(1) Xiayu-le (ma)?
rain-PFV MA
‘Did it rain?’

Regarding the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic nature of Mandarin ma, whose mainstream interpretation is a yes-no question marker (1), several proposals have been made. This presentation aims to examine and to respond to those proposals, including the question morpheme (Q-morpheme) proposal, the speech act intensifier (SA-intensifier) proposal and the polar question particle (PQP) proposal.
Based on evidence concerning the embeddability of sentence-final particles (SFPs) and concerning both within- and pre-SFP intonation patterns, I argue against the proposals that Mandarin *ma* is a Q-morpheme or an SA-intensifier. Instead, I argue in favor of the PQP proposal by resolving two potential issues, namely whether *ma* can induce partitions like Hindi *kyaa* and why double *ma* construction is unacceptable.