cité Internationale universitaire.

Lucas : « Musique et danse » ?  
Mélissa : Oui.  
Lucas : Tu es française ?  
Mélissa : Antillaise.  
Lucas : Super, les Antilles !  
Mélissa : Tu connais ?  
Lucas : Je connais la chanson ! (il chante)  
« Belle-Île-en-Mer, Marie-Galante... »  
Mélissa : Pas mal !  
Lucas : Lucas... de Toulouse. Bonjour !  
Mélissa : Moi, c'est Mélissa, et voici Florent.  
Lucas : Ah, vous êtes ensemble ?  
Florent : Eh oui, nous sommes ensemble.  
Lucas : Super.

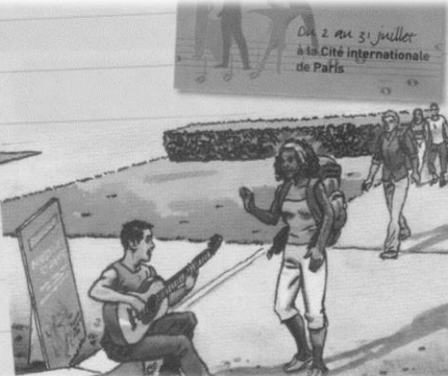


Figure 125: Rond-Point 1, p.42

3 Vous êtes étudiante ?  
Euh... Oui.  
Vous avez votre carte ?

4 Vous habitez à Paris ?  
Oui, et vous ?  
Moi aussi... On se tutoie ?  
D'accord !



Consequently, the difference arises from a divergence in the interrogative forms in instructions and the representation of written communication. While *Rond-Point 1* mostly uses inverted structures



(cf. (631) and (632)), *Écho 1* varies regarding morphosyntactic structures (cf. (633) to (635)). In the German materials, yes/no-questions are extremely rare, but the few times they occur, they are posed as {s/S}V or E{s/S}V-structures (cf. (636) to (639)).

- (631) Selon vous, y-a-t-il d'autres bonnes raisons pour apprendre le français ?<sup>1070</sup>
- (632) Reconnaissez-vous les différentes langues ?<sup>1071</sup>
- (633) Est-ce que c'est vrai ?<sup>1072</sup>
- (634) ÊTES-VOUS ACCRO AUX NOUVELLES TECHNOLOGIES ?<sup>1073</sup>
- (635) Vous avez un ordinateur ?<sup>1074</sup>
- (636) Vous avez un animal ? Racontez.<sup>1075</sup>
- (637) Tu aimes l'aventure ?<sup>1076</sup>
- (638) Est-ce qu'Alex est d'accord pour l'interview ?<sup>1077</sup>
- (639) Malabar n'entre pas au Parc Astérix ?<sup>1078</sup>

In written communication and other input texts (i.e. texts that are presented as language input in the course of the units), the French materials also include inversion (cf. figures 126 and 127), whereas the German ones adhere to oral forms also in writing (cf. figures 128 and 129).<sup>1079</sup>

Figure 126: E-mail in *Écho 1*, p. 51

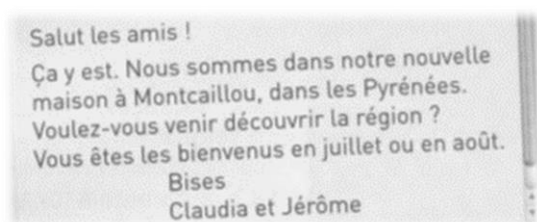


Figure 128: *À plus 1*, p. 102

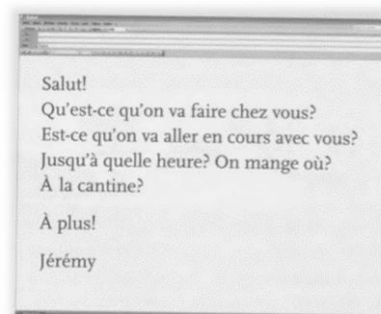


Figure 127: Written interview in *Rond-Point 1*, p. 75

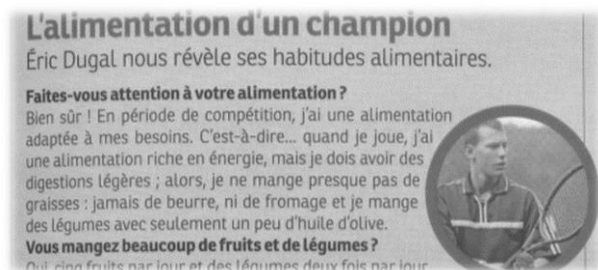
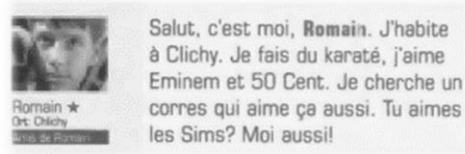


Figure 129: *Découvertes 1*, p.37



<sup>1070</sup> English translation: 'According to you, are their good reasons for learning French?' (*Rond Point 1*, p.21)

<sup>1071</sup> English translation: 'Do you recognise the different languages?' (*Rond Point 1*, p.39)

<sup>1072</sup> English translation: 'Is this true?' (*Écho 1*, p.68)

<sup>1073</sup> English translation: 'Are you hooked on the new technologies?' (*Écho 1*, p.94)

<sup>1074</sup> English translation: 'Do you have a computer?' (*Écho 1*, p.94)

<sup>1075</sup> English translation: 'Do you have a pet / an animal? Tell more about it.' (*À plus 1*, p.55)

<sup>1076</sup> English translation: 'Do you like adventures?' (*À plus 1*, p.144)

<sup>1077</sup> English translation: 'Is Alex fine with the interview?' (*Découvertes 1*, p.84)

<sup>1078</sup> English translation: 'Is Malabar not entering the Parc d'Astérix?' (*Découvertes 1*, p.116)

<sup>1079</sup> Indeed, the German textbooks seem to avoid truly written (i.e. not only medially but also conceptually written) communication.

To sum up, yes/no-questions are presented as morphosyntactically unmarked structures and *EST-CE QUE* structures in the dialogues of all four textbooks, but (the authentic use of) inversion is only included in the French ones.

### Intonation

In contrast to *wh*-interrogatives, yes/no-interrogatives have traditionally been described as rising. Therefore, pedagogical reduction could lead to the restriction of intonational patterns to simple rises. Since *wh*-interrogatives could not be mapped to a specific intonational pattern, it would though be surprising if yes/no-interrogatives could. To substantiate this hypothesis, the distribution of nuclear configurations is given hereafter (see table 61).

Table 61: Distribution of nuclear configurations in yes/no-interrogatives in the four FLE-textbooks

	H*H%	H*L%	L*H%	L*L%
Total (n = 234)	148	42	35	9
Percentage (rounded)	63%	18%	15%	4%

As expected, there is no direct link between the semantic type of a yes/no-question and a final contour. However, the prevalence of simple rises is in accordance with traditional descriptions. Unlike *wh*-interrogatives, yes/no ones thus tend to follow the rules established in the past. This becomes even more obvious when considering the distribution of last syllables' mean-F<sub>0</sub> differences (see figure 130): Measures of central tendency are clearly positive (median = 5.0st, mean = 4,7st), and all values within the interquartile range are positive. Hence, at least three quarters of the interrogatives have a positive mean-F<sub>0</sub> difference. When classifying the differences into *falling*, *flat*, and *rising*, it is revealed that even more than 80% of the ultimates' mean-F<sub>0</sub> values are at least one semitone higher than the penultimates' ones.

Figure 130: Boxplot of intonational movement in last syllables of yes/no-interrogatives

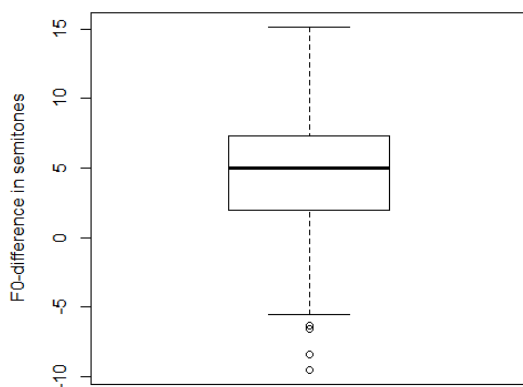
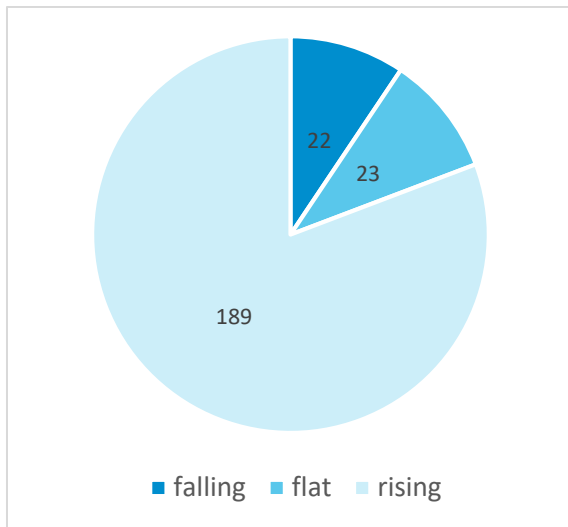
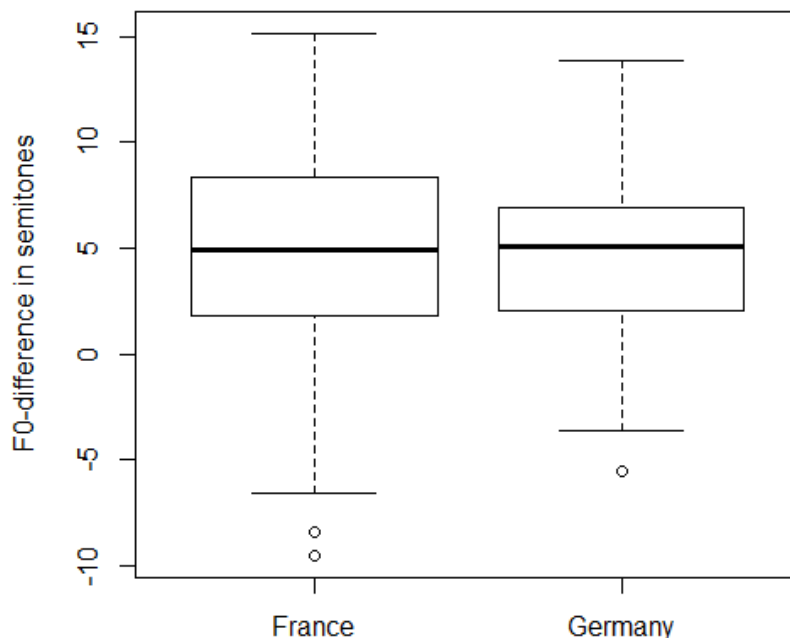


Figure 131: Distribution of mean-F0 difference classes in yes/no-interrogatives



There is thus less variation than in wh-interrogatives. Nonetheless, it will be interesting to see whether the country of publication and morphosyntactic marking play a role for intonational realisations. Comparing the distribution of acoustic measurements (see also figure 132), French and German FLE-textbooks seem to present very similar input: The medians of intonational movement in the last syllables of yes/no-question are around five semitones in both samples (4.9st vs. 5.1st), and both value ranges include negative values although the latter are rather seldom.

Figure 132: Mean-F0 difference in yes/no-interrogatives across countries



This first exploration is confirmed by the distribution of mean-F0 difference classes (see figures 133 and 134): Both textbook pairs use in more than three quarters of the yes/no-interrogatives a 'rising' mean-F0 difference. The only differences observable lie in the distribution of the rarer cases. Whereas

flat mean-F0 differences are very scarce in the German textbooks (4%), they are still quite regularly encountered in the French ones (14%). Falling mean-F0 differences, on the other hand, are rather marginal in the French textbooks (7%) and not as rare in German ones (12%). Similar observations can be made on the base of the distribution of nuclear configurations across publication countries (see table 62): The general dispersions are alike, but rise-falls are slightly more common in the teaching materials from France, whereas simple rises and fall-rises are a little more often used in the teaching materials from Germany. A rising boundary tone being traditionally associated with ‘openness’ and thus interrogative meaning, this could be interpreted as the German materials providing slightly more prototypical input. These small differences are however not significant, as a linear regression model<sup>1080</sup> shows ( $p = 0.5$ ).

Figure 133: Distribution of mean-F0 difference classes in yes/no-interrogatives in French textbooks

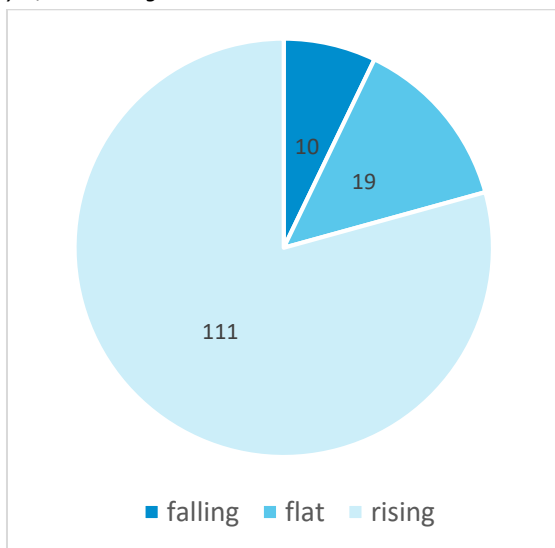


Figure 134: Distribution of mean-F0 difference classes in yes/no-interrogatives in German textbooks

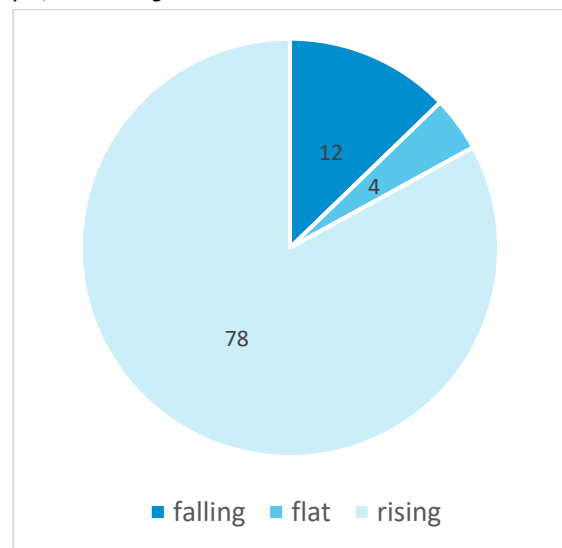


Table 62: Nuclear configurations in yes/no-interrogatives across publication countries

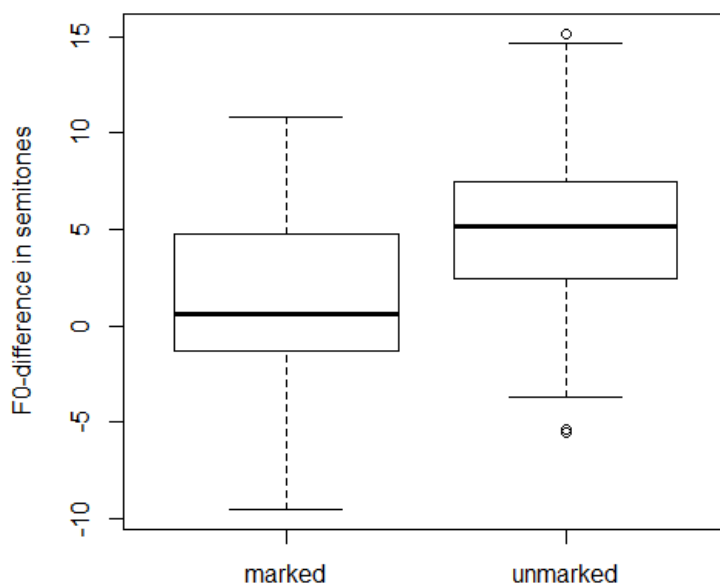
		H*H%		H*L%		L*H%		L*L%	
		F	G	F	G	F	G	F	G
Total (n = 234)		85	63	30	12	20	15	5	4
140	94								
Percentage (rounded)		61%	67%	21%	13%	14%	16%	4%	4%

In contrast, morphosyntactic marking turns out to be highly significant in yes/no-interrogatives. This is even visible when comparing the dispersions of the two subsets (see figure 135): While the median of morphosyntactically marked interrogatives is only slightly above zero semitones, the median of unmarked ones is around five semitones (0.6st vs. 5.1st). On average, an unmarked question is four

<sup>1080</sup> The R-code used was `lm(DifferenceLastSyllables~Country)`

semitones higher than a marked one ( $\beta = 4.1$ ,  $SE = 1.0$ ,  $p = 2.94e-05$ )<sup>1081</sup>. This can be directly explained by the absence of a morphosyntactic cue to mark the sentence as a question. If the interrogative meaning is to be encoded in the form of the sentence, prosody will have to undertake the role of syntactic encoding. Hence non-marking in morphosyntax was expected to correlate positively with marking in intonation. Dividing the acoustic data into three mean-F0 difference classes (see figures 136 and 137), one can however see that even marked yes/no-interrogatives still tend to be rising. The difference rather lies in the degree of their variability: While morphosyntactically unmarked yes/no-interrogatives are prosodically cued on a regular basis, morphosyntactically marked yes/no-interrogatives are more prone to alternation.<sup>1082</sup>

Figure 135: Mean-F0 difference in yes/no-interrogatives across morphosyntactic marking



<sup>1081</sup> The R-code used was `lm(DifferenceLastSyllables~MorphosyntacticType_binary)`

<sup>1082</sup> However, it must be acknowledged that only 20 marked yes/no have been analysed. A much larger sample would be required for a well-founded study on the influence of this factor.

Figure 136: Distribution of mean-F0 difference classes in unmarked yes/no-interrogatives

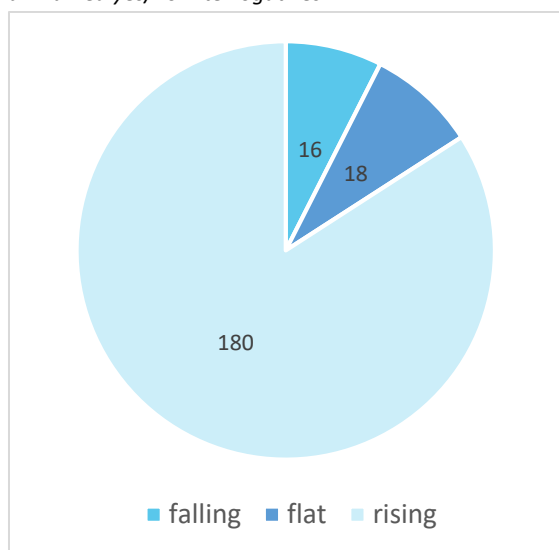
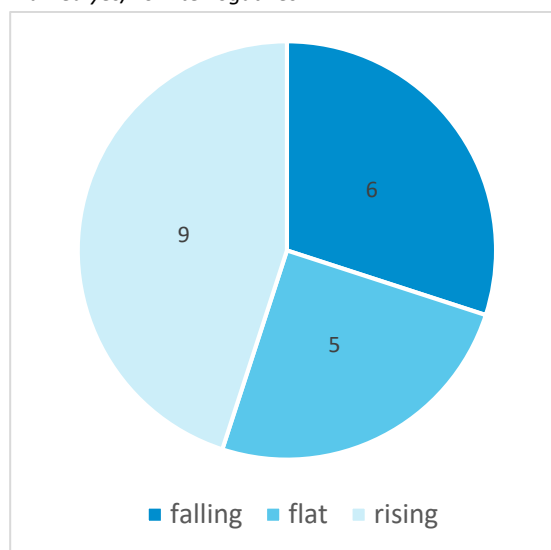


Figure 137: Distribution of mean-F0 difference classes in marked yes/no-interrogatives



#### 7.4.3.2 Results on explicit training and ordering

Having seen that the input provided by the textbooks differs on a quantitative basis, I will now take on a more qualitative perspective. This subsection presents the results of the qualitative analysis of explicated linguistic means (i.e. explicitly given resources, such as useful phrases given in a box) and their training (i.e. exercises such as transformation drills or audio files offered for phonetic imitation). More precisely, the chronological ordering of the target forms will be depicted and compared across textbook series.

#### Morphosyntax

As significant differences have been found in the morphosyntactic distributions between the two publication countries, German pedagogical approaches can be expected to diverge from French ones. In the following, the four textbooks are analysed separately and finally compared. I will start with the two German textbook series (i.e. *À plus* and *Découvertes*), give a short conclusion on how interrogative variation is treated in the German materials and continue with the two French FLE-textbook series (i.e. *Écho* and *Rond-Point*).

In the first unit, *À plus 1* sticks to the most essential communicative skills of saying hello and goodbye as well as introducing one another. Accordingly, interrogatives are restricted to simple forms of intonation questions (e.g. *Ça va ?*, p.12f. / *Lara, c'est toi ?* / *Tu t'appelles Lara ?*, p.15) and wh-in-situ (*Pardon, tu t'appelles comment ?* / *Et la fille, c'est qui ?*, p.16 / *Les deux garçons, c'est qui ?*, p.17). In the following transition module, *Comment est-ce qu'on*-structures are introduced (e.g. *Comment est-ce qu'on dit « das Heft » en français ?* / *Comment est-ce qu'on écrit « effaceur » ?*, p. 25 ; see figure

138), and in unit 2 further periphrastic structures are introduced as chunks (*Qu'est-ce qu'il y a ?*, p.29 / *Qu'est-ce que tu fais ?*, p.35). Furthermore, the question word *où* is learned together with the first inverted chunks (*Où est le shampoing ? / Où sont les biscuits ?*, p.32; for a follow-up drill exercise see figure 141). In unit 3, *quel*-in-situ questions (e.g. *Tu as quel âge ?*, p.60) as well as more *qui*-fronted questions (e.g. *Qui n'a pas d'animal ?*, p.55) are presented. After that, periphrastic yes/no-questions are treated extensively (unit 4), leading the way for periphrastic *wh*-questions (*pourquoi est-ce que* in unit 5, *où est-ce que / quand est-ce que / à quelle heure est-ce que* in the facultative parts of units 5 and 6). The last question feature learned in *À plus 1*, is the question word *combien* (unit 7). Surprisingly, it is not presented with *est-ce que* but in situ only. Since *combien est-ce que* does neither appear in my corpus of reality TV nor in my corpus of ten detective novels<sup>1083</sup>, this may actually reflect authentic language use. At the end of *À plus 1*, the main question words as well as {s/S}V and E{s/S}V structures have been introduced and practised (cf. figures 138 to 142), but inversion is only known from the chunk *Où {est/sont}...?*.

Figure 138: Exercise for “Comment est-ce qu'on écrit... ?” in *À plus*, p.25



<sup>1083</sup> In reality TV, it occurs several times as *wh*-fronted as well as *wh*-in-situ variant in direct interactions, and as inverted structures in comments by the off-voice. In the detective novels, it also occurs as *wh*-fronted, *wh*-in-situ and inverted structures, as well as is several elliptical questions.

Figure 139: Exercise for morphosyntactically unmarked yes/no-questions in À plus, p.69

**Parler**

**4** Pose des questions à ton/ta partenaire. Il/Elle répond. | Findet heraus, was ihr beide mögt und was ihr nicht mögt.

DELF 35/3

Exemples:

1. – Tu aimes la nature?	2. – Tu aimes la nature?
– Oui. Et toi?	– Non. Et toi?
– Moi aussi. / Moi, non.	– Moi non plus. / Moi, si.

la nature les animaux le sport le dessin le cinéma la musique  
chanter être avec des copains chatter avec des copains  
faire du vélo / du ski / du foot faire de l'athlétisme / de la danse / de la musique

Figure 140: Exercise for interrogatives with est-ce que in À plus 1, p.74

**S'entraîner**

**6** A pose des questions et utilise *est-ce que*. B répond par *oui* ou par *non*. Puis B pose des questions à A. (► Repères, p. 78/5) (B ► p. 149)

- Tu as des frères et sœurs? → Est-ce que tu as des frères et sœurs?
- Tu as un chat?
- Tu travailles beaucoup pour l'école?
- Tu surfes beaucoup sur Internet?
- Tu fais du sport?

Die Intonationsfrage verwendest du nur mündlich, die Frage mit *est-ce que* kannst du auch schriftlich verwenden.

**7** *Est-ce que* ou *Qu'est-ce que*? Complète.





1. ? tu passes le week-end chez ta tante?	5. ? il y a une télé dans ta chambre?
2. ? tu aimes?	6. ? tu fais le week-end?
3. ? tu aimes le cinéma?	7. ? tu fais du sport?
4. ? il y a dans ta chambre?	8. ? tu détestes?

Figure 141: Exercise for "Où {est/sont}... ?" in À plus 1, p.86

**Parler**

**3** Ils sont où? A pose des questions. B répond. Puis B pose des questions et A répond. (B ► p.149)

Exemple: A: Où est le CPE? B: Il est au CDI.

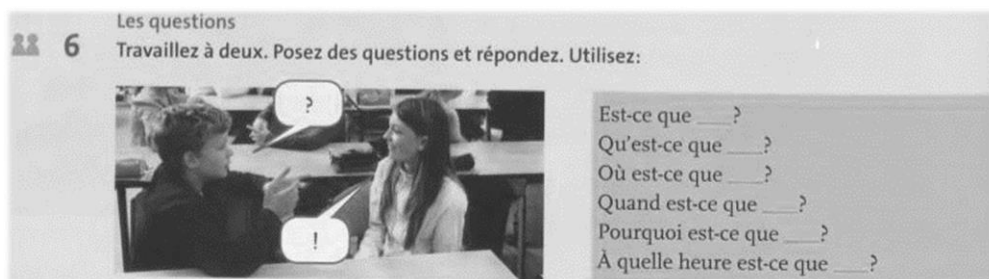
Tes questions à B	Tes informations pour B
1. le CPE?	5. 
2. les élèves de la 6 <sup>e</sup> A?	6. 
3. les élèves de la 5 <sup>e</sup> B?	7. 
4. Noah?	8. 

**A**

à	la cantine l'infirmérie
au	CDI gymnase secrétariat
dans	la cour la salle de classe la salle des profs



Figure 142: Exercise for EST-CE QUE questions in À plus, p.118



A similar treatment of interrogative variation can be observed in *Découvertes 1*. In the very first section (*au début*), which precedes the first unit, only three questions occur: *Qui est-ce ? / Ça va ? / Et toi/vous ?* (p.12). This collection of chunks is enriched by *Tu t'appelles comment ?* (p.19; see also figure 143) / *Tu es de Paris ?* (p.21) in the first unit, and by *Qu'est-ce que c'est ? / Que fait Léo ?* (p.28) / *Tu habites où ?* (p.36) and *Où est... ?* (p.41; see also figure 145) in the second one. In the course of the unit, the structures are slightly alternated (e.g. by adding a right dislocation, changing the verb or replacing the name), and intonation questions are formally introduced (see also figures 144 and 147). In unit 3, *Tu as quel âge ?* (p.54) is introduced as a first *quel*-chunk, which will however not be treated formally before *Découvertes 2*. The second *quel*-chunk, which is introduced in unit 4, is *Quelle heure est-il ?* (p.62). In the same unit, more interrogatives connected to everyday school life are encountered (e.g. *Elle [la clé USB] est à qui ?*, p.63 / *Je vais où, Madame ?*, p.65). In unit 5, periphrastic questions with and without question words are introduced. As in *À plus*, the introduced interrogative structures are practised continuously throughout the book (see figures 143 to 147).

Figure 143: Exercise for “Tu t'appelles comment ?” in Découvertes 1, p.20

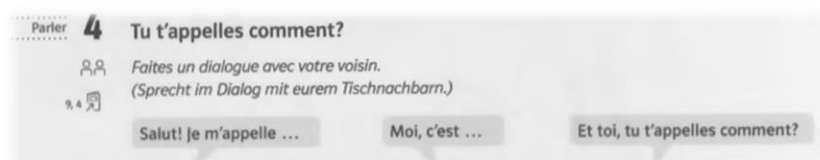


Figure 144: Exercise for “Qu'est-ce que” and intonation questions in Découvertes, p.32

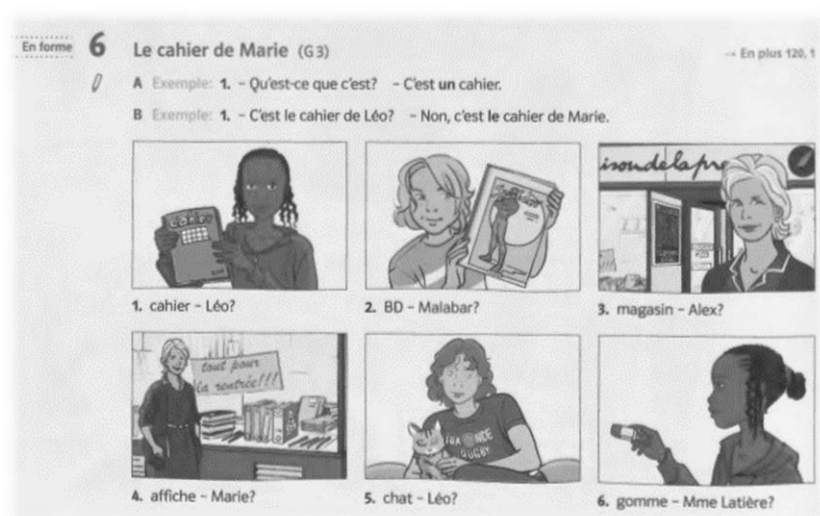


Figure 145: Exercise for “Où {est/sont}... ?” in Découvertes 1, p.46

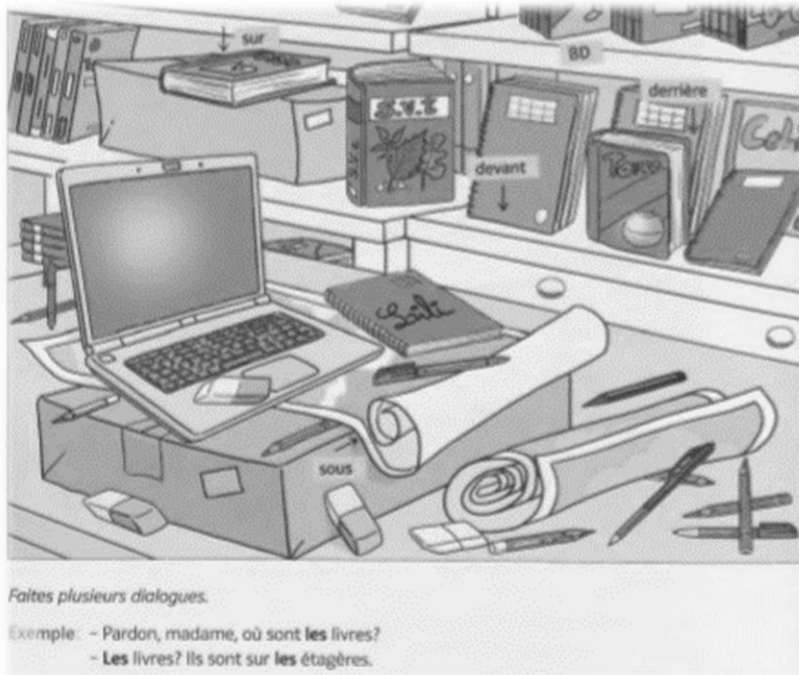


Figure 146: Exercise for questions about personal information in Découvertes 1, p.76







#### 4 Production orale

Timo est nouveau au collège Balzac. Léo est curieux. Il lui pose des questions. Jouez la scène.  
(Timo ist neu im Collège Balzac. Léo ist neugierig. Er stellt ihm Fragen. Spielt die Szene.)

1. Tu as quel âge?
2. Ton anniversaire, c'est quand?
3. Tu rentres à quelle heure, aujourd'hui?
4. Qu'est-ce que tu fais ce soir?
5. Qu'est-ce que tu as envie de faire, samedi?

Figure 147: Exercise for yes/no-questions in Découvertes 1, p.126

**Parler** 1 Qu'est-ce qu'ils font? (G18)  
▲ Regardez les dessins. Posez des questions et répondez.  
Exemple: 1. Alex fait du rugby? – Non, elle fait ...

		
1. Alex: rugby?	2. Clara et ses amies: natation?	3. Léo: gymnastique?
		
4. Marie: foot?	5. Jérôme: danse?	6. Moustique et Malabar: musique?

Both of the German textbooks postpone thus the structural treatment of *quel (/lequel)*, *Qu'est-ce qui (/qui est-ce que / qui est-ce qui)* and inverted forms.<sup>1084</sup> In later volumes, the two textbook series treat

<sup>1084</sup> *Lequel* (as a question word) is only treated in *À plus!* 3.

these structures extensively, including even some sociostylistic classifications. However, they do neither give an extensive overview of forms,<sup>1085</sup> nor do they mirror authentic language use: Periphrastic structures still tend to be overused, and different types of inversion as well as meaning nuances are not dealt with. This contrasts with the French textbooks, which will be analysed hereafter.

It is striking that, in the French textbooks, the range of interrogative structures is wider, but at the same time there are less exercises on interrogative forms than in the German textbooks. On the first relevant page of *Écho 1*, the question forms indicated as a means of expression are restricted to intonation (*Vous êtes étudiante ?*, p.7) and wh-fronted questions (*Comment vous vous appelez ? / Où vous habitez ?*, p.7).<sup>1086</sup> The production of intonation questions is also practised (see figure 148). In the following, other variants are presented (*D'où es-tu ? / Tu habites où ?* (p.9) / *Où sont Mélissa, Florent et Lucas ?*, p.11), but there is still a clear predominance of {s/S}V (*Vous vous appelez ? / Tout va bien ? / Le café est bon ?*, p.11) and elliptical (« *Musique et danse* » ? / *Excusez-moi, madame, la Cité universitaire ?*, p.10) structures. In the second lesson<sup>1087</sup>, periphrastic yes/no-questions are presented, but not actively practised. Also, further wh-words (*quel*, *qui*, and *que*) are introduced by exemplary chunks (*Quel est le nom du professeur ?*<sup>1088</sup> / *Vous parlez quelles langues ? / Qui est-ce ? / Qu'est-ce que c'est ?*, p.15). In the following, the structures are alternated (e.g. *Qu'est-ce qu'on fait ?*, p.26 / *Qu'est-ce que vous avez fait samedi et dimanche ?*, p.32), and other variants are occasionally shown (*Est-ce une lettre, une carte postale ou un courriel ?*, p.28 / *Que peut-on voir, que peut-on faire au musée Grévin ?*, p. 31). In lesson four, questions about time and date are dealt with, indicating two variants respectively (*Quelle heure est-il ? / Il est quelle heure ?*, *Elle est née quand ? / Quand est-ce qu'elle est née ?*, p.33). The latter is comparable to the German textbooks, but when the question word *pourquoi* is added in lesson 5, it is presented in several structures (*Et pourquoi ? / Pourquoi Fanny veut-elle aller à Arcachon ? / Pourquoi ne peut-on pas laisser le chien chez les parents de Bertrand ? / Pourquoi est-ce que tu arrives à 10 h ?*, pp.50f.). Up to here, the production of questions is oriented mostly towards using non-inverted yes/no-questions and chunks (see also figures 149 and 150). Finally, in lesson six, inversion is explicitly introduced (p.57). In an overview (see figure 152), intonation questions, periphrastic yes/no-questions, yes/no-questions with simple clitic inversion and yes/no-questions with complex clitic inversion are represented by one example each. For wh-questions, it is claimed that there would be only three forms, and examples only comprehend simple clitic inversion, periphrastic structures and wh-fronting. Wh-in-situ structures as well as stylistic and complex clitic

<sup>1085</sup> In *Découvertes 3* and *4*, there is a summary of interrogatives. Wh-fronting and complex as well as stylistic inversion are however omitted.

<sup>1086</sup> By *relevant*, I mean the first page of the book containing written text intended as learning input.

<sup>1087</sup> *Écho 1* is divided into 4 extensive units (*unités*), and which are again divided into lessons (*leçons*). In total, there are 16 lessons.

<sup>1088</sup> *Quel(le)(s) est sont... ?* is not avoided in the German materials, but it is not


inversion are thus left aside. The newly introduced structures are also practised (see figure 152), but the production of interrogatives is generally less trained than in the German materials. Moreover, when the formulation of questions is trained, the choice of a morphosyntactic variant is not reflected (see figure 151). Once inversion has been introduced, the presentation of *wh-interrogatives* with *est-ce que* is reduced to *Qu'est-ce que* structures.

To sum up, an overall picture and differentiation of the forms is missing, but authentic language use seems to be the ultimate aim and the introduction of structures takes place in a sequence. This sequence mainly conforms with my pedagogical norm, although progression is much steeper than I would recommend it.

Figure 148: Exercise for morphosyntactically unmarked questions in *Écho 1*, p.9

**Interroger – Répondre**

Vous êtes Maria Monti ?



Non, je ne suis pas Maria Monti. Je ne parle pas italien. Je ne connais pas Maria Monti. Je n'habite pas à Rome. Je suis la secrétaire du Festival.

**2 Répondez.**

- Vous êtes français / française ?
- Vous êtes professeur ?
- Vous habitez à Paris ?
- Vous comprenez le mot « bonjour » ?
- Vous parlez bien français ?

**3 Posez les questions à votre voisin(e).**

Tu es français ? – Tu es française ?  
[Vous êtes français ? – Vous êtes française ?]

**L'interrogation et la négation**

- Marie parle français ?  
– Non, elle ne parle pas français. **ne ... pas**
- Elle est espagnole ?  
– Non, elle n'est pas espagnole. **n'... pas**  
(devant une voyelle)

**■ Observez et complétez.**

Elle ... s'appelle ... Maria Monti.  
Elle ... parle ... italien.  
Elle ... connaît ... Maria Monti.  
Elle ... habite ... à Rome.  
Elle ... est ... secrétaire.  
Elle ... est ... française.

Figure 150: Structural resources in *Écho*, p.27

**Demander une explication**

- Vous pouvez répéter ? Je ne comprends pas. Qu'est-ce que vous dites ?
- Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire ?  
« Ami », ça veut dire *friend* en anglais.  
Vous pouvez traduire ?

Figure 151: Exercise in *Écho*, p.93

**► Présentez votre famille à votre voisin(e)**

**Posez-vous des questions.**  
« Tu as un frère ? Qu'est-ce qu'il fait ? Il est marié ? Que fait ta belle-sœur ?... »

Figure 149: Structural resources in *Écho*, p.15

**Poser des questions**


- **Est-ce que...**  
Lima est la capitale du Pérou ?  
Est-ce que Lima est la capitale du Pérou ?
- **Il y a**  
Est-ce qu'il y a un musée à Cannes ?
- **Quel – quelle – quels – quelles**  
Quel est le nom du professeur ?  
Quelle est la capitale de l'Australie ?  
Quels sont les bons restaurants de Cannes ?  
Vous parlez quelles langues ?
- **Qui**  
Qui est-ce ? – C'est Lucas Marti.
- **Que**  
Qu'est-ce que c'est ? – C'est un musée.
- **Où**  
Où est le Kilimandjaro ?

Figure 152: Exercise and structural resources in *Écho*, p.57

**Interroger – Répondre**

Tu viens dîner à la maison ?  
Est-ce que tu aimes le poisson ?

Venez-vous dîner à la maison ?  
Quand êtes-vous libres ?



**1** Observez les phrases et lisez le tableau.  
**Trouvez :**

- les trois façons de poser une question
- les mots interrogatifs
- dans quel cas on répond « si »

**2** Complétez ce dialogue avec les questions.

- ... ? → – Oui, je pars en vacances.
- ... ? → – Dans les Alpes.
- ... ? → – En août.
- ... ? → – Avec Marie, Vanessa et Luc.
- ... ? → – De la randonnée.
- ... ? → – Si, je vais faire du vélo.

**Les questions**

- **Question générale**  
Vous aimez le curry ?  
Est-ce que vous aimez le curry ?  
Aimez-vous le curry ?  
Marie aime-t-elle le curry ?
- **Les mots interrogatifs (avec chacune des trois formes)**  
**Qui** invitez-vous ? (Avec qui vient-il ? À qui parle-t-il ?)  
**Qu'**est-ce que vous préparez ?  
**Où** vous faites le repas ?  
**Quand** faites-vous votre réception ?

**Les réponses**

- **Vous prenez du vin ?** – **Oui**, je prends du vin  
– **Non**, je ne prends pas de vin.
- **Vous ne prenez pas de vin ?**  
– **Si**, je prends du vin.  
– **Non**, je ne prends pas de vin.

In contrast, **Rond-Point 1** starts rather unconventionally. Instead of ordering the introduction of question forms, various interrogative structures are used from the very beginning. Already on the first relevant page (i.e. p.11), learners are exposed to a range of morphosyntactic structures: a variant with simple clitic inversion (*Connaissez-vous ces images de la culture francophone ?*), a declarative yes/no-interrogative (aka intonation question, *Ça, c'est la Côte d'Azur ?*), a question with *Qu'est-ce que* (*Et ça, Qu'est-ce que c'est ?*), an elliptical wh-question (*Dans quel ordre ?*) and a wh-in-situ question with right subject dislocation (*Et pour vous, c'est quoi la France ?*). However, the only structure commented on is *Qu'est-ce que* (see figure 153). In fact, intonation questions are never formally introduced, but they are dealt with in a casual remark on the intonation of sentences (see next subsection, figure 176). Inversion, on the other hand, is mentioned as early as in unit two: In the context of personal pronouns, it is explained that, in questions, subjects can also be placed after the verb. Additionally, the question words *comment* and *pourquoi* are introduced, again presenting several structures: Elliptical structures (e.g. *Pourquoi le français ?*), wh-fronted declarative structures (e.g. *Comment vous vous appelez ?*) forms with simple clitic inversion (e.g. *Pourquoi apprenez-vous le français ?*, *Comment s'appellent-ils ?*) and even forms with complex clitic inversion (e.g. *Pourquoi ces étudiants apprennent-ils le français ?*) are used (pp.21-25). Likewise, yes/no-interrogatives are presented in virtually all possible forms. *Quel*-questions are formally introduced in unit 3 (see figure 154). As opposed to the other question words, *quel* is though presented with inversion only. In unit four, the question words *qui* and *où* are introduced, and the different morphosyntactic variants are finally commented (see figure 155). In unit six, **Rond-Point 1** treats questions about prices and the time. For questions about the time, the conservative variant with simple clitic inversion (*Quelle heure est-il ?*, p.65) is pointed out as the structure to be learned, but in the grammar section, the wh-in-situ variant (*Il est quelle heure ?*, p.153)

is presented as well.<sup>1089</sup> All in all, morphosyntactic variation is thus included in the presentation of interrogatives. As for the active training of interrogative forms, question forms are practised throughout the textbook, but only in occasional exercises on different topics (such as given in figures 156 to 161). There is hence rather little training on each particular form, although some structures do occur in more than one exercise. For example *Qu'est-ce que* is actively trained not only in an exercise about guessing places (see figure 156), but also when asking about personal preferences (*Qu'est-ce que tu aimes faire ?*, p. 52) or shop names (*Et Qu'est-ce qu'on vend chez le traiteur ?*, p.61). Likewise, the active use of *EST-CE QUE* in yes/no-questions is trained in several exercises (see figures 159 to 161). While some exercises focus on one or two structures (see figures 156 and 158), others comprise several ones (see figures 157 and 159). Some exercises also focus a certain structure by indicating a corresponding example, but leave it open whether this is the only structure to be used (see figures 160 and 161). In comparison to the other textbooks, there is though less drill and more meaning-related application. Besides, it is the only textbook which includes an exercise on written interrogatives: One of the final unit tasks is the publication of an interview (p.47). Consequently, even inverted forms are practised actively (see also p.27), which my pedagogical norm would postpone to a later stage of acquisition. On the other hand, this textbook conforms with my pedagogical norm because it makes a difference between the interrogatives printed as instructions and the interrogatives printed as resources for oral production: While in the examples for speaking exercises non-inverted forms are used, interrogatives in instructions are usually given as inverted forms (see figures 157 and 161).

Figure 153: Structural resources for 'what'-questions in Rond-Point 1, p.14

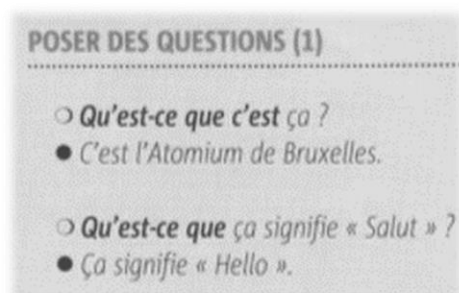


Figure 154: Structural resources for 'which'-questions in Rond-Point 1, p.35

	MASCULIN	FÉMININ
SINGULIER	quel âge...?	quelle profession...?
PLURIEL	quels livres...?	quelles langues...?

<sup>1089</sup> Not mentioning the wh-fronted variant (*Quelle heure il est ?*), the authors suggest that this structure is not possible. One may wonder whether the omission of this form is rather due to authentic language use or to its potential stigmatisation (cf. Behnstedt 1973; Valdman 1988; Coveney 2011; Antes 2016). Since it occurs as the only variant of 'What time is it?' in my corpus of ten detective novels, the second option seems to be more likely. On the other hand, this would mean that *Quelle heure il est ?* would be more stigmatised than *Combien ça coute ?*. Intuitively, I would explain the last question's higher degree of acceptability by the pronoun *ça*, which seems to favour wh-fronting in general (cf. numerous occurrences of *comment ça* in my corpus of ten detective novels, e.g. *Comment ça va ? / Comment ça a commencé ? / Comment ça s'est passé aujourd'hui ?*). Nonetheless, one would have to consult large corpora of spoken French and conduct an acceptability survey if one wanted to be sure.

Figure 155: Structural resources for mixed question forms in Rond-Point, p.44

**POSER DES QUESTIONS (3)**

POSER UNE QUESTION	RÉPONDRE
Vous avez des frères et sœurs ?	Oui, j'ai un frère.
<b>Est-ce que</b> vous aimez le cinéma ?	Oui, beaucoup ! Et vous ?
<b>Qu'est-ce que</b> c'est ça ?	C'est un cadeau pour toi.
<b>Qui</b> chante <i>La Vie en rose</i> ?	Édith Piaf, n'est-ce pas ?
<b>Comment</b> vous appelez-vous ?	Laurent, Laurent Ogier. Et vous ?
Vous habitez <b>où</b> ?	À Berlin.
<b>Quel</b> est votre acteur préféré ?	Romain Duris.


Dans un registre soutenu, la marque de l'interrogation est l'inversion sujet-verbe.  
**Aimez-vous** le rap français ?

On peut aussi marquer l'interrogation sans l'inversion : avec **est-ce que** et avec la seule intonation.  
**Est-ce que** vous aimez le rock ?  
 Vous aimez la musique électronique ?

Placé après le verbe, **qu'est-ce que** devient **quoi** dans un registre familier.  
**Qu'est-ce que** tu fais ? = Tu fais **quoi** ?

Figure 156: Exercise on "C'est... ?" and "Qu'est-ce que c'est ?" in Rond-Point 1, p.11

Nous allons répondre à un quiz pour découvrir la langue française et explorer notre manuel.



**1. DÉJÀ VU**

**A. Connaissez-vous ces images de la culture francophone ?**

- ▶ la côte d'Azur
- ▶ un fromage suisse
- ▶ un croissant
- ▶ un café de Paris
- ▶ le Mont Saint-Michel
- ▶ l'Atomium de Bruxelles
- ▶ Montréal

- Ça, c'est la côte d'Azur ?
- Oui et ça...
- Et ça, qu'est-ce que c'est ?

**vos stratégies**

Les images sont très importantes pour vous aider à comprendre les textes.

Figure 157: Exercise on personal information in Rond-Point 1, p.35

**B. Quel âge ont-ils ?**

Patrick Bruel a...  
 Jean Reno a...  
 Lætitia Casta a...  
 Amélie Nothomb a...

**C. Maintenant, pensez à un personnage célèbre et laissez la classe vous poser des questions pour deviner de qui il s'agit.**

- C'est un homme ou une femme ?
- Une femme.
- Quelle est sa nationalité ?
- Elle est italienne.
- Elle a quel âge ?
- Environ 45 ans.
- Qu'est-ce qu'elle fait dans la vie ?

Figure 158: Exercise on 'what/which is/are'-questions in Rond-Point 1, p.41

**C. Quel style de musique aimez-vous ? Répondez aux questions suivantes, puis interrogez quelques camarades. Avez-vous les mêmes goûts ?**

Quel est votre chanteur préféré ?

Quelle est votre chanteuse préférée ?

Quelles sont vos chansons préférées ?

Figure 159: Exercise on mixed question forms in Rond-Point 1, p.44

**6. COMME MOI !**


**A.** Cherchez, dans la classe, des camarades qui ont des points communs avec vous.  
Attention : vous devez décider si vous employez le tutoiement ou bien le vouvoiement.

- Où aimez-vous passer vos vacances ?
  - À la plage.
- Vous êtes étudiante ?
  - Oui, je fais des études d'infirmière. Et vous ?
  - Moi, je fais des études d'architecture.
- Est-ce que tu aimes le football ?
  - Pas beaucoup.

Figure 160: Exercise on asking about what others have in their handbag in Rond-Point 1, p.65

**6. DANS TON SAC**

**A.** Observez la photo de cette jeune fille et imaginez ce qu'elle a dans son sac à main.



**B.** En groupes, posez des questions pour deviner ce que chacun a dans son sac.

- Est-ce que tu as un stylo ?
  - Non, je n'ai pas de stylo.

Figure 161: Exercise on asking about stress in Rond-Point 1, p.74

**5. LES CAUSES DU STRESS**

**A.** Voici une liste de différentes causes éventuelles de stress. Notez d'autres causes que vous connaissez. Ensuite, interrogez un camarade.

- ▶ Passer souvent des examens.
- ▶ Vivre dans un environnement bruyant.
- ▶ Manger à des heures irrégulières ou devant la télévision.
- ▶ Se coucher tard tous les jours de la semaine.
- ▶ Travailler ou étudier plus de 10 heures par jour.
- ▶ Penser souvent au travail ou aux études pendant le week-end.
- ▶ Se disputer fréquemment avec la famille, les amis ou les collègues.
- ▶ Se réveiller très tôt le week-end.
- ▶ Avoir un petit salaire.
- ▶ .....
- ▶ .....

- Est-ce que tu travailles plus de 10 heures par jour ?
  - Non, je fais 8 heures tous les jours.

**B.** Pensez-vous que votre interlocuteur souffre de stress ? Si oui, pourquoi ? Demandez-lui de vous le confirmer.



As hypothesized, **the German and the French materials differ** thus in their treatment of interrogative variation. In general, the German textbooks reduce variation to a minimum, introducing and revising even chunks step by step, while the French textbooks present a wide range of interrogative forms from the very beginning, incorporate less repetition, and have a steeper progression. This may be attributed to two factors: First, the target group are young adults, so the learners are supposed to be cognitively more mature than 10-13-year old school children. Secondly, French publishing houses will assume that most institutions using their books will be situated in francophone areas. Therefore, learners will be immersed in a French-speaking environment and encounter linguistic variation in their everyday lives. Reducing structures in the textbooks would therefore be unlikely to reduce the variation the learners are exposed to. Also, the amount of input outside the classroom may compensate for the lack of structural recurrence. Nonetheless, it is striking that pedagogical reduction is much more present in the German teaching materials although all textbooks are conceived for beginners.<sup>1090</sup>

### Intonation

As for intonational variation, we have seen that the teaching materials do not reduce intonational variation in their input. Mean-F0 difference values were found to be sometimes positive and sometimes negative, and all nuclear configurations occurred. The variation observed could not be attributed to word order, mapping prosody to morphosyntactic form.

Yet, from this fact does not directly follow that interrogative intonation will not be treated in the teaching materials. Indeed, all textbooks but *Découvertes 1* offer **an exercise on the discrimination of affirmations and interrogatives** for {s/S}V-structures (see figures 162 to 164).

Figure 162: Exercise on the discrimination of affirmations and interrogatives in *À plus 1*, p.22



Figure 163: Exercise on the discrimination of affirmations and interrogatives in *Écho 1*, p.9

**3 Interrogation ou affirmation ?**  
Cochez la bonne case.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
interrogation						
affirmation						

Figure 164: Exercise on the discrimination of affirmations and interrogatives in *Rond-Point 1*, p.14

**6. QUESTION OU AFFIRMATION ?**

Écoutez ces phrases. Sont-elles des affirmations ou des questions ? Ajoutez des points d'interrogation, si nécessaire.

Piste 5

1. Ça, c'est la côte d'Azur .....
2. Ça, c'est un fromage emmental .....
3. Ça, c'est la lettre « h » .....
4. Ça, c'est un dictionnaire .....
5. C'est le premier jour de classe .....
6. Ça, s'écrit avec deux « n » .....

<sup>1090</sup> *Écho 1* and *Rond-Point 1* indicate that they will lead at least to an A1-level (partly already covering A2-level tasks). In contrast, *À plus 1* and *Découvertes 1* only specify that they are meant for the first year of FLE-learning.

The understanding of an {s/S}V-structure with a prototypical final rise as a question is thus trained in three out of four textbooks. Since intonation is phonologically relevant in morphosyntactically unmarked structures only, interrogatives with question words, *EST-CE QUE* or inversion are left aside in most of the textbooks. In *Écho 1*, which offers regular exercises on sounds, rhythm and intonation, there is though also **an exercise on the prosody of inverted wh-questions** (see figure 165).<sup>1091</sup> In the corresponding recording, inverted structures are presented with varying intonation patterns. More precisely, the nine interrogatives illustrate all different possibilities of nuclear configurations<sup>1092</sup> (see table 63). Unfortunately, there is no instruction which precises what learners are supposed to do with the audio input. One possibility would be to imitate interrogatives with the same prosody, but it remains an open question why this would be expected to be useful for learners.

Figure 165: Exercise on inverted wh-interrogatives in *Écho*, p.57

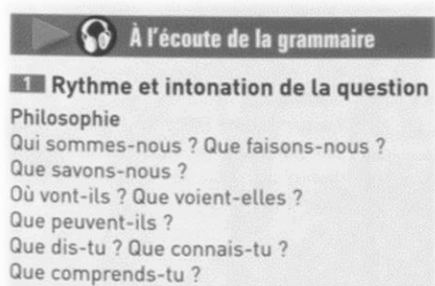


Table 63: Prosodic variation in an intonation exercise

	NC	Mean-F0 difference
<i>Que comprends-tu ?</i>	H*H%	4.4st
<i>Que dis-tu ?</i>		3.9st
<i>Que connais-tu ?</i>		2.1st
<i>Que savons-nous ?</i>	L*H%	1.2st
<i>Que faisons-nous ?</i>		0.1st
<i>Que peuvent-ils ?</i>	H*L%	1.1st
<i>Où vont-ils ?</i>		0.5st
<i>Qui sommes-nous ?</i>	L*L%	-2.1st
<i>Que voient-elles ?</i>		-3.9st

Accordingly, inverted wh-questions are not presented with a prototypical final contour which could be imitated. Instead, intonational variability is illustrated by means of different realisations of the same morphosyntactic variant. The only implicit regularity that could be detected is that the F0-maximum is usually associated with either the question word or the end of the utterance. However, even if this regularity was supposed to be used in production, intonational training of interrogatives would still be kept to a minimum.

<sup>1091</sup> There is also an exercise on emotion-related intonation, which may also be considered as relevant for interrogative intonation because surprise questions are included there (see p.155).

<sup>1092</sup> Since the audio material of exercises is presented on other CDs than the unit texts, these wh-interrogatives were not part of the audio corpus.

### 7.4.3.3 Explicit rules

For completing the qualitative analysis of how question forms are taught in the four textbooks, I also collected the corresponding rules. In this subsection, I will thus depict how the books systematise interrogative variation.

#### Morphosyntax

All four textbooks mention questions in their grammar sections, but they do so in different ways. For one thing, the French materials stay monolingual while the German materials add comments in German. More importantly though, the German textbooks introduce and practise interrogative structures in much smaller steps.

In the grammar booklet from *À plus 1*, seven out of forty-one rules concern questions (see also table 64).<sup>1093</sup> Therefore, it seems legitimate to speak of questions as a central grammar topic in the first year of FLE. After introducing intonation questions (G1.2), question words with their most typical morphosyntactic variants are presented: *Qu'est-ce que* (G7), *où {est/sont...}* (G8), and *qui + V* (G13). After that, yes/no-questions with question particle are introduced (G21, see also figure 166), indicating that this type of interrogative is formed by adding *est-ce que* in front of a statement. Also, it is said that intonation questions should only be used in spoken language, whereas questions with *est-ce que* could also be written (*À plus 1 Schülerbuch*, p. 74 and *À plus 1 Grammatikheft*, p. 23).<sup>1094</sup> Having introduced *EST-CE QUE* for yes/no-interrogatives, the question particle is also used for the next question word to be presented: *pourquoi est-ce que* (G27, see also figure 167). Hence, although this is not the most common morphosyntactic variant in authentic language use – which is *Q{s/S}V* – (cf. chapters 5 and 6), the textbook indicates this form as the one to be learned. Finally, *EST-CE QUE* is introduced for wh-questions in general (G28), suggesting that *QE{s/S}V* should be learned as a general means of expression.

Figure 166: Grammar rule on yes/no-interrogatives with “est-ce que” in *À plus 1*, p.78

Du stellst Fragen:	Dazu brauchst du:
<b>Est-ce que</b> je peux inviter Lukas?	→ die Frage mit <i>est-ce que</i>
Aussagesatz Je peux inviter Lukas. On fait une balade à la montagne.	Fragesatz <i>Est-ce que</i> je peux inviter Lukas? <i>Est-ce qu'on</i> fait une balade à la montagne?

<sup>1093</sup> In total, there are 48 grammar topics, but two belong to optional modules and five are part of the general appendix (including comments on pronunciation, conjugation tables, a list of prepositions, a glossary of grammatical terms, and solutions).

<sup>1094</sup> This is a simplification which is not accurate regarding authentic language use: Written language seems to entail subject-verb inversion. Correspondingly, question forms with *est-ce que* were barely used in off-voice comments (see chapter 5) or narration (see chapter 6). However, it is true that interrogatives with the question particle are perceived as less colloquial. Therefore, it will be less shocking to read an *est-ce que* question.

Figure 167: Grammar rule on “pourquoi est-ce que” in À plus 1 Grammatikheft, p.27

**27** Pourquoi est-ce que ...? ... parce que mon prof de français n'est pas là.  
 US V2, p.88 Die Frage mit *pourquoi est-ce que* und die Antwort mit *parce que* |  
 La question avec *pourquoi est-ce que* et la réponse avec *parce que*

Pourquoi est-ce que Clara fait ses devoirs avec Yasmine?  
 Clara fait ses devoirs avec Yasmine **parce que** Yasmine est bonne en maths.

Pourquoi est-ce que Noah mange à la cantine le lundi?  
 Noah mange à la cantine le lundi **parce qu'il** y a toujours des spaghettis le lundi.

Mit **pourquoi est-ce que** fragst du nach einem Grund.  
 Mit **parce que** begründest du etwas. Nach **parce que** bleibt die Wortstellung die gleiche wie im Aussagesatz.

**MERKE** Begründung mit **parce que**:  
**parce que** + Subjekt + Verb (+ Ergänzung)

	Subjekt	Verb	Ergänzung
■	... parce que Yasmine	<b>est</b>	<b>bonne en maths.</b>

■	Subjekt	Ergänzung	Verb
■	... weil Yasmine	gut in Mathe	<b>ist.</b>

In comparison to *À plus 1*, *Découvertes 1* keeps grammar rules to a minimum: There are only two rules on interrogation. In the first rule, eight exemplary questions with their German translation are presented (see figure 168). Obviously, these structures shall be learned as chunks, which can later be used as models for posing slightly alternated questions. In the second rule, *EST-CE QUE* is presented as a signal for questions and it is stressed that word order remains declarative (*Grammatisches Beiheft*, p.31). Also, overviews of already encountered interrogative chunks are given (p.134; *Grammatisches Beiheft*, p.32). In units 6 and 7, there is no new information on interrogatives, but in the final grammar revision (*Grammatisches Beiheft*, p.67f.), intonation and periphrastic questions are concisely summarised. Like in *À plus 1*, the production of interrogatives is thus guided by the learning of chunks and the formulation of *EST-CE QUE* structures.


Figure 168: Grammar rule on first interrogatives in Découvertes 1, p.134

**6** Tu es le frère d'Alex? Fragen stellen (I)

Tu habites ici?	Wohnst du hier?
Tu habites où?	Wo wohnst du?
Tu t'appelles comment?	Wie heißt du?
Qui est-ce?	Wer ist das?
Qu'est-ce que c'est?	Was ist das?
Que fait Léo?	Was macht Léo?
Qu'est-ce que tu aimes?	Was magst du?

Figure 169: Grammar rule on interrogatives with EST-CE QUE in Découvertes 1, p.139

**20 Est-ce que ...? Fragen stellen**



Est-ce que tu as mal?

Où est-ce que tu as mal?

Tu as mal?  
tu as mal?  
tu as mal?

Est-ce qu'il a mal?  
Où est-ce qu'elle a mal?

As opposed to the German materials, the French materials do not formulate simple mnemonic sentences. Rather, they aim at quite an extensive presentation of question forms. Interestingly, *Écho 1* does though not present an exhaustive overview of the structures in its *aide-mémoire* (a grammar revision section at the end of the book): While the different morphosyntactic types of yes/no-interrogatives are illustrated by one example each, wh-questions are mainly exemplified by inversion (see figure 170). What is more, there is no comment about when to use which form – the examples are merely categorised according to their information gap (i.e. whole sentence (=> truth value), subject of an action, direct object of an action, indirect object, selection, place, moment or duration). As in the *Ressources* part, the question forms are thus presented as three different ways of asking a question. Since no differentiation is made, they might be assumed to be freely interchangeable variants.

Figure 170: Overview of question forms in Écho 1, p.172

**Les phrases interrogatives**

L'interrogation porte sur...	Formes interrogatives
toute une phrase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intonation : Tu viens ?</li> <li>Forme « Est-ce que » : <b>Est-ce que</b> tu viens ?</li> <li>Inversion du pronom sujet : Viens-tu ? – Pierre vient-il ?</li> <li>Interrogation négative : Ne viens-tu pas ?</li> </ul>
le sujet d'une action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personnes (Qui – Qui est-ce qui) : <b>Qui</b> veut venir avec nous ?</li> <li>Choses (Qu'est-ce qui) : <b>Qu'est-ce qui</b> fait ce bruit ?</li> </ul>
le complément direct d'une action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personnes (qui) : Qui invitez-vous ? – Vous invitez <b>qui</b> ?</li> <li>Choses (que – qu'est-ce que – quoi) : <b>Que</b> faites-vous ? – <b>Qu'est-ce que</b> vous faites ? – Vous faites <b>quoi</b> ?</li> </ul>
le complément indirect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personnes (à qui – de qui – avec qui – etc.) : <b>À qui</b> partez-vous ?</li> <li>Choses (à quoi – de quoi – avec quoi – etc.) : <b>De quoi</b> avez-vous besoin ?</li> </ul>
un choix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quel (quelle – quels – quelles) : <b>Quel</b> acteur préférez-vous ? – <b>Dans quel</b> film ?</li> </ul>
un lieu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sur la situation ou la direction <b>Où</b> allez-vous ? – <b>D'où</b> venez-vous ? <b>Jusqu'où</b> va la ligne de métro ? <b>Par où</b> passez-vous ? – <b>Chez qui</b> allez-vous ? <b>À côté de qui / quoi</b> habitez-vous ?</li> <li>Sur la distance <b>Quelle est la distance</b> entre Paris et Lyon ? – 430 km. <b>Il y a combien de kilomètres</b> de Paris à Lyon ? – Il y a 430 km.</li> </ul>
un moment ou une durée	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sur le moment <b>Quand... À quel moment... Quel jour... Quel mois... À quelle heure...</b> } part-il en vacances ? <b>En quelle année... En quelle saison...</b></li> <li>Sur la durée – Il y a <b>combien de temps</b> [<b>Ça fait combien de temps</b>] que vous habitez ici ? Vous habitez ici depuis combien de temps ? – <b>Combien de temps</b> [<b>d'années, de mois, etc.</b>] avez-vous vécu en Australie ?</li> </ul>

This is different from the systematisation in **Rond-Point 1**. In the latter's grammar section, clitic inversion is explained as a variant used in a refined speaking style or formal writing whereas morphosyntactically unmarked and wh-in-situ structures are described as colloquial (see figures 173 and 174). Nonetheless, these comments are somewhat dispersed, and an exhaustive structural overview is not given either. In total, *Rond-Point 1* gives three rules on interrogation, but they are neither complementary nor do they build on each other. In the very first rule, it is simply pointed out that there are several ways of asking a question, and that one of those ways is *Qu'est-ce que* + phrase/clause (see figure 171). In the second rule, the use of *QUEL* is specified (see figure 172). Finally, in the last rule, all other remarks on question forms are indicated at once. For instance, it is explained that the question particle is used in yes/no-interrogatives as well as wh-questions. Besides, it is added that *EST-CE QUE* can also be left out in colloquial speech, so wh-fronting is indirectly mentioned as well. Examples for *Qu'est-ce que* and *quoi*-in-situ, and examples for *comment*, *où* and *qui* are given in separate subsections. All in all, the different structures are thus mentioned and sociostylistically described, but the information is not very clearly structured.

Figure 171: Grammar rule in *Rond-Point 1*, p.133

**POSER DES QUESTIONS (1)**

En français, il y a différentes façons de poser des questions. On peut utiliser la forme **qu'est-ce que** + phrase.

- **Qu'est-ce que** ça veut dire « book » en anglais ?  
 ↳ Ça veut dire « livre ».

Figure 172: Grammar rule on 'which/what' in *Rond-Point 1*, p.142

**POSER DES QUESTIONS (2)**

On peut aussi poser une question à l'aide des adjectifs interrogatifs **quel, quelle, quels, quelles**.

	MASCULIN	FÉMININ
SINGULIER	<b>quel</b> âge... ?	<b>quelle</b> profession... ?
PLURIEL	<b>quels</b> livres... ?	<b>quelles</b> langues... ?

- **Quelle** est ta date de naissance ?  
 ↳ Je suis né le 24 avril 1991.

**Quel, quelle, quels, quelles** se prononcent tous [kel].

Figure 173: Grammar rule in Rond-Point 1, p.145

**POSER DES QUESTIONS (3)**

**L'inversion**

En langage soutenu à l'oral et surtout à l'écrit formel, on place le verbe devant le pronom sujet et on unit ces deux éléments par un trait d'union. Si la phrase initiale ne contient pas de pronom sujet, on l'ajoute.

*Il y a souvent des stéréotypes... Quels **sont-ils** ?*

On emploie l'inversion aussi bien pour des questions fermées que pour des questions ouvertes.

« **Est-ce que...** »

On utilise **est-ce que** dans les questions fermées. Cette locution est simple à utiliser : il suffit de la placer devant la phrase affirmative.

- **Est-ce que** vous voulez un café ?  
 → Oui, volontiers !  
 → Non merci !

Devant une voyelle, **est-ce que** devient **est-ce qu'**.

- **Est-ce qu'**il y a un bon film à la télé ce soir ?  
 → Non.

On peut utiliser **est-ce que** dans des questions ouvertes en combinaison avec un mot interrogatif.

**Où est-ce que** tu habites ?

À l'oral, en langage familier, **est-ce que** disparaît très souvent. Seule l'intonation montante indique que c'est une question.

- Vous faites du sport ?  
 → Moi oui, un petit peu.  
 → Moi non, pas du tout.

Figure 174: Grammar rule in Rond-Point 1, p.146

« **Qu'est-ce que...** »

**Qu'est-ce que** est une question partielle et les réponses possibles sont nombreuses.

- **Qu'est-ce qu'on** achète pour son anniversaire ?  
 → Je ne sais pas. Un disque ? Un pull ? Un livre ?
- **Qu'est-ce que** nous apportons samedi ? Un gâteau ? Des jus de fruits ?  
 → Apportez un gâteau.
- **Qu'est-ce qu'il** mange normalement ?  
 → Il mange de tout. Ce n'est pas un enfant difficile.

À l'oral, en langage familier, on utilise **quoi** au lieu de **qu'est-ce que**.

*On achète **quoi** pour son anniversaire ?  
 On apporte **quoi** samedi ?  
 Il mange **quoi** ?*

**Quelques mots interrogatifs**

Dans cette unité, nous avons vu trois mots interrogatifs :

- **Comment** : la question porte sur la façon ou la manière de faire ou de dire quelque chose.  
*Comment tu t'appelles ?*
- **Où** : la question porte sur le lieu.  
*Où habites-tu ?*


On peut aussi faire précéder ce mot d'une préposition.

*D'où est-ce que tu viens ?*

- **Qui** : la question porte sur une personne.  
*Qui veut un café ?*

À l'oral, en langage familier, le mot interrogatif est très souvent placé à la fin de la question.

*Tu t'appelles **comment** ?*



**To sum up**, the German materials offer very reduced but clear rules, whereas the French ones expose a wide range of forms but only some guidelines. In order to draw a concise conclusion of the sections on the teaching of morphosyntactic variation, an overview table is given (see table 64). In this table, not only the first book of the series, but also the consecutive ones leading to level B1 are integrated. As becomes obvious, the German textbooks target a different language than the French ones: As opposed to the latter ones, they adopt a pedagogical norm which does not try to reach native-likeness, but they aim at an interlanguage sufficient for expressing questions in some prototypical situations (e.g. *Tu as quel âge ?* for asking for a peer's age). Consequently, the German textbook series clearly focus on an interlanguage target.



Table 64: Explicit treatment of morphosyntactic forms of direct interrogatives in four FLE-textbook series

		FLE-textbook series for learners from level A1 to B1			
		German		French	
		Découvertes (1-4)	À plus! (1-4)	Écho (1-3)	Rond-Point (1-2)
<b>Progression</b>		Chunks (1, G6) > <i>est-ce que</i> (yes/no and wh) (1, G20) > <i>quel</i> + noun (2, G3) > { <i>qu'/qui</i> } <i>est-ce qu{i/e/'}</i> (3, G19) > simple clitic inversion (3, G20)	Intonation questions (1, G1.2) > <i>Qu'est-ce que</i> (1, G7) > <i>Où est/sont... ?</i> (1, G8) > questions with <i>qui</i> (1, G13) > <i>est-ce que</i> (1, G21) > <i>pourquoi est-ce que</i> (1, G27) > wh-questions with <i>est-ce que</i> (1, G28) [> mentioning questions with final question words (2, G8.2 (revision))] > <i>quel</i> + noun + ESV and SV + <i>quel</i> + noun (2, G22) > preposition + QESV (2, G43) > simple clitic inversion (2, G44) > { <i>qu'/qui</i> } <i>est-ce qu{i/e/'}</i> (3, G22) > <i>lequel</i> (3, G35)	Chunks > training of intonation questions (without rule) > further chunks > <i>pourquoi</i> as question word > short overview of the main types (1, p.57) > thematic consolidation	<i>Qu'est-ce que</i> (1, p.133) > intonation in morphosyntactically unmarked questions (1, p.134) > the <i>accord</i> of <i>quel</i> (1, p.142) > first overview of main types across registers (1, pp.145f.) > confirmation-seeking questions (2, p.112) > polite demands (2, p.113) > ( <i>Et Si on ... ?</i> (2, p.121) > negated interrogatives (and their response) (2, p.149)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- moderate and well-defined progression</li> <li>- primary status of spoken forms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rather steep and less well-defined progression</li> <li>- active training of spoken (and sometimes also written) forms, passive habituation to written forms</li> </ul>		
<b>Final target</b>	<b>yes/no</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- intonation questions</li> <li>- <i>est-ce que</i></li> <li>- simple clitic inversion</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- authentic language use</li> <li>- active and passive use seem to be separated in a more stringent way</li> </ul>	
	<b>wh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>est-ce que</i></li> <li>- some chunks with wh-in-situ (e.g. <i>Tu as quel âge ?</i>)</li> <li>- some chunks with stylistic inversion (e.g. <i>Où est/sont... ?</i>)</li> </ul>			

## Intonation

Interestingly, rules on intonation are far less common than rules on morphosyntax. Although the French FLE-textbook *Écho 1* offers exercises on intonation (pp.9+57, see last subsection), it does not describe intonation on a metalinguistic level. Hence, it focuses on imitative training instead of indicating guidelines. As for the other French textbook, *Rond-Point 1*, the only “rule” on interrogative intonation consists in indications that interrogatives would always be rising (see figures 175 and 176). As we have seen, this generalisation corresponds to the overall tendency for the interrogatives contained in the input, but one might wonder whether the introduction of such an overgeneralising rule is necessary or even useful. In *À plus 1*, the prototypical rising pattern is also mentioned, but it is linked to intonation questions only (see figure 177). The other German textbook, *Découvertes 1*, does not describe interrogative intonation at all. In its older version (*Série verte*), it did, however, not only mention the prototypical rise associated with questions, but it even indicated concrete rules for the intonation of wh-interrogatives: Although intonational input varied as much as in other teaching materials, the authors tried to map prosody to syntax. Intonation was described as falling whenever the question word was sentence-initial, and as rising whenever it was at the end of the sentence (see figure 178). It was only in their newer series, *Série bleue* and *jaune*, that this unnecessary and inaccurate rule was abandoned. Now, interrogative intonation seems to be treated in a much more careful way: The only thing mentioned about intonation is that questions without wh-words *can* be formed by raising one’s voice at the end of the sentence.<sup>1095</sup> As opposed to *À plus* and *Rond-Point*, *Découvertes Série bleue* does thus not insinuate that yes/no-interrogatives are generally rising. It merely points out that a final rise may be used to encode interrogative meaning.

To conclude, all four textbooks expose learners to unreduced intonational variation without indicating precise rules on tonal movement (anymore). While *À plus 1* may implicitly suggest that the sentence melody of questions is generally rising, *Rond-Point 1* even explicitly mentions that interrogatives are pronounced with rising intonation. In contrast, *Écho 1* and *Découvertes 1* leave out any intonational descriptions. Altogether, intonational variation is rather left aside in the four textbooks.

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<sup>1095</sup> “Wenn kein Fragewort vorhanden ist, kann die Frage durch die Intonation (Satzmelodie) gebildet werden: die Stimme wird am Satzende angehoben.“ (*Découvertes 1, Série bleue, Grammatisches Beiheft*, p.30)

Figure 175: Intonation as a means of distinction in Rond-Point 1, p.134

**L'INTONATION DE LA PHRASE**

Habituellement, dans une phrase déclarative (affirmation ou négation), l'intonation baisse.

*Tu viens demain.*                      *Tu ne viens pas demain.*

Dans une phrase interrogative, l'intonation monte comme l'indique la flèche.

*Tu viens demain ?*

Figure 176: Intonation as a means of distinction in Rond-Point 1, p.15

**L'INTONATION DE LA PHRASE**

À l'oral, l'intonation est parfois la seule façon de distinguer une question d'une affirmation.

*Anne s'écrit avec deux N ?*                      *Anne s'écrit avec deux N.*

Figure 177: Intonation questions in À plus 1, p.22


Grammaire


Du stellst eine Frage:                      Dazu brauchst du:

CH1 1                      **Ca va?**                      → die Intonationsfrage

Frage	Aussage
↗	↘
Ça va?	Ça va.
↗	↘
Tu es en cinquième B?	Non. Je suis en cinquième A.
↗	↘
Il est nouveau?	Oui. Il est nouveau.

Figure 178: Rule mapping prosody to wh-word position (Découvertes 1, Série verte, Grammatikheft, p.6)

- **Qui** est-ce ?                                            - C'est Julien.

- Tu t'appelles **comment** ?                                            - Je m'appelle Isabelle.

**R** Bei manchen Ergänzungsfragen steht das Fragewort am Satzanfang. Diese Fragen haben eine fallende Intonation.  
Bei anderen Ergänzungsfragen steht das Fragewort am Satzende. Diese Fragen haben eine steigende Intonation.

## 7.5 Suggestions for the implementation of the pedagogical norm

In this section, the results from 4.2 shall be related to the pedagogical norm developed under 7.3, giving suggestions how to adapt the current teaching materials. Again, I will start with morphosyntax, and deal with intonation separately.

### Morphosyntax

As we have seen, the French textbooks do not clearly reduce morphosyntactic variation. This is not advisable for FLE-teaching in secondary schools because beginning learners, and even more so 10-to-13-year-old children, will be overtaxed by the variety of forms. On the other hand, a pedagogical reduction should not lead to unauthentic language use either. An actively trained overuse of periphrastic wh-structures as observed in the two German textbooks *À plus* and *Découvertes* is therefore not recommendable per se.

There is though a conceivable reason for this unauthentic language use: its structural simplicity and transferability, while being considered sociostylistically ‘neutral’.<sup>1096</sup> Hence, it seems reasonable that the German materials use this pedagogical reduction purposefully: By introducing this structure, learners do not only obtain a structurally simple means to ask wh-questions, but they also avoid the risk of using potentially stigmatized forms. With regard to competence and output orientation (i.e. the idea that learners are enabled to express themselves), such a deviation from the statistical norm may be justified for early production.<sup>1097</sup> However, such a pedagogical reduction should be limited to speaking and writing. In instructions as well as other truly written input, I do not think that inverted questions are to be avoided.

What is more, learners are at no point sensitized that the periphrastic wh-form they use is not a form they are likely to hear or read in francophone countries. If one is willing to accept a deviation from the statistical norm, i.e. if one is willing to change the preliminary target from the native-speaker use to a pedagogically reduced inventory of forms, it is strongly advisable to make this subject of discussion once learners are advanced.<sup>1098</sup> As a first step in this direction, I would endorse incorporating a short overview of question forms in the textbook for the first year of FLE. Giving learners a structural guide

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<sup>1096</sup> The structure is simple because it is easily decomposable, and transferable because it is not grammatically restrained (cf. Valdman’s notions of *complexity* and *extensivity*).

<sup>1097</sup> As far as I am concerned, active training should though rather focus on authentic forms, such as *qu’est-ce que + sV ?*, *Pourquoi + sV ?* and *sVQ*.

<sup>1098</sup> In the educational system of Baden-Württemberg, I would recommend doing so in the *Kursstufe* (i.e. during the final two years before graduation).

from the very beginning will help them to find their way through the opaque tangle of interrogative forms. To illustrate how such an overview could look like, I give an example hereafter (see table 65).

Table 65: Overview of question forms for FLE-beginners<sup>1099</sup>

<b>Syntaxe normale</b> <b>{s/S}V<sup>1100</sup></b>	Tu es là ? Elle est là, <b>ma mère</b> ?	La plupart de ces constructions s'utilisent surtout à l' <b>oral</b> car elles sont plutôt <b>informelles</b> .
	Où <b>tu</b> habites ? Où <b>il</b> est, <b>mon sac</b> ? Tu habites où ? Il habite où, <b>Pierre</b> ? Tu fais <b>quoi</b> ?	
<b>est-ce que</b> <b>E{s/S}V</b>	Est-ce que <b>tu</b> es là ? Est-ce que <b>Pierre</b> est là ?	
	Où est-ce que <b>Pierre</b> habite ? Qu'est-ce que <b>tu</b> fais ? Qu'est-ce que <b>Pierre</b> fait ?	
<b>Inversion</b> <b>V{s/S}</b>	Es-tu là ? <b>Pierre</b> est-il là ?	La plupart de ces constructions s'utilisent surtout à l' <b>écrit</b> car elles sont plutôt <b>formelles</b>
	Où <b>ses parents</b> sont-ils ? Où est <b>son sac</b> ? Où va-t-il ? Que fait <b>Pierre</b> ?	

Although learners have no need to use all the different forms productively, they will need to know that there are several possibilities to form French questions. Otherwise, when encountering interrogative chunks of different forms, they may be confused and make overgeneralisations. If an overview clarifies structural variation, different forms can be used in the input without constantly bewildering learners. More precisely, inversion can then be used for instructions and other truly written interrogatives from early on, while the focus in production can remain on spoken forms (i.e. non-inverted structures) and chunks (e.g. *Où est/sont... ?*). Doing so, learners will gradually get used to the differences the French language shows in oral and written uses.

Additionally, I suggest using authentic materials, such as novels or reality TV shows, for data-driven learning in later acquisition stages. It has been shown that learning from corpora can be helpful, especially for understanding natives in direct conversations (Paternostro 2017). Hence, intensive reading and listening tasks can guide learners in their acquisition. These tasks can be incorporated at all levels: early exercises on structural analysis (e.g. underlining questions with pre- and postverbal

<sup>1099</sup> One could oppose that the information given about inversion is not sufficient because there is the risk of negative transfer in cases such as *\*Quand est Marie arrivée?*. However, this overview is not meant to be a model for *production*, but to systematise interrogative variation encountered in *perception*.

<sup>1100</sup> Of course, different colours should be used for the presentation of this scheme (e.g. red, orange and blue instead of shades of blue and grey only).

question words in different colours), later sociostylistic classification tasks (e.g. judging the authenticity of a dialogue from a novel by comparing it to an extract from a spoken corpus) and finally detailed listening comprehension for proficient learners (e.g. transcribing and analysing an extract from reality TV). By integrating exercises of this kind, learners will reflect the specific features of French, which is not only good for their language acquisition but also for their general language awareness (cf. *Bildungsplan Französisch als zweite Fremdsprache* 2016: 14).

### Intonation

Although none of the textbooks reduced the intonational variety of final contours, some of them introduced overgeneralising rules. If these rules do not even hold for the audio material provided by the textbooks themselves, those instructions are certainly needless. However, this does not automatically mean that intonation should be excluded from teaching.

Albeit discrimination tasks on assertive versus interrogative declaratives (cf. *À plus* 1, p. 22; *Écho* 1, p.9; *Rond-Point* 1, p.14) may seem superfluous for German-L1 learners (as in other European languages, rising declaratives are associated to an interrogative meaning), they will be a good means to expose learners to interrogative input and to solidify their previous knowledge. Also, learners will get prosodic input, which will accustom them to properties of French phonetics. Therefore, I plead for the integration of similar exercises. Even more so, I support the integration of focus on form exercises. As far as I am concerned, exercises on intonational variation like the listening to *wh*-questions in *Écho* 1 (see p.57) go into the right direction. However, the prosodic form of inverted structures is certainly less important than the forms learners should be able to use productively at this stage. Hence, the same exercise with *wh*-in-situ questions would be more sensible. Besides, the exercise lacks concrete instructions, so learners would not know what to focus on. One possibility would be to make them focus on a particular part of the interrogative and to record an imitation of the utterance. Following my pedagogical norm on intonation in *wh*-questions (p.327), the part to focus on could be the question word at the beginner's level, the difference between (*wh*-fronted) echo and information-seeking questions at intermediate stage, and the differences in contours for advanced learners. Since studies have shown the positive influence of visualisation (see p.364), the presentation of the (relevant parts of) intonation curves, e.g. via Praat, may be helpful for these exercises.

## 7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, a model appropriate for teaching French interrogatives in German grammar schools (*Gymnasien*) has been developed and compared to the actual input provided by two German and two French FLE-textbooks for beginners.

Notwithstanding the relatively limited sample, this study offered valuable insights into FLE-teaching practises in Germany and France. The study of the four textbooks has shown that morphosyntactic and intonational variation are treated differently: While morphosyntactic variation is generally treated explicitly, intonational variation remains mostly implicit. When intonation was taught, it was mostly by indicating overgeneralising rules that did not even hold for the input provided by the textbooks themselves. By way of illustration, rules attributing a rising intonation to questions are disproved by the fact that all textbooks also showed final falls. What is more, varying intonation patterns were not sequentially presented but simply included in the input. In comparison, morphosyntactic forms were actively practised in exercises, and at least in the German materials, they were introduced in a structured way. On the whole, pedagogical reduction of morphosyntactic forms was much more present in the German textbooks than in the French ones. Accordingly, learners are exposed to a much wider range of forms in *Écho* and *Rond-Point* than in *À plus* and *Découvertes*.

Structural diversity is certainly important for proficient learners but beginning learners may be discouraged by such floods of linguistic forms. Therefore, pedagogical selection and ordering are necessary. Overall, I suggest to not avoid variation in the input, but to guide learners through the maze of interrogative forms. While the learning of chunks has been shown to be imperative in the initial stage, formal alternation is crucial for using language in a native-like manner.

As for morphosyntax, this means that after the learning of essential chunks, the different structures should be introduced, explained, and practised. For this purpose, the ordering of the structural presentation should follow learners' needs. Although spoken forms should thus be treated primarily, inversion should not be completely omitted. By favouring {s/S}V-forms in dialogue transcriptions and oral exercises and V{s/S}-forms in instructions, written input and writing tasks, learners will get used to the discrepancy between the French oral and written language use. Since the French interrogative system is rather complex and confusing for beginners, an initially presented overview may be a good means to take away learners' insecurity when encountering varying forms.

As for intonation, I suggest standing back from prescriptive rules. If rules on intonation are to be integrated, they should be inductively taught and hold for at least the majority of cases. Most importantly, however, rules that do not even hold for the input provided should be left out. Intonational variation should nonetheless be, as it already is, included in the input, particularly as prosodic variability is not likely to bewilder learners. Some pedagogical reduction may though be useful for accustoming beginning learners to French prosody. The recurrence of certain patterns, such as a high tone on question words, will help them to internalize prosodic features. At the beginning, they should thus mostly encounter prototypical intonation patterns. In comparison, advanced beginners and intermediate learners will also profit from meaning-related nuances in the input. At all levels, focus

on form exercises with visual aids can be used to sensitize learners to the regularity and variability of French intonation.

The present work has contributed to existing knowledge on the teaching of interrogatives in FLE by providing some insights into the European treatment of interrogative variation. As the teaching material analyses were restricted to respectively two textbooks from France and Germany, analyses of materials from other European countries, such as Great Britain or Spain, could be a follow-up. Likewise, it might be interesting to have a look at teaching materials from germanophone Switzerland or Austria, where learners would be similar to German target groups (since dialectal varieties of German are the native language of most learners there as well on the one hand, and due to their age and school environment on the other). Also, elaborated research on native-speaker perception would widen our understanding of interrogatives in FLE. For instance, it remains unclear in which cases wh-fronting is more stigmatised than wh-in-situ. Besides, there are no studies on the perception of tonal movement, and it would be very interesting to see its impact on acceptability and accentedness ratings. More research is also required to determine the efficacy of specific teaching methods, such as phonetic training with visually supported focus on intonational form. In this context, it would also be interesting to assess the effects of intonational perception (i.e. the capacity to describe a contour accurately) on intonational production (i.e. the capacity to reproduce a prosodic pattern) or the difference between the explicit and implicit teaching of interrogative intonation. Even the outcome of using different pedagogical norms (e.g. wh-fronted vs. wh-in-situ as the first structure to be learned) could be assessed. Any research aiming to optimize the teaching of morphosyntactic and intonational variation would be desirable. Hence, I seriously hope that this chapter will give an impetus to further research on the teaching of interrogatives in FLE.



## 8. Conclusion: *C'est quoi, le bilan ?*<sup>1101</sup>

### 8.1 Summary

This thesis comprised a short introduction (chapter 1), an outline of the most relevant theoretical and methodological issues (chapter 2), a summary of previous studies (chapter 3), and four empirical studies on morphosyntactic and intonational variation in French interrogatives (chapters 4 to 7). In the following, I will summarise the individual chapters.

The first empirical study, which was presented in chapter 4, was a **questionnaire survey**, in which a hundred native speakers of hexagonal French were asked for their opinion on certain interrogatives and contexts. As it turned out, speakers often classified interrogatives according to their degree of formality, but they also suggested several pragmatic differences. For example, the inverted structure of item 5.1. ('Did you sleep well?') was said to be formal, the periphrastic one to be rather colloquial, and the sV-variant even more colloquial. At the same time, the EsV-structure was believed to be more doubtful or insisting. Such generalisations were however not possible for all of the items and questionnaire answers could not always be systematised.

In chapter 5, I examined the interrogatives of thirty episodes of **reality TV shows**. As I could empirically support, the morphosyntactic and intonational variation in French interrogation is – at least to some extent – systematic. As for general distributions of forms, the most common forms were {s/S}-structures and most interrogatives were rising. Yet, variation did occur, and all main morphosyntactic types as well as nuclear configuration could be found. By unravelling the tangle of linguistic and extralinguistic factors in constituency tables and regression models, the impact of the variables could be determined. In the case of the numerous linguistic factors investigated, several aspects of the wh-phrase, the subject, and the verb could be shown to have an influence on the formulation of a question. As for intonation, it was mostly the presence of a question word (and to a smaller extent also its position) that seemed to be of importance for the final tonal movement. With regard to extralinguistic factors, the pragmatic function (including event type) and the speech type (interaction/spoken vs. comment/written) had a clear influence on morphosyntax (e.g. on-screen interactions were usually formulated in declarative form) as well as intonation (e.g. thought guiding off-voice comment favoured falls) whereas the biological characteristics of speakers could not be straightforwardly interpreted. Overall, the most important finding was that the directness of interrogatives correlated with declarative structures and final rises.

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<sup>1101</sup> English translation: 'What's the final result?'; this question would be expected to be used in spoken language.

In chapter 6, research was extended to **detective novels**, i.e. the e-book as well as audio book version of contemporary fiction. The latter contained a lot of direct speech and could thus be taken as a written imitation of spoken hexagonal French. Interestingly, distributions differed from the RTV-corpus: for example, inversion was much more common in the scripted dialogues than in the candidate interactions in reality TV. Likewise, the prevalence of final rises in yes/no-interrogatives was stronger in the oralisation of the written material than in spontaneous speech. This may be an effect of reading out (=> transforming punctuation into pitch movement) as well as an effect of standardisation (=> training and conforming with prescriptive norms). Hence, the fact that these interrogatives were medially written and read (or acted out) may have led to the observed distributional differences. All in all, the findings of the two preceding chapters could be confirmed, but the effect of some factors – such as morphosyntactic markedness and the position of the wh-word – could not be substantiated statistically.

In the last of the four empirical study, previous findings were used to develop a pedagogical norm. In a second step, this norm was compared to the one used in current **teaching materials for FLE-beginners**. In general, the teaching materials focus on spoken language, and morphosyntactic as well as intonational variation is by no means absent. In contrast to authentic language use, inverted structures are however (at least in the German materials) avoided and periphrastic wh-structures are recurrently used and even actively trained. The wh-in-situ form, which is much more common in contemporary spoken French, is included in the teaching materials, but it is not introduced explicitly. As for intonation, there used to be overgeneralising rules, but fortunately the current textbooks do no longer include any obsolete rules.

## 8.2 Reaching the end

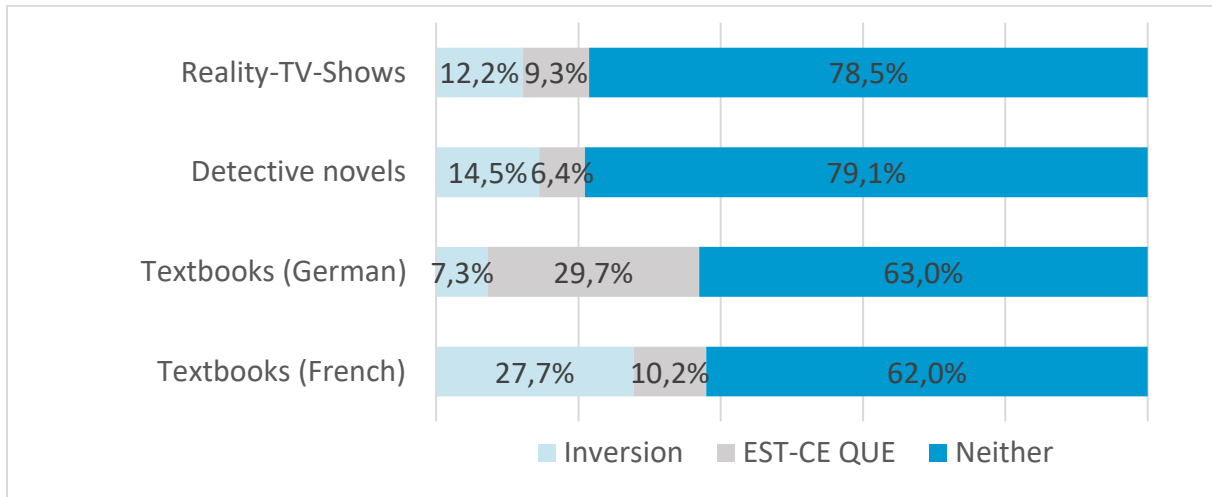
In the second chapter, two broad research questions were determined for this thesis:

- A) How are questions realised (a) morphosyntactically and (b) intonationally?
- B) What (I) linguistic and (II) extralinguistic factors have an impact on the choice of the (a) morphosyntactic and (b) intonational form of a question form?

*Reaching the end* of this thesis does hence not only mean coming to the final part of this writing, but also achieving the goal of answering these two research questions. Consequently, I will hereafter gather the results of the four different studies I conducted. As the morphosyntactic form could be shown to have an influence on the intonational realisation of a question, the results on morphosyntax will be presented prior to the ones on intonation.

In all corpora, declarative structures (i.e. {s/V}, Q{s/S}V and {s/S}VQ) predominated, but the predominance was stronger in the corpora of RTV and detective novels than in the textbooks (cf. figure 179).

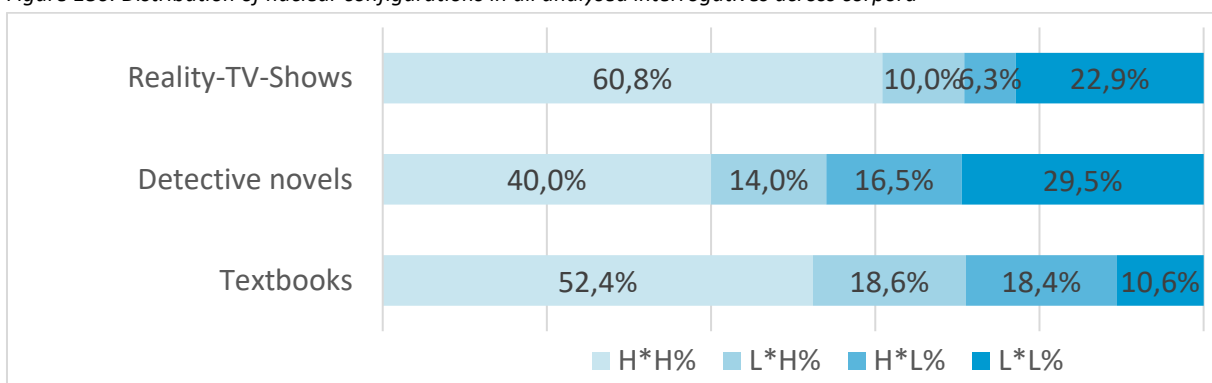
Figure 179: Distribution of main morphosyntactic types in all analysed interrogatives across corpora



The greatest difference was in the repartition of the morphosyntactically marked interrogatives: While periphrastic interrogatives represented the smallest proportion in authentic corpora, they represented almost a third of the interrogatives in the German textbooks. In contrast, the French textbooks used more inverted structures than the other corpora.

As for final tonal movement, all corpora contained interrogatives with all four nuclear configurations. Although rising structures prevailed, falling structures were not uncommon either (cf. figure 180).

Figure 180: Distribution of nuclear configurations in all analysed interrogatives across corpora<sup>1102</sup>



There was quite a lot of morphosyntactic as well as intonational variation in all corpora. At least some of this observed variation could be systematised by linguistic and extralinguistic factors.

As far as **word order** is concerned, it was shown that spontaneously spoken interrogatives seem to be as good as restricted to straight forms. In contrast, inversion seems to be the default in written speech

<sup>1102</sup> As there was no significant difference between the German and the French FLE-textbooks, the two textbook corpora have been subsumed.

(cf. narration, off-voice comments and instructions in French FLE-textbooks). Besides, subject and verb types were of importance. While the presence of a non-clitic subject and verbal complexity may favour subject-verb inversion, certain forms (such as *ça* or forms of *ÊTRE*) rather promote the use of declarative structures.

As for **the use of the question particle**, the most important factors seemed to be the question word and pragmatics. If the interrogative contained *QUE*, the likelihood of *EST-CE QUE* was multiplied many times. As could be shown, this is due to the special status of *Qu'est-ce qu{i/e/'}* as a (quasi-)lexicalised question word. In other cases, the question particle seemed to be either used to mark emphaticness, politeness (mainly in demands) or in thought explication. Also, if there was no question word (i.e. if it was a yes/no-question), the interrogative was much more likely to contain *EST-CE QUE* than if the structure contained a wh-expression other than 'what'.

Regarding the **wh-phrase position**, it became clear that wh-in-situ structures are not necessarily used in different situations than wh-ex-situ ones. Nonetheless, the likelihood of wh-in-situ structures increases when the question is truly information-seeking and/or contextually grounded. In general, {s/S}VQ-structures seem to gain ground, and they may be considered the default structure for contemporary spoken French.

In the case of the final **intonation** contour, no strict rules could be found. There were though several tendencies: YNQ were more often rising than WHQ, and questions in direct interactions were more often pronounced with a final rise than questions in narration or comments. Likewise, there was evidence for a decrease of the likelihood for final rises if the interrogative was morphosyntactically marked. However, the findings were to some extent controversial (cf. locative YNQ in novels).

### 8.3 Outlook and final statement

Although it may not be possible to generalise all my findings, the four empirical studies presented in this thesis allowed to check hypotheses and to test the mapping of morphosyntax, intonation, and meaning. The obtained results could also be applied to FLE-didactics. In the questionnaire answers as well as in all three corpora, there could be observed some regularity as well as some variation. As it turned out, some tendencies can be observed, but variation cannot be reliably predicted. The least contestable observation is thus the fact that French interrogatives vary in their morphosyntactic and intonational realisation. As I could show, they do so systematically – but only to some extent.

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## Primary Sources

### Reality TV shows

Programme	ID <sup>1103</sup>	Date	Channel	Starting time				
<i>L'addition s'il vous plait</i>	ADDI_1	07/03/2016	TF1	17:00				
	ADDI_2	15/03/2016						
	ADDI_3	23/03/2016						
<i>Bienvenue au camping</i>	BVAC_1	09/05/2016		TF1	18:00			
	BVAC_2	17/05/2016						
	BVAC_3	25/05/2016						
<i>Bienvenue à l'hôtel</i>	BVAH_1	02/05/2016				TF1	18:00	
	BVAH_2	19/04/2016						
	BVAH_3	27/04/2016						
<i>Bienvenue chez nous</i>	BVCN_1	04/04/2016			TF1			18:00
	BVCN_2	16/03/2016						
	BVCN_3	13/04/2016						
<i>Chasseurs d'appart'</i>	CHAP_1	02/05/2016	M6				18:40	
	CHAP_2	19/04/2016						
	CHAP_3	13/04/2016						
<i>Cinq salons qui décoiffent</i>	CSQD_1	18/04/2016	RTL-be	17:25				
	CSQD_3	05/07/2017		16:30				
	CSQD_4	29/06/2017						
<i>La Meilleure Boulangerie de France</i>	MBOU_1	03/10/2016	M6	17:30				
	MBOU_2	27/09/2016						
	MBOU_3	21/09/2016						
<i>Quatre mariages pour une lune de miel</i>	QUAM_1	02/05/2016	TF1	17:00				
	QUAM_2	19/04/2016						
	QUAM_3	06/04/2016						
<i>Les reines du shopping</i>	SHOP_1	02/05/2016	M6	17:25				
	SHOP_2	05/04/2016						
	SHOP_3	13/04/2016						
<i>Un dîner presque parfait</i>	UDPP_1	02/05/2016	W9	17:50				
	UDPP_3	14/06/2016						
	UDPP_5	02/05/2016		16:50				

<sup>1103</sup> The numbers stand for the days of the week, i.e. 1 = Monday, 2 = Tuesday, 3 = Wednesday, 4 = Thursday, 5 = Friday.

## **Detective Novels**

E-books: Kindle

**Audio books: Audible (exception: Total Khéops)**

Bussi, Michel (2016): *Le temps est assassin*.

Presses de la Cité, 2016.

Michel Bussi et Presses de la Cité (P)2016 Audiolib

Bussi, Michel (2015): *Maman a tort*.

Presses de la Cité, 2015.

APub (P)2017 Audible FR

Giébel, Karine (2012): *Juste une ombre*.

2012, Fleuve Noir, département d'Univers Poche, 2012.

Univers Poche (P)2016 Audible FR (read by Nathalie Spitzer)

Giébel, Karine (2008): *Terminus Elicius*.

Belfond, 2016.

Belfond (P)2016 Audible FR (read by Micky Sébastien)

Izzo, Jean-Claude (1995): *Total Khéops*.

Editions Gallimard, 2013.

DPI - Le Livre qui parle 2016

Lemaitre, Pierre (2011): *Alex*.

Éditions Albin Michel, 2011.

Albin Michel, 2011 et (p) Audiolib, 2011

Lemaitre, Pierre (2006): *Travail soigné*.

Pierre Lemaitre et Éditions du Masque, département des éditions Jean-Claude Lattès, 2006.

Pierre Lemaitre / Éditions du Masque, département des éditions Jean-Claude Lattès (P)2015 Audiolib

Molay, Frédérique (2017): *Copier n'est pas jouer*.

Amazon Publishing, 2017.

APub (P)2017 Audible FR

Lévy, Marc (1999): *Et si c'était vrai...*

Versilio, 2012.

Robert Laffont 2003 (P) Éditions Gallimard 2005

Lévy, Marc (2003): *Si c'était à refaire*.

Versilio, 2012.

Editions Robert Laffont, S.A. Susanna Lea Associates, Paris 2012 et (p) Audiolib 2012

The Perl scripts (i.e. the programming code) and output files (i.e. the automatically extracted and annotated question forms) as well as the intonationally analysed interrogatives (i.e. the manually extracted audio files, the textgrids and the spreadsheet with the transcriptions, annotations and measurements) are available under <https://www.ortolang.fr/market/item/interrogatives-in-novels>.

## **FLE-Textbooks**

*À plus 1. Nouvelle édition*. 2012. Grammar booklet & pupil's book. Berlin: Cornelsen.

*Découvertes 1 - Série verte*. 2001. Grammar booklet. Stuttgart: Klett.

*Découvertes 1, Série bleue*. 2012. Grammar booklet & pupil's book. Stuttgart: Klett.

*Écho 1. Méthode de français*. 2008. Pupil's book. Paris: CLE international.

*Rond-Point 1. Méthode de français basée sur l'apprentissage par les tâches*. 2011. Pupil's book. Paris: Editions Maison des Langues.

## Appendix

### Excursion on morphosyntactic forms of yes/no-question subtypes

By the criteria of bias and focus, there can be determined four subtypes of yes/no-interrogatives. For positively biased yes/no-questions, only the morphosyntactic form with declarative word order seems to be available:

- (20a) Il est là, non ?
- (20b) \*Est-il là, non ?
- (20c) \*Pierre est-il là, non ?
- (20d) \*Est-ce qu'il est là, non ?

Interestingly enough, there has been made the claim that “l'absence de changement de l'ordre des mots [...] rapproche l'interrogation et l'assertion”<sup>1104</sup> (Feuillet 1994: 25). Knowing that the orientation of a yes/no-question actually approaches the interrogation to an assertion, this semantic-syntactic relation could explain the exclusive use of declarative questions for this type at first sight. However, questions with *bien* and *vraiment* do also seem to be restricted to morphosyntactically unmarked forms. In contrast, for negatively biased yes/no-questions, all forms are available:

- (1a) Il n'est pas là ?
- (1b) N'est-il pas là ?
- (1c) Pierre n'est-il pas là ?
- (1d) Est-ce qu'il n'est pas là ?

The point is that tag questions actually consist of two parts: an assertion and an interrogation. Thus, strictly speaking, only the tag itself is a question (see Bolinger 1957 for tags in American English). Therefore, I would rather argue that all three morphosyntactic forms are available for biased questions. It is only the morphosyntactic subtype of a tag question that does not allow for inversion or *est-ce que*.

As for yes/no-questions with narrow focus, there seem to be even four options: the three ones already seen marked morphosyntactically by a presentative plus one that is intonationally marked by prosodic emphasis:

- (IIa) C'est à huit heures qu'elle est rentrée ?
- (IIb) Est-ce à huit heures qu'elle est rentrée ?
- (IIc) Est-ce que c'est à huit heures qu'elle est rentrée ?
- (IId) Elle est rentrée à HUIT heures ?

The last option is obviously the result of the (post-syntactically applied) Focus Prominence Rule (cf. Costa 2010). Consequently, there are also four options for biased questions with narrow-focus:

- (IIIa) C'est bien à huit heures qu'elle est rentrée ? / C'est à huit heures qu'elle est rentrée, non ? / C'est pas à huit heures qu'elle est rentrée ?

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<sup>1104</sup> 'The absence of a change in word order approaches interrogation and assertion.'

(IIIb) Est-ce bien à huit heures qu'elle est rentrée ? / - / N'est-ce pas à huit heures qu'elle est rentrée ?

(IIIc) Est-ce que c'est bien à huit heures qu'elle est rentrée ? / - / Est-ce que c'est pas à huit heures qu'elle est rentrée ?

(IIId) Elle est bien rentrée à HUIT heures? / Elle est rentrée à HUIT heures, non ? / Elle n'est pas rentrée à HUIT heures ?

To conclude, the orientation of a question does not seem to make a morphosyntactic difference for the choice of forms available when it is lexically marked, whereas narrow-focus questions are always realised by either a presentative form or an only prosodically emphasised one.

(Non-exhaustive) overview of pragmatic question types

NON-REPETITIVE Qs NON-TAKING-UP Qs ⇔ PARTLY TAKING-UP Qs											REPETITIVE Qs TAKING-UP Qs				
IMPERATIVE		ASSERTIVE		INTERROGATIVE							all speech acts possible				
non-information-seeking				confirmation-seeking	information-seeking						all possible				
non-questioning				questioning, but tendentious	questioning, but knowing the answer	questioning, but not necessarily wanting to know for him-/herself	reflecting / asking oneself	giving the turn to the hearer by questioning	truly questioning		REACTIVE QUESTIONS relevant to speaker (echo surprise questions: hearer) (reacting with the question to some input of the interlocutor)			Miscellaneous, s. non-taking-up Qs	
relevant to hearer				relevant to speaker			relevant to third party	relevant to speaker				can be questioning as well as non-questioning			
REQUEST Qs	THOUGHT-GUIDING Qs	RHETORICAL Qs	REPROACH Qs / /REMINDING Qs	CONFIRMATION - SEEKING Qs	ANSWER-OFFERING Qs	PLAYFUL Qs / EXAM Qs	INTERVIEW Qs / JUDICIARY Qs	EXPLICATION Qs	PROMPTING Qs	GENUINE Qs (SUBTYPE: SPECIFICATION Qs)	EXPLICITING Qs	ECHO Qs (SUBTYPE: SURPRISE Qs)		SELF-REPEATED Qs	
The speaker gives instructions in a polite way	The speaker is announcing new information or wants to make salient an entity (look at... / think of...!)	The speaker wants to make salient something supposed to be common ground knowledge	The speaker is expressing a reproach or remind.	The speaker wants to know whether he's right.	The speaker adds a possible answer or sentence completion.	The speaker pronounces a riddle or joke / The speaker wants to know whether the hearer knows the answer	The speaker wants the hearer to pronounce an answer	The speaker is pronouncing what he's wondering about	The speaker is demanding some elaboration	The speakers wants to know something from the hearer (The speaker wants to know a detail from the hearer)	reaction to non-verbal input	reaction to verbal input; can be information-seeking, confirmation-seeking or assertive (=>surprise)			repetition of own question
											interpretive	re-formulating	citing	reformulating or citing	
<u>Tu peux me passer le sel (s'il te plaît) ?</u>	Deux amies sont en train de regarder des photos. <u>Tu vois la maison là-bas ?</u> C'est là que j'ai passé toutes mes vacances quand j'étais petite. <u>Tu sais qui j'ai vu hier?</u>	Speaker 1 : <u>Tu crois que Lena aime les Haribos ?</u> Speaker 2 : <u>Quel enfant n'aime pas les sucreries?</u>	The hearer is smoking although she was planning on giving up on it. Speaker: <u>Quelle résolution est-ce que tu avais prise cette année ?</u> <u>Pourquoi tu ne prends jamais mon parti ?</u>	Speaker 1 : <u>L'examen, c'était l'horreur ...</u> Speaker 2 : <u>Mais j'ai bien compris que tu l'as passé ?</u>	<u>Et Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire ? Rester à la maison ?</u>	<u>Pourquoi Toto laisse-t'il la porte des toilettes ouverte ?</u> (answer : <u>Il a peur qu'on le regarde par le trou de la serrure</u> )  During an oral exam in linguistics: <u>Qu'est-ce qu'un « morphème » ?</u>	<u>Pourquoi vous êtes resté à la maison ce soir-là ?</u>	<u>Qu'est-ce que je voulais dire?</u> (thinking about what he was going to say)	Je suis Madeleine, <u>et toi ?</u>	<u>Comment t'appelles-tu?</u> (Speaker 1: Aujourd'hui, j'ai beaucoup mangé. Speaker 2 : <u>Et Qu'est-ce que tu as mangé?</u> )	(Speaker 1 is wrinkling his nose.) Speaker 2 : <u>Tu sens cette odeur de gaz, toi aussi ?</u>	Speaker 1 : <u>Tu n'étais pas à la maison quand je t'ai appelée il y a une heure ?</u> Speaker 2 : <u>Tu m'as téléphonée ?</u>	Speaker 1 : <u>Tu trouves ça juste ?</u> Speaker 2 : <u>Si je trouve ça juste?</u>	Speaker 1 : <u>Pierre s'est marié hier.</u> Speaker 2 : <u>Pierre s'est marié hier ?</u>	<u>Tu veux du gâteau ?</u> (The person addressed does not react.) <u>Justine, est-ce que tu veux du gâteau ?</u>

# QUESTIONNAIRE SUR LES QUESTIONS

## Partie 0: Questions sur vous

Quel âge avez-vous?	
De quel sexe êtes-vous?	
Où vivez-vous? (pays et région)	
Quelle variété de français parlez-vous? (hexagonale, suisse, canadienne, ...)	
Avez-vous d'autres langues maternelles que le français? Lesquelles?	
Parlez-vous régulièrement d'autres langues que le français? Lesquelles?	
Combien de temps avez-vous vécu dans un/des pays francophone(s)?	

## Partie 1: Questions dans un contexte donné

Les énonciations suivantes sont censées être des questions spontanées produites dans des contextes concrets. Par conséquent, on vous indique dans quel contexte chacune doit être posée. Veuillez bien considérer la situation donnée avant de répondre.

### 1) QUELLES FORMULATIONS ATTENDRIEZ-VOUS DANS UNE TELLE SITUATION ?

COCHEZ "OUI" SI LE CONTEXTE ET LA FORMULATION VONT ENSEMBLE ET "NON" SI LA QUESTION N'EST PAS POSSIBLE (DANS LE CONTEXTE DONNE OU EN GENERAL). PLUSIEURS VARIANTES PEUVENT ETRE POSSIBLES.

CONTEXTE	VARIANTE 1		VARIANTE 2		VARIANTE 3		VARIANTE 4	
Un couple est en train de mettre la table pour ses invités. Quand la femme dit "Ça va pas.", l'homme lui demande à quoi elle se réfère.	<i>C'est quoi qui va pas encore?</i>		<i>Que va pas encore?</i>		<i>Qu'est-ce qui va pas encore?</i>		<i>Quoi va pas encore?</i>	
	OUI	NON	OUI	NON	OUI	NON	OUI	NON
Le couple est en train de préparer le dîner. Quand la femme dit à son mari de découper les fruits pour la salade, il lui demande où ils sont.	<i>Ils sont où, tes fruits?</i>		<i>Où sont tes fruits?</i>		<i>Où sont-ils, tes fruits?</i>		<i>Où ils sont, tes fruits?</i>	
	OUI	NON	OUI	NON	OUI	NON	OUI	NON
Deux amis se disputent parce que l'un des deux a de nouveau insulté la sœur de l'autre. Le premier veut rappeler au deuxième qu'il lui avait déjà dit de la laisser tranquille.	<i>Qu'est-ce que je t'ai dit à propos de ma sœur?</i>		<i>Je t'ai dit quoi à propos de ma sœur?</i>		<i>Que t'ai-je dit à propos de ma sœur?</i>		<i>C'est quoi que je t'ai dit à propos de ma sœur?</i>	
	OUI	NON	OUI	NON	OUI	NON	OUI	NON
Une criminologue essaie d'analyser le comportement du meurtrier. Elle réfléchit sur le fait qu'il a déplacé le corps en se posant cette question.	<i>Pourquoi l'a-t-il traînée jusqu'aux poubelles?</i>		<i>Pourquoi est-ce qu'il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles?</i>		<i>Pourquoi il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles?</i>		<i>Il l'a traînée jusqu'aux poubelles pourquoi?</i>	
	OUI	NON	OUI	NON	OUI	NON	OUI	NON



**2) SUR UNE ECHELLE DE 1 A 5, QUELLE SERAIT LA PROBABILITE QUE CETTE FORMULATION SOIT DITE DANS UNE TELLE SITUATION?**

	1 TRÈS IMPROBABLE	2 PLUTÔT IMPROBABLE	3 PEUT-ETRE, PEUT-ETRE PAS	4 PLUTÔT PROBABLE	5 TRÈS PROBABLE
La présentatrice d'une émission pose des questions afin de présenter le candidat: <i>Qu'est-ce que vous faites dans la vie?</i>					
La présentatrice d'une émission pose des questions afin de présenter le candidat: <i>Vous faites quoi dans la vie?</i>					
Deux candidats d'un jeu télévisé réfléchissent s'ils devraient prendre leur joker pour réviser leur choix. L'un demande à l'autre: <i>On changerait quoi?</i>					
Deux candidats d'un jeu télévisé réfléchissent s'ils devraient prendre leur joker pour réviser leur choix. L'un demande à l'autre: <i>Qu'est-ce qu'on changerait?</i>					

**3) Y AURAIT-IL D'AUTRES POSSIBILITES DE DIRE LA MEME CHOSE EN UTILISANT D'AUTRES CONSTRUCTIONS? LESQUELLES? (REMARQUE: SANS CHANGER LE CONTEXTE, C'EST-A DIRE NI LA SITUATION, NI LES INTERLOCUTEURS NI LE VOCABULAIRE!)**

CONTEXTE	QUESTION	D'AUTRES FORMULATIONS
Un inspecteur a vu qu'une des membres de son équipe a parlé avec une inconnue sur le lieu de crime. Il prend l'inconnue pour une journaliste et il n'aime pas que son équipe parle avec des journalistes.	<i>Depuis quand tu parles aux journalistes?</i>	
Un inspecteur découvre une inconnue sur le lieu du crime. Il n'est pas de bonne humeur et il veut savoir pourquoi elle est là.	<i>Qu'est-ce que vous foutez sur ma scène de crime, vous?</i>	
Deux amis se parlent. L'un des deux fait la morale à l'autre. Ce dernier se lamente du fait que son ami ne le soutienne pas.	<i>Pourquoi tu prends jamais mon parti?</i>	
Un adolescent voit les vestiges d'un feu. Il est surpris.	<i>Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ici?</i>	

## Partie 2: Contexte de la question à donner

Les énonciations suivantes sont censées être des questions spontanées produites dans des contextes concrets. Par conséquent, on vous prie d'indiquer dans quel(s) contexte(s) chacune pourrait être posée.

### 4) DANS QUEL(S) CONTEXTE(S) POURRAIENT ETRE POSEES DE TELLES QUESTIONS?

QUESTIONS	CONTEXTE(S)
<i>Qu'est-ce qu'on a?</i>	
<i>Qui c'est qui sait conduire?</i>	
<i>Vous êtes où?</i>	
<i>Tu dirais quoi?</i>	

### 5) Y A-T-IL UNE DIFFERENCE ENTRE LES QUESTIONS? SI OUI, LAQUELLE? DONNEZ DE CONTEXTES POSSIBLES.

QUESTIONS	DIFFÉRENCE	CONTEXTES
<i>Est-ce que vous avez bien dormi?</i>		
<i>Vous avez bien dormi?</i>		
<i>Avez-vous bien dormi?</i>		
<i>Qu'est-ce qu'on fait?</i>		
<i>On fait quoi?</i>		
<i>Comment allez-vous?</i>		
<i>Comment vous allez?</i>		
<i>Vous allez comment?</i>		
<i>Où tu vas?</i>		
<i>Où vas-tu?</i>		
<i>Tu vas où?</i>		
<i>Et ça, c'est quoi ?</i>		
<i>Et ça, Qu'est-ce que c'est?</i>		

Overview of morphosyntactic types as coded in RTV shows

		Yes/no (YNI)	Wh (WHI)	Disjunctive (DSI)
M A R K E D	Periphrastic	E{s/S}V (ESK) <i>Est-ce que t'as bien dormi ?</i> (BVAH_1_00_56_09)	QE{s/S}V (ESK) <i>Quand est-ce que je vais arrêter de pleurer ?</i> (QUAM_3_00_48_09)	E{s/S}V ou ... (ESK)
	Inverted	Vs (INV) <i>Sera-t-elle aussi cool ?</i> (SHOP_1_01_03_06) SVs (INC) <i>Stéphanie, a-t-elle relevé le défi d'être moderne ?</i> (SHOP_1_00_49_12)	QVs (INV) <i>Qu'en est-il chez la concurrence ?</i> (MBOU_3_00_39_32) QSVs (INC) <i>Quelle note Dominique a-t-elle obtenue ?</i> (UDPP_5_01_03_17) QVS (INS) <i>Qu'en pense notre hôtesse de l'air Mireille ?</i> (SHOP_1_00_34_55)	V{s/S} ou ... (INV) <i>Alors, va-t-il donner une note première classe ou classe éco ?</i> (CSQD_1_00_52_59) SVs ou ... (INC)
U N M A R K E D	Declarative	{s/S}V (DEC) <i>Ça s'est bien passé ?</i> (ADDI_2_00_44_45) {s/S}Vt (TAG) <i>C'est plus sympa ça, non ?</i> (BVCN_1_00_14_03)	Q{s/S}V (FRO) <i>Bon, laquelle je prends ?</i> (SHOP_1_00_37_23) {s/S}VQ (SIT) <i>Vous avez dit quoi là ?</i> (SHOP_1_00_17_46) {s/S}V (DEC) <i>Ce qui veut dire ... ?</i> (BVAC_3_00_38_28)	{s/S}V ou ... (DEC) <i>Vous préféreriez gagner du temps ou de l'argent ?</i> (SHOP_1_00_31_48) {s/S}V (DEC) <i>Stéphanie a une passion pour 1 les girafes 2 les éléphants ?</i> (SHOP_1_00_25_11)
	Non-conjugated	X (ELL) <i>Au-dessus ?</i> (ADDI_1_00_32_27) (Et) si... (ELS) <i>D'ailleurs, si on faisait un petit récap' ?</i> (UDPP_5_00_11_44)	X (COM) <i>C'est-à-dire ?</i> (BVAH_1_01_05_03) Q (ELL) <i>Le quoi ?</i> (SHOP_1_00_33_17) QV <sub>nc</sub> (INF) <i>Alors, pourquoi chercher ailleurs ?</i> (CHAP_1_00_04_13)	... ou ... (ELL) <i>Alors, cet ensemble : couture or not couture ?</i> (SHOP_1_00_34_10)

Overview of morphosyntactic types as coded in detective novels

		Yes/no (YNI)	Wh (WHI)	Disjunctive (DSI)
M A R K E D	Periphrastic	E{s/S}V (ESK) <i>Est-ce que ça te rappelle quelque chose ?</i> (MMAT_3452)	Qk{s/S}V (QUE) <i>Mais où qu'tu vis ?</i> (TOKE_97)  QE{s/S}V (ESK) <i>Où est-ce qu'Aurélia a encore rangé ce foutu dossier ?</i> (LTEA_4558)  {QE}={s/S}V (ESB) <i>Qu'est-ce qui te prend ?</i> (ESCV_2152)	E{s/S}V ou ... (ESK) <i>Est-ce que tu vas finir par me croire, oui ou merde ?</i> (JUST_6547)
	Inverted	Vs (INV) <i>Ai-je été clair ?</i> (SCAR_2672)  SVs (INC=>INV) <i>Eva se confiait-elle à sa mère ?</i> (CNPJ_5608)	QVs (INV) <i>Où es-tu ?</i> (TRAV_645)  QSVs (INC=>INV) <i>Où Gattegno a-t-il rencontré Nathalie Granger ?</i> (ALEX_1446)  QVS (INS) <i>Où est Valou ?</i> (LTEA_4634)	V{s/S} ou ... (INV) <i>Est-ce important ou non ?</i> (ALEX_1402)  SVs ou ... (INC=>INV) <i>Une directrice générale doit-elle être sexy ou stricte ?</i> (JUST_7514)
U N M A R K E D	Declarative	{s/S}V (DEC) <i>Tu ne t'en souviens pas ?</i> (TEEL_8479)  {s/S}Vt (TAG) <i>C'est mieux, non ?</i> (TOKE_347)	{s/S}VQ (SIT) <i>Vous en êtes où ?</i> (TRAV_576)  Q{s/S}V (FRO) <i>Où tu vas ?</i> (TEEL_8236)  Q={s/S}V (SUB) <i>Qui tient la caméra ?</i> (CNPJ_5943)	{s/S}V ou ... (DEC) <i>Alors, c'est oui ou c'est non ?</i> (ALEX_1492)
	Non-conjugated	(ELL) <i>Par son père ?</i> (CNPJ_6343)	(ELL) <i>Pourquoi Irène ?</i> (TRAV_1117)  (INF) <i>Et où placer Batisti ?</i> (TOKE_328)	... ou ... (ELL) <i>Lyse-Rose ou Emilie ?</i> (LTEA_5452)

### Excursion on *wh*-interrogatives with tags

As tags (i.e. *d'accord, hein, n'est-ce pas, non, ok, pas vrai*) could by definition only occur in yes/no-interrogatives (see p.37), the occurrences of *hein* in sentences with a question word had to be ignored for semantic annotations (see (640) to (642)):

(640) Et qu'est-ce qui te fait croire ça, hein ?<sup>1105</sup>

(641) Et qu'est-ce que tu ferais sans moi, hein ?<sup>1106</sup>

(642) Ça changera quoi, hein ?<sup>1107</sup>

Interestingly, this particle was the only tag that occurred in *wh*-interrogatives, and all these constructions were (very close to) rhetorical questions (see p.51). To illustrate, the speaker in (640) makes clear that the hearer does not have any reason to believe this, the speaker in (641) infers that the hearer could not do without the speaker, and the speaker in (642) shows his/her disbelief in the possibility that this would change anything. Hence, one may expect that this kind of *hein* is linked to a very specific use of *wh*-interrogatives.

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<sup>1105</sup> English translation: 'And what makes you believe this, huh?' (TEEL\_ 8163)

<sup>1106</sup> English translation: 'And what would you do without me, huh?' (TEEL\_ 8340)

<sup>1107</sup> English translation: '{What would that change / That would change what}, huh?' (TEEL\_ 8048)

## Excursion on the hybridity of reality TV

Although my source corpus can be said to consist of authentic data (see Delais-Roussarie 2008: 61f.), RTV cannot be taken as a veritable depiction of everyday life. While it is true that language is used for communication, i.e. the exchange and transmission of information, in situations which are similar to the ones French people experience in their everyday lives, it is also true that those situations are arranged, filmed, cut, and recomposed. To put it differently, authenticity and artificiality are both unavoidably part of RTV: On the one hand, the selection of participants via castings, the production following call sheets, storyboards and scripts, and the post-production process including the rearrangement of footage as well as the adding of montages, voiceovers, sounds or background music<sup>1108</sup> suggest that the whole programme will be highly premeditated and ritualised. On the other hand, the documented competitions are not entirely predetermined – at least not in the sense that there are professional actors playing the characters of a screenplay, pronouncing words the screenplay writer puts them in their mouths. Indeed, the candidates and experts are real people, and the places they present are existing locations (e.g. bakeries, hairdressing salons, hotels, camping sites or flats to be let). What is more, the competitions really take place and leave room for personal decisions, spontaneous reactions, and unforeseen incidences. Hence, the documented interactions between candidates and/or experts may be planned, but they are not stipulated with regard to the choice of words, sentence structures or intonational patterns. At most, the director will give instructions such as “Ask one another about...”, so even if some of the direct interactions may not be entirely spontaneous, they are still more spontaneous than the speech material obtained in elicitation experiments. While participants in those experiments only act as if they were communicating, participants in RTV shows are nonetheless truly interacting. Since the main factor investigated in this chapter is directness of (spoken) interaction, and not true spontaneity, the claim that direct interaction leads to less inversion and more high-final tones, is not at risk.

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<sup>1108</sup> For the technical terms used here and an overview of the RTV production procedure, see Essany (2013).

### Excursion on further teaching materials

Up to now, recent research does not seem to have greatly affected **FLE** manuals. In fact, linguistic variation is sometimes so much reduced that French learners are confronted with rules which do by no means reflect language use. This goes especially for the representation of intonational variation, which many FLE manuals avoid by describing questions simply as “rising”. But even manuals which try to capture some variation by including linguistic theory do not show the *souplesse de la langue française* (‘flexibility of the French language’). Those manuals typically try to map intonation to either semantics (yes/no vs. wh-question) or syntax (morphosyntactic marking and/or position of wh-word) although such a mapping is not possible. For instance, « Sans mot interrogatif, l’intonation monte en fin de phrase. [...] Avec un mot interrogatif, l’intonation dépendra de la place du mot interrogatif : en début ou fin de phrase. » (Abry & Veldeman-Abry 2007: 15) clearly suggests a one-to-one mapping of semantico-syntactic structures to intonation. Similarly, Briet et al. (2014) quote Delattre’s (1966) intoneme differentiation between the semantic question types ([yes/no-]question as rising vs. [wh-]interrogation as falling). Even more strikingly, some of them use his certainly outdated 4-level system to teach intonational contours. As far as I am concerned, this is alarming not only because the number of levels seems to be somewhat arbitrary, but also because of the misdescription of the intonational patterns of questions (Why should a question like *depuis quand?* be pronounced with a strong fall from 4 ‘very high’ to 1 ‘low’?). Although I completely understand and agree on the fact that linguistic reality must be simplified in didactics, I am not willing to completely deny variation.