CHAPTER III

THE TRANSFORMATION RULES OF FRENCH QUESTIONS

This chapter will be concerned with the transformation rules (T rules) of French questions. A few obligatory and optional rules are needed to serve as background before we begin the structural analysis of the question.

Obligatory Grammatical Transformations

Agreement Rule

O 1 $NP + AUX_1 \longrightarrow NP_{no/p} + AUX_{no/p}$

French N is always marked with gender, number, and person. For example:

> <u>le livre</u> is masculine gender, singular number, and third person.

> <u>Marie</u> is feminine gender, singular number, and third person.

At the syntactic level when the string NP is attached to string AUX_1, the gender is of no significance. The important thing is that the NP and AUX_1 must agree in number and person. For example:

$$NP \begin{bmatrix} \text{1st person} \\ \text{singular} \\ \text{number} \end{bmatrix} + AUX_I \begin{bmatrix} \text{1st person} \\ \text{singular} \\ \text{number} \end{bmatrix} \text{, etc.}$$

Affixal Rule

O 2 $Af + x \longrightarrow x + Af$

It was presented in the first chapter that Af represents Tmps, -en, -er. This affixal rule signifies that the Af string will have to be attached to the following string. For example:

$NP - Tmps + VB \longrightarrow NP - VB + Tmps$

Nous - ons + donn- $\longrightarrow$ Nous donnons

Optional Grammatical Transformations

Negative Rule[1]

T_{neg} $NP + Pvb + AUX_1 + VB + NP_2 \longrightarrow$

$NP + \underline{ne} + AUX_1 + VB + \underline{pas} + NP_2$

Nous ne connaissons pas le cinéma.

The two morpheme negatives in a statement will have a fixed place as presented. The position will be changed according to the other constructions.

These rules are given since they are basic to the transformation of French questions. Other transformational rules are not included since they are not within the province of the study.

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[1]See page 6.

French questions may be characterized by tone, form, or word order. Either of these three is permitted for any question; also, each of these three imparts exactly the same meaning to the question. The distributions are neither restricted nor specialized.

Tone indication: Il est là? (rapidly rising tone on là)

Form indication: Il est là, n'est-ce pas?

Word order : Est-il là?

For the purpose of the analysis the writer will label:

$$NP_1 + AUX_1 + \begin{bmatrix} D \\ V \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} -en \\ -er \end{bmatrix} + VB + NP_2 + \begin{bmatrix} Cau \\ Loc \\ Man \\ Tmp \end{bmatrix}$$

$$X_1 \qquad X_2 \qquad\qquad X_3 \qquad X_4 \qquad X_5$$
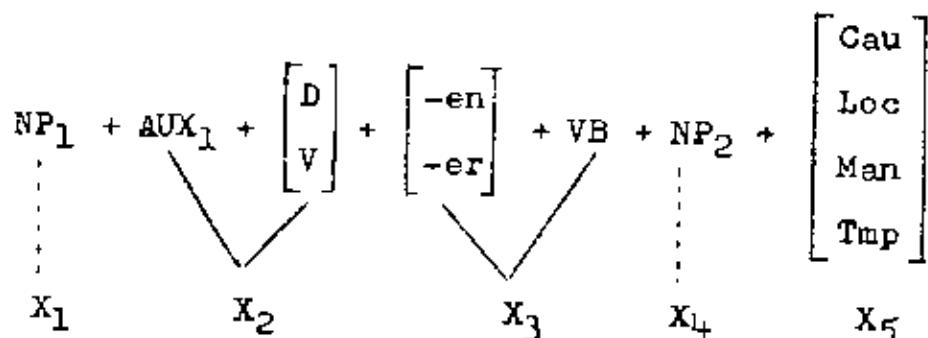
The transformation rules of questions may be grouped as follows:

Reversal Type Transformation. -- The reversal type transformation is concerned basically with the shifting of position between X_1 and X_2 -- that is, the usual position of X_1 and X_2 in a statement is $X_1 + X_2$. The shifted position for a question would be $X_2 + X_1$.

<u>Generalized Transformation</u>. -- The generalized transformation is concerned with putting two or more sets of strings together (embedding).

<u>Question Word Transformation</u>. -- In a question word transformation, the rules for bringing a questioned nominal or adverbial to the beginning of the sentence are given. For example:

$$X_1 + X_2 + X_5 \quad ----\rightarrow \quad QX_1 + X_2 + X_5$$

The symbols on the right hand side of the arrow show that X_1 (or NP_1) is being questioned.

The types of French questions that are generated from the application of these transformations may be called:

Reversal type (RT)

Voulez-vous du lait?

Question word reversal type (QW + RT)

Que voulez-vous?

Generalized transformation type (GT)

Est-ce que vous voulez du lait?

Generalized transformation reversal type (GT + RT with question words)

Qu' est-ce que vous voulez?

Each of these types will be presented in detail.

Reversal Type Questions

T 1 $X_1 + X_2 \longrightarrow X_2 + X_1$

This transformation has been presented on page 14 as an example of the basic reversal type. T 1 may be applied only if $X_1 = N_{prop}$.

$N_{prop} \longrightarrow$ je, tu, il, elle, nous, vous, ils, elles, ce.

Prenez-vous du thé?

T 2 $X_1 + X_2 + (Y) \longrightarrow X_1 + X_2 + N_{prop} + (Y)$

This rule must be applied when $X_1 \neq N_{prop}$. X_1 which represents NP_1 may be a noun phrase (NP), a personal pronoun (N_{prop}), or a proper noun (N_p). If X_1 is either NP or N_p, T 2 must be applied.

L'épicier et l'épicière sont-ils des employés?

NP must be in agreement in gender and in number with N_{prop}.

$$X_1 = \begin{bmatrix} N_{sg} & \begin{bmatrix} masc \\ fem \end{bmatrix} \\ N_{pl} & \begin{bmatrix} masc \\ fem \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \longrightarrow N_{prop} = \begin{bmatrix} il \\ elle \\ ils \\ elles \end{bmatrix}$$

For example, if NP is singular masculine, il must be put after X_2, etc.

$$T\ 3 \qquad N_{prop} + Pvb_1 + X_2 + (Y) \quad \dashrightarrow$$
$$\underline{Ne} + X_2 + N_{prop} + \underline{pas} + (Y)$$

On page 13 T_{neg} shows Pvb ($\underline{ne}$ --- $\underline{pas}$) position in a statement. For the negative question transformation, the $X_2 + N_{prop}$ string can not be separated. The first element of the negative morpheme ($\underline{ne}$) will be located at the same place as it is for T_{neg}, -- that is, before X_2 but the element ($\underline{pas}$) is located after N_{prop}.

N'allez-vous pas avec lui?

Question Word Type Questions

When a particular element rather than the whole sentence is to be questioned, none of the above transformations will be enough. But rather the rule must single out the nominal or adverbial to be questioned; attach the question morpheme (Q) and bring them out to the beginning of the sentence.[1]

For the study here we shall assume that when the Q questioned nominal has been the object of a preposition, the

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[1]R. B. Lees, <u>The Grammar of English Nominalizations</u> (International Journal of American Linguistics, Part II, Vol. 26, No. 3, July), 1960, pp. 36-38.

latter accompanies the transformation. For example, if in the sentence Elle a donné cette robe à sa belle petite soeur the questioned nominal is sa belle petite soeur, the preposition with it (à) would be brought out to the beginning of the sentence and the result would be À qui . . .? (Q NP_{an} = qui).

It is also assumed that if any modifiers are present in the nominal, they may not accompany the Q transform; thus from Je connais l'homme avec le manteau rouge, we may derive qui for the whole NP (l'homme avec le manteau rouge.)

Although the adverbials are of various origins, they will be listed separately in this presentation. Prepositions are also of various origins. To avoid complicating the rules, the writer will use the class-symbol in each place in the constituent structure where a member of the class occurs. For example, we have Q_{Cau} for causative, Q_{Loc} for places, Q_{Man} for manner, and Q_{Tmp} for time.

Another assumption is that when a nominal is an internal constituent of an adverbial prepositional phrase, it may not be changed to a Q transform. A permitted transformation in a normal situation for Je le vois dans la rue would be Où est-ce que je le vois?

It is also permitted in French to question only with Q morphemes. For example:

Quand?	Dans un mois.
Combien?	Deux cent cinquante francs.
Combien de rôtis de veau?	Deux.
Pourquoi?	Parce qu'il n'y a pas de taxi sur la place.
Pour qui?	Pour une amie sans doute.
Qui donc?	Monsieur Lebrun.
Comment?	Par avion.

It may be noted that in French two particular question morphemes "comment" and "quoi" by themselves may stimulate repetition of what had been uttered. They are two different morphemes from Q_{Man} and Q_{Prep2} (for example, avec quoi in further presentation on page 26 may clarify the reader on this subject.)

For the purpose of the analysis the symbols X_1, X_2, etc. will be used to represent the strings in a sentence (See page 14).

$$S \quad ----\rightarrow \quad X_1 + X_2 + (X_3) + (X_4) + (X_5)$$

Different questions with "question words" may be presented as follows:

$$T\ 4 \quad X_1 + X_2 + (Y) \quad -----\rightarrow \quad QX_1 + X_2 + (Y)$$

X_1 or NP is questioned in this transformation. This set of transformational strings may occur only if $X_1 = N_{an}$ ($QN_{an} = $ qui).

Qui est là?

T 5 $\underline{c'est}$ + NP + $\underline{Qui}$ + VP[1] ------>

QNP + $\underline{est\text{-}ce}$ $\underline{qui}$ + VP

In this case NP, the complement of $\underline{c'est}$, is questioned. It is brought out to the beginning of the question and X_1 and X_2 are reversed. This rule can be applied to both N_{an} and N_{in}, but the QN_{an} and QN_{in} are not the same.

$$Q \quad \begin{bmatrix} N_{an} \\ N_{in} \end{bmatrix} \quad ----> \quad \begin{bmatrix} Qui \\ Que \end{bmatrix}$$

Qui est-ce qui est là?

Qu' est-ce qui est sur la table?

T 6 $\underline{c'est}$ + NP_2 + $\underline{que}$ + NP_1 + VB[2] ------>

QNP_2 + $\underline{est\text{-}ce}$ + $\underline{que}$ + NP_1 + VB

NP_2 is questioned. This rule may also be applied to both N_{an} and N_{in}.

Qui est-ce que vous regardez?

Qu' est-ce que vous regardez?

T 7 X_1 + X_2 + X_4 ------> QX_4 + X_2 + X_1

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[1]For the origin of this string see GT 1.

[2]For the origin of this string see GT 2.

NP_2 or X_4 is being questioned. This rule may also be applied to both N_{an} and N_{in}.

> Qui est-ce?
>
> Que fait Madame Vincent?

$$T\ 8 \qquad X_1 + X_2 + X_5 \ \text{----}\rightarrow \ QX_5 + X_2 + X_1$$

$$Q \begin{bmatrix} \text{Loc} \\ \text{Man} \\ \text{Tmp} \end{bmatrix} \ \text{----}\rightarrow \ \begin{bmatrix} \text{Où} \\ \text{Comment} \\ \text{Quand} \end{bmatrix}$$

X_5 which may be an adverbial locution of any kind is being questioned. There are locutions of place (Loc), manner (Man), and time (Tmp). The phrase structure and the question transformation are the same, but QX_5 is different. For X_{Loc} _où_ will be the replacement; for X_{Man} _comment_ will be the replacement; and _quand_ will be the replacement for X_{Tmp}. They must all be brought out to the beginning of the sentence.

> Où habite Monsieur Vincent?
>
> Comment mangez-vous?
>
> Quand vas-tu?

$$T\ 9 \qquad X_1 + X_2 + X_4 \ \text{----}\rightarrow \ Q_{nu}(\underline{de} + X_4) + X_2 + X_1$$

Q_{nu} _de_ + X_4 is being questioned, since the quantity of X_1 or X_4 may be questioned. The position of the _de_ + X_4 string is optional. It may occur after Q_{nu}, or after X_1, or not at all.

Combien (de filles) sont venues?   (QX_1)

Combien m'apportez-vous?

Combien a-t-il de cravates?

Combien de cravates y a-t-il?   (QX_4)

T 10 $X_1 + X_2 + S_{Cau}$ -----→ $QS_{Cau} + X_2 + X_1$

The causative sentence (S_{Cau}) is being questioned.

Pourquoi pleures-tu?

T 11 $X_1 + X_2 + (Prep) + (Adj) + X_4$ -----→

(Prep) + Q(Adj) + X_4 + X_2 + X_1

$$QAdj + N \longrightarrow \begin{bmatrix} quel \\ quelle \\ quels \\ quelles \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} N_{sg} \begin{bmatrix} masc \\ fem \end{bmatrix} \\ N_{pl} \begin{bmatrix} masc \\ fem \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

A part of X_4 is being questioned; the signal is "quel." This morpheme must be in agreement in gender and in number with X_4.

Quels habits portez-vous?

A quelle heure t'en vas-tu?

X_4 may be replaced by Det (le, la, and les).

$$Det \begin{bmatrix} N_{sg} \begin{bmatrix} masc \\ fem \end{bmatrix} \\ N_{pl} \begin{bmatrix} masc \\ fem \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} + Q(Adj) \longrightarrow \begin{bmatrix} lequel \\ laquelle \\ lesquels \\ lesquelles \end{bmatrix}$$

Lequel voulez-vous?

T 12 $X_1 + \text{Etre} + X_4 \quad \text{-----} \rightarrow \quad QX_4 + \text{Etre} + X_1$

The application of T 12 is limited to situations where $X_1 = X_4$ and $X_2 =$ Etre. In this case too, the morpheme _quel_ which replaces the QX_4 string must be in agreement in gender and in number with X_1.

Quels sont vos tissus?

Generalized Transformation Type Questions

Generalized grammatical transformation deals with optional transformations of two or more set of strings. The rule shows one set of them (the constituent string) being embedded into another (the matrix string).

Relative Pronoun as Subject

GT 1 $\left.\begin{array}{l} Y + NP_2 \\ NP_1 + VP \end{array}\right\} \quad \text{-----} \rightarrow \quad Y + NP_2 + \underline{Qui} + VP$

where $NP_2 = NP_1$

In this situation NP_1 which is the subject of the second sentence is replaced by _qui_.

Voilà les gens. $\left.\begin{array}{l} \\ \\ \end{array}\right\}$ -----$\rightarrow$

Les gens gagnent leurs douze francs.

Voilà les gens qui gagnent leurs douze francs.

Relative Pronoun as Object

GT 2 $\left.\begin{array}{l} Y + NP_2 \\ NP_1 + VB + NP_3 \end{array}\right\} \quad \text{---} \rightarrow \quad Y + NP_2 + \underline{que} + NP_1 + VP$

where $NP_2 = NP_3$

NP$_3$ object of the second sentence is replaced by <u>que</u>.

Voilà la fille. ⎫
J'ai vu la fille. ⎬ -----→
Voilà la fille que j'ai vue.

GT 3   NP + VP ⎫
         <u>N'est-ce pas?</u>[1] ⎬ ----→   NP + VP + <u>n'est-ce pas?</u>

Il va venir. ⎫
N'est-ce pas? ⎬ ---→ Il va venir, n'est ce pas

GT 4   <u>C'est que</u> + S ⎫
         NP$_1$ + VP$_1$ ⎬ -----→ <u>C'est que</u> + NP + VP

The sentence S is replaced by NP$_1$ + VP$_1$.

C'est que mes parents sont partis.

Generalized Transformation Reversal Type Questions

This type of question (from T 1) must be preceded by GT 4.

<u>C'est que</u> + NP + VP -----→   <u>est-ce que</u> + NP + VP
Est-ce que mes parents sont partis?

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[1]This string may be derived from <u>c'est</u> + X by T 1 and T$_{neg}$.

T 13

$$\underline{\text{Est-ce que}} + NP + VB + \begin{bmatrix} Loc \\ Man \\ Tmp \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{-----}\rangle$$

$$Q \begin{bmatrix} Loc \\ Man \\ Tmp \end{bmatrix} + \underline{\text{est-ce que}} + NP + VB$$
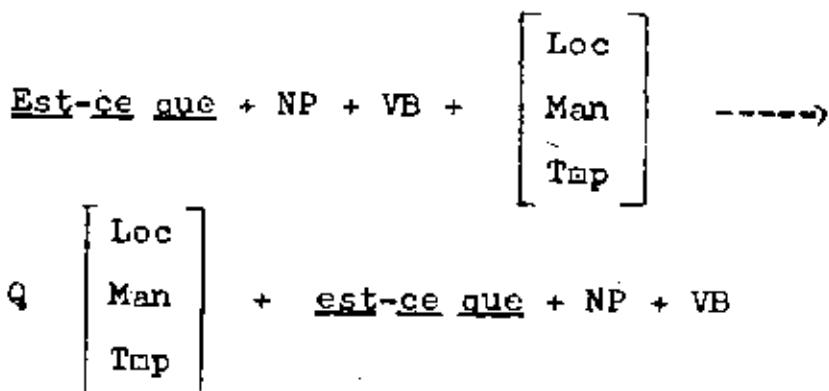
The adverbial locution is being questioned (See T 8, page 21).

> Où est-ce que vous habitez?
>
> Comment est-ce qu' elle l'a fait?
>
> Quand est-ce que vous sortirez?

T 14 $\underline{\text{Est-ce que}} + NP + VB + nu + NP_2 \quad \text{-----}\rangle$

$Q_{nu} + \underline{\text{est-ce que}} + NP + VB$

Quantity is being questioned (see T 9, page 21).

> Combien est-ce qu' il y a de pièces?
>
> Combien de robes est-ce que vous avez?
>
> Combien est-ce que vous voulez?

T 15 $\underline{\text{Est-ce que}} + NP_1 + VP_1 + S_{Cau} \quad \text{-----}\rangle$

$QS_{Cau} + \underline{\text{est-ce que}} + NP_1 + VP_1$

The sentence S_{Cau} is being questioned. It is replaced by QS_{Cau} (QS_{Cau} = $\underline{\text{pourquoi}}$) in the derived sentence (See T 10, page 22).

T 16   Est-ce que + NP$_1$ + VB + (Prep) + (Adj)+N ----->

(Prep) + Q(Adj) + N + est-ce que + NP$_1$ + VB

The morpheme quel is to be used to signal the question. It has to be in agreement in gender and in number with N (See T 11, page 22).

Quels fruits est-ce que vous voulez?

A quel étage est-ce que vous habitez?

For the transformation of the nominal of an adverbial either T 1, T 2, Gt 4, or a Q transformation is permitted. The question word transformation of the adverbial prepositional phrases is given below. The writer assumes that it is clear to anyone who has read the beginning of this chapter that these Q questions will have to be brought out to the beginning of the sentence.

QPrep$_1$ + N$_{an}$ ----->   Prep$_1$ + qui

QPrep$_2$ + N$_{in}$ ----->   Prep$_2$ + quoi

QPrep$_3$ + N$_{dir}$ ----->   Prep$_3$ + où

N$_{an}$ ----->   garçon, Pierre, parents, etc.

N$_{in}$ ----->   table, école, soleil, etc.

N$_{dir}$ ----->   chemin, pont, la Sorbonne, etc.

Prep$_1$ ----->   à, avec, de, pour

Prep$_2$ ----->   à, avec, de, pour, en, dans

Prep$_3$ ----->   de, par