Adapting a compositional grammar of intonation meaning in French : some issues

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GENERAL APPROACH AND ISSUES

See Anja Arnhold's talk and Claire Beyssade's discussion in the present workshop : thanks to them both!

INTONATION MEANING IN FRENCH : (DIS-)AGREEMENT

(Portes & Beyssade, 2015)

Intonation meaning is dialogical and epistemic.
Declaring and attributing commitments allows negotiating and building common ground.
In French:
- Pitch Accent's choice: a strong [>], a weak [<], or no disagreement.
- Boundary tone's choice: Is the speaker (L%) or the hearer (H%) responsible for the epistemic commitment towards the utterance content.

CAN WE ADAPT TONAL CODING TO MEANING CONTRASTS?

(Portes, 2023: 55)

An existing ToBI French: Delais-Roussarie et al. 2014
Independent proposition of Ladd (2008: 122) to code Delattre's implication contour as H*+LL% instead of H*L%.
Portes & Beyssade (2015) : coding the incredulity contour H+L*L% rather than the usual H+!H*H%
- H+L = disagreement
- H*+L versus H+L* = an alignment formal contrast
- coupled with an a disagreement force contrast.

Coding a *phonetic* difference between continuation and question rises identified by Dorokhova & D'Imperio (2019) as a *phonological* difference : H*H% for yes-no question versus L*H% for continuation rises.
Independently confirmed by corpus annotation in Marty et al. (2022, SP2024)
⇒ Allow a coherent inclusion of this contrast in the meaning model.

Don't fear to change tonal coding for semantic reasons if coherent with phonetic data, formal contrasts, and independent findings.

HOW TO ADAPT OUR MEANING MODEL TO CORPUS VARIATIONS?

(Portes & Reyle, 2014)

Variations in the use of some contours in conversational data shows that their meaning does not always target a *disagreement* with the *addressee*.

Rather, and more generally, observed contours' uses convey a *contrast* (or no contrast) with a contextually relevant content.

Although subject to debate in the semantic-pragmatic literature, the notion of *contrast* is well known to be related to intonation meaning.

Repp's (2016) reformulation of the notion of contrast:
- explicitly relates to information structure and the notion of focus,
What articulation between contours' meaning as negotiating commitments and information structure (the two invited talks of this workhop)?
- gives arguments in favor of degrees of contrast (see also Cruschina, 2021).
Can intonational phonology encode scalar dimensions of meaning?

INTONATION MEANING IN FRENCH : DEGREES OF CONTRAST

(Portes, 2023)

Modelling the pitch accent choice dimension in terms of the more unspecified notion of contrast permits:

- to conceive the contribution of T* as the choice of a degree of contrast from Level 0 contrast for the fall L*L% and the continuation rise L*H% to level 3 contrast for contradiction H+L*L% and incredulity H+L*H%.

- to include the contrast between continuation L*H% evoking no alternative, and question H*H% evoking alternatives without committing the speaker (or only weakly if he is).

## CONVERSATIONAL OR CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURE?

Hirshberg (2002) proposed that "much of intonational meaning can be viewed as an instance of Gricean conversational implicature".
See also Westera (2017).

This accounts for the idea that intonation meaning is very sensitive to context.

I rather defend the view that intonational contrasts have a core meaning that can be captured and defined despite the obvious variability of uses in context. The concept of conventional implicature should fit better for this king of meaning.
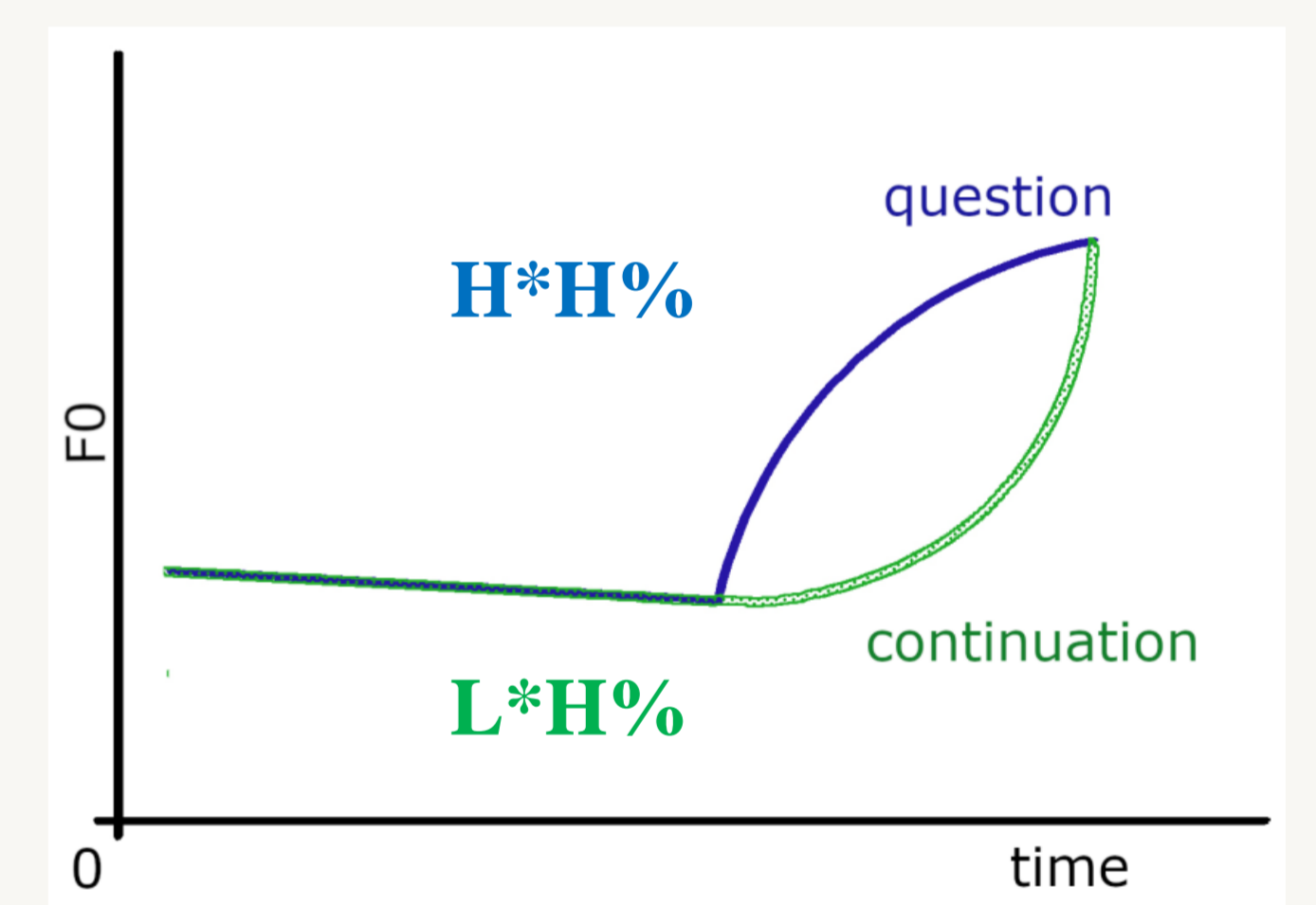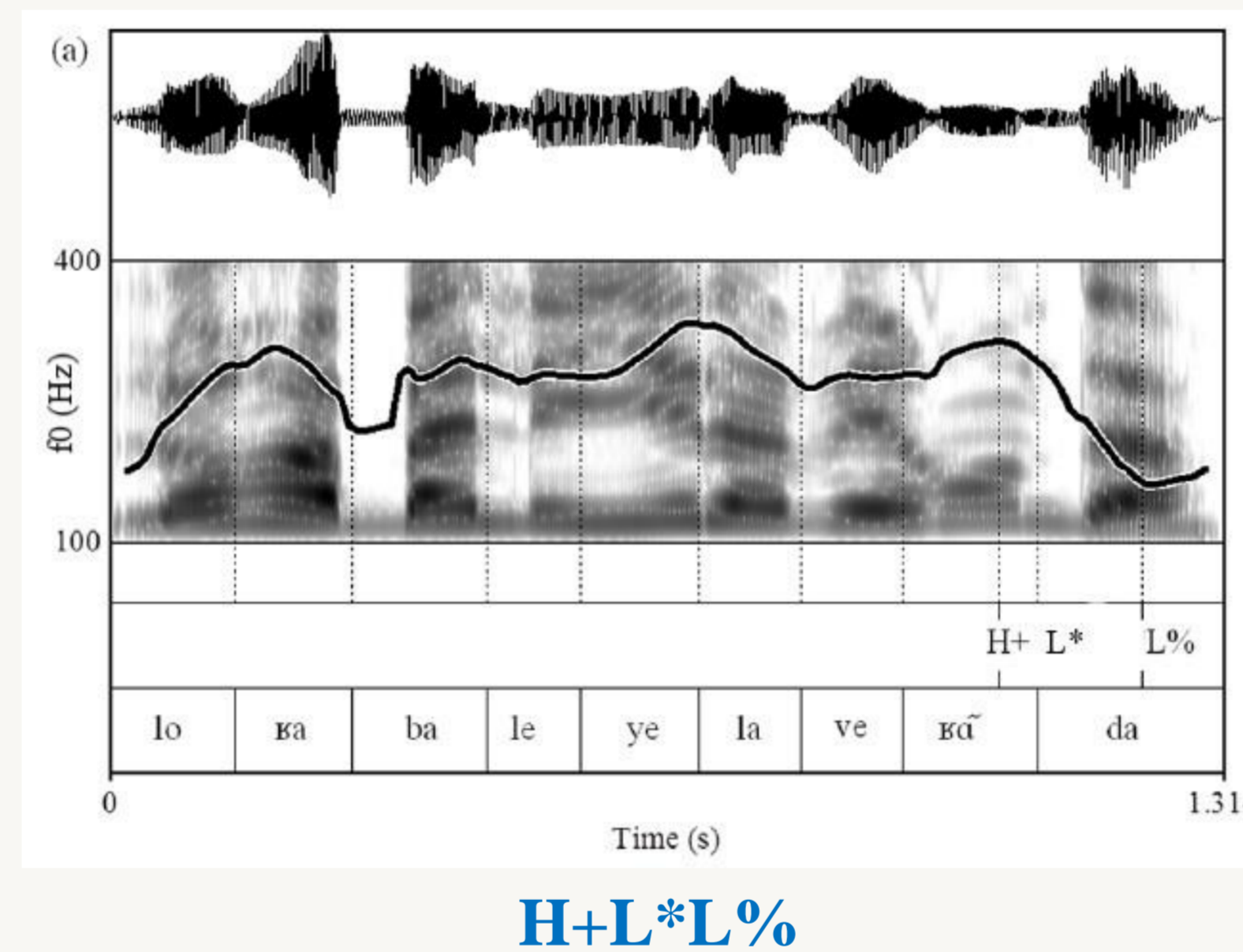
This does not preclude additional conversational implicatures explaining variations in context.

SOME FRENCH CONTOURS AND TWO MODELS OF THEIR MEANING

H*+LL%   L*L%

H*H%   H+L*H%
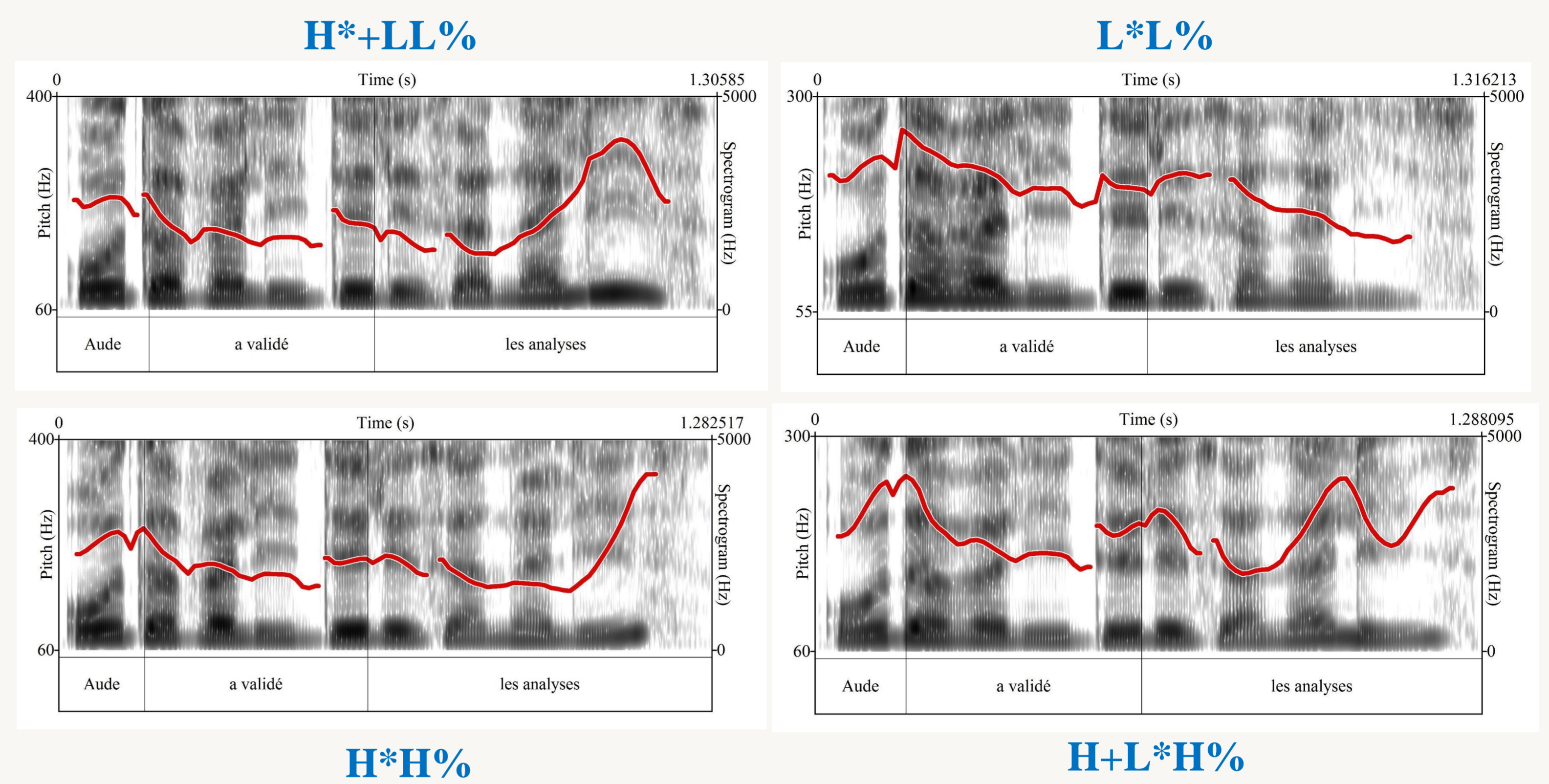
	[- AGREED]		[+ AGREED]
	[>]	[<]	
[S]	H+L*L%	H*+LL%	L*L%
[H]	H+L*H%	H*+LH%	L+H*H%

Portes & Beyssade, 2015

H+L*L%

Dorokhova & D'Imperio (2019)

	[CONTRAST]			
	[3]	[2]	[1]	[0]
[S]	H+L*L% *contradiction*	H*+LL% *conviction/obviousness*	H*L% (?)	L*L% *statement*
[H]	H+L*H% *incredulity*	H*+LH% *surprise*	H*H% *y/n question*	L*H% *continuation*

Portes (2023)

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