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A Prosodic Account of To-Contraction

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In this talk, we focused upon wanna-contraction, as exemplified below, and argued that it is possible to characterize the phenomenon as one of the cases for which any version of prosodic theory is responsible, as opposed to the generally accepted view that the presence or absence of wh-traces must bear the responsibility.

(1) a. Who₁ do you wanna [\text{see } t₁ ]?
   b. Who₁ do you wanna [\text{see } Bill ]?

Adopting the prosodic theory of Nespor and Vogel (1986), we propose that want and to are contracted only when they are within the same intonational phrase (1Ph). Following the syntactic projection system of Fukui (1986), we assume that the S-Structures of (1a) and (1b) are given respectively as follows:

(2) a. [who₁ do you want \text{to see } t₁ ]
   b. [who₁ do you want \text{to see } Bill ]

We also assume that the categories of XP level constitute an 1Ph in the prosodic component. Thus (2a) and (2b) are mapped onto (3a) and (3b), respectively:

(3) a. [1Ph who₁ do you want to see]
   b. [1Ph who₁ do you want to see]
In (3a), contraction of *want* and *to* is permitted since they are within one IPh, while it is blocked in (3b) since they are contained in different IPh's.

Appealing to the prosodic domain in this way to account for *wanna* contraction, we have no need to say that *wanna* contraction is the isolated case that is sensitive to the presence of *wh*-traces, in light of the observation that external sandhi rules are generally not sensitive to the presence or absence of such traces:

(4) Nasal Assimilation in Spanish:
Que, canta[m] t₁ para navidad? (< canta[n])
who they-sing for Christmas
"Who do they sing for Christmas?"

(5) Gorgia Toscana in Italian:
Chi, hai invitato t₁ [h]on Marco? (<[k]on)
who have you-invited with
"Who did you invite with Marco?"

The *wh*-traces are invisible to the application of these rules. Rather, the rules may apply when the relevant elements are within the same IPh:

(6) [₁IPh que₁ cantan t₁ para navidad ]

(7) [₁IPh chi₁ hai invitato t₁ kon Marco ]

The prosodic-theoretic analysis can also cover the cases where the structural 'distance' between *want* and *to*, rather than the presence of traces, is relevant:

(8) a. I don't want [c₁ to flagellate oneself in public] [to become standard practice in this monastery]
("I don't wanna flagellate.....")

b. I don't want anyone who continues to want to stop wanting

("I don't want anyone who continues to wanna to stop wanting")

These syntactic structures are mapped onto the following prosodic structures:

(9) a. [IPh I don't want] [IPh to flagellate oneself in public to become standard practice in this monastery]

   b. [IPh I don't want] [IPh anyone who continues to want] [IPh to stop wanting]

In each structure, want and to belong to different IPh's so that contraction is not permitted.