

LAD Conferences

6 mai 2014, 12h30

DS-3470, 320 Ste-Catherine Est, Montréal

L a b o r a t o i r e d e r e c h e r c h e s u r l e s a s y m é t r i e s d ' i n t e r f a c e s

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How hidden is syntactic licensing in Romance polar questions: the role of presupposition

We explore the viability of a *syntactic* account of polar questions whose licensing device is traditionally assumed to be *intonation-only*. We depart from this view and from one of its corollaries: syntactically yes-no questions parallel declaratives. Languages like Portuguese don't use particles, differently from Chinese, Japanese or Slavic and don't exhibit verb movement to C, differently from English or French; likewise Portuguese polar questions don't exhibit the French *est-ce que* strategy, productive in wh-questions, a fact derived from properties of clefts. Inversion acts in true polar questions, as in wh-questions. The *intonation-only* cue also exists in French and English (Cheng & Rooryck 2000). We posit questions can be either *true or echo*, generally. Presupposition is associated to the latter, its derivation activating a speaker's projection (Ambar 2003, Speas & Tenny 2003).

Manuela Ambar is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Lisbon. She was visiting scholar at U. Paris 7, 8 and at MIT and prepared her PhD thesis on word order under the supervision of Richard Kayne and Malaca Casteleiro, degree in 1989, U Lisbon. In 1991-1992 she was president of the Glow society. She was visiting invited professor at different European and American universities, invited speaker at international meetings, member of (inter)national projects of research and of (editorial) scientific boards, supervisor of different theses. Her main area of interest is theoretical and comparative syntax. Her work also addresses the question how pragmatic and semantic factors are encoded into syntactic representations and how verb movement interacts with word order and tense, how finiteness is syntactically derived.

Some references:

- Ambar, M. 2013. Unexpected variation between EP and BP - rethinking parameters. Paper presented at *Towards a theory of Syntactic Variation*. Bilbao, June 5-7. Published video, edited by Itziar Laka and Beatriz Fernandez, Bilbao.
- Ambar, M. 2010. Word order, complementation and tense *ISDA IEEE (International Conference on Intelligent Systems Design and Applications)*: 1083-1088. Cairo, Egypt.
- Ambar, M. 2003. Wh-Asymmetries. In Anna-Maria Di Sciullo (ed.) *Asymmetry in Grammar*. Amsterdam /USA: John Benjamins, pp. 209-250.

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