

Interrogative constructions in Basque and the syntax-phonology interface

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Research on the structure of *wh*-interrogatives in generative grammar has been very intensive and fruitful; the morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonological properties of such structures are well studied in a wide variety of languages. The analysis has traditionally been framed in syntactic terms: [+interrogative] (or [+focus]) is taken to be a feature that has to be checked against a dedicated head in the complementizer area, which brings about the observed displacements in a given language (overtly or covertly).

Recent works however propose that rather than as a syntactic phenomenon, the patterns observed in *wh*-questions have to be understood in prosodic terms (see, i.a. Richards (2010, 2016); Mathieu (2011, 2016); Kandybowicz (2020)). I provide a general critique such theories from the prism of Basque. I will discuss a variety of interrogative constructions of this language that cast doubt on the viability of such approaches, including long-distance displacements, clausal pied-piping constructions, *wh in situ* strategies and the particular behavior of *why*-questions. From the discussion I will conclude that the patterns attested in Basque are better studied as a *bona fide* syntactic phenomenon (with a determinate prosodic interpretation). I will also bring into discussion similar phenomena from a wider variety of typologically distinct languages reinforcing my critique.