The syntax and prosody of wh-questions in Italian
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Within Generative Grammar, but also beyond the transformational approaches, the name wh-movement is widely used to denote the phenomenon whereby a wh-phrase with a grammatical function associated with a particular position in the clause shows up in a different, sentence-initial position. Ever since Chomsky (1973, 1977), it has been proposed that long-distance wh-movement (i.e. wh-movement across clause boundaries) does not take place in one fell swoop, but should rather be broken into a sequence of smaller movement steps. The moving element makes intermediate stop-overs on its way to the final landing site, and wh-movement can therefore be viewed as successive cyclic. A wealth of empirical evidence has since been accumulated for the successive cyclic nature of wh-movement. In several languages, the movement of the wh-phrase leaves a syntactic or morphological reflex in intermediate positions such as inversion phenomena (Belfast English, French, Spanish), complementizer alternation and wh-agreement (Irish, Chamorro), intermediate copy pronunciation (Child English, German dialects), and stranded *all* in West Ulster English (see Boeckx 2008, Abels 2012, Citko 2014, and Georgi 2014 for overviews).

In this paper, which is based on joint work with Valentina Bianchi and Giuliano Bocci, I discuss two properties that characterize wh-questions in Italian, i.e. subject inversion and the assignment of the nuclear pitch accent (NPA). While the behaviour of subject inversion confirms the central role of successive cyclic movement in syntactic inversion phenomena, the placement of the NPA in conjunction with long-distance movement and its sensitivity to the intermediate positions of wh-movement provides novel evidence in support of the view that not only syntax, but also phonology is sensitive to the derivational history of the wh-phrase. Phonological evidence for successive cyclic movement has been provided from tonal alternations in tonal languages such as Kikuyu (Clements 1984) and Asante Twi/Akan (Korsah & Murphy 2016). Our experimental data show that phonology, in particular prosody, can also reflect the derivational history of a wh-phrase in an intonational language such as Italian, where the assignment of the NPA appears to track the intermediate steps of wh-movement.

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