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“ What does ‘?’ sound like?”

Friday, March 31, 2017 @ 5:00 pm
in KCB (565 Commonwealth Ave) room 101



Abstract:

The English writing system employs a question mark (i.e. “?”) to indicate that something is a question. American English speakers tend to intuitively associate the question mark with a rise in intonation. At the same time, it is known that there are different types of questions — do they all involve an intonational rise? What sorts of variation do we find across different types of questions, and how much variation do we find within each type of question?



In this talk, I address these questions and present some results from ongoing experimental research, which has uncovered more variation within question-type than previously recorded. In particular, low pitch accents (ToBI: L*) in polar questions appear to have a variant in which they are preceded by a non-meaningful high (what I label as: hL*), suggesting that intonational phonology (like segmental phonology) allows phonetic variation that goes beyond the phonemic inventory of the language.

This is also a Facebook event:

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