Annotation Guidelines for Questions under Discussion and Information Structure

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Introduction
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Depending on the language, information structure may be expressed via morphologic, syntactic and/or prosodic means.
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But… underspecification:

‘Focus projection’ (Selkirk 1984, 1995)

(1) He was warned to look out for [an ex-convict [with [a red [shirt]] F] F] F.
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But… ambiguity:

Japanese *wa* (Kuno 1973)

thematic *wa*

(2) ano honi-*wa* John-ga ei katta.
   that book-*WA* John-NOM bought
   ‘Speaking of that book, John bought it.’

contrastive *wa*

(3) Ame *wa* hutte imasu ga (taisita koto *wa* arimasen)
   rain-*WA* falling is but important matter *WA* exists-*NEG*
   ‘It is raining, but it isn’t much.’
Introduction

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But… ambiguity:

French clefts (Doetjes, Rebuschi & Rialland 2004)

(4) C’est [le petit]F qui est tombé dans l’escalier (, pas ma fille).
   ‘It’s the young one who fell down the stairs (, not my daughter).’

(5) C’est [pour cette raison que Marie n’y est plus jamais revenue]F.
   ‘It’s for that reason that Marie never went back there.’

(6) C’est [avec plaisir que je vous invite à participer à ce séminaire]F.
   ‘It is with pleasure that I invite you to this seminar’
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Depending on the language, information structure may be expressed via morphologic, syntactic and/or prosodic means.

But… underspecification:

‘Focus projection’ (Selkirk 1984, 1995)

(1) He was warned to look out for [an ex-convict [with [a red [shirt]]]F]F]F]F.

a. No, he was warned to look out for an ex-convict with a red [tie].

b. No, he was warned to look out for an ex-convict with [a carnation].

c. No, he was warned to look out for [an automobile salesman].

d. No, he was warned [to expect a visit from the FBI].

e. No, he was [simply told to be more cautious].
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Disambiguation by means of context

‘Focus projection’ (Selkirk 1984, 1995)

(1) He was warned to look out for [an ex-convict [with [a red [shirt]FF]FF].

(2) a. No, he was warned to look out for an ex-convict with a red [tie].
   b. No, he was warned to look out for an ex-convict with [a carnation].
   c. No, he was warned to look out for [an automobile salesman].
   d. No, he was warned [to expect a visit from the FBI].
   e. No, he was [simply told to be more cautious].
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Disambiguation by means of context

(7) A: Qué hizo Consuelo?  
‘What did Consuelo do?’

B: [Consuelo]B [preparó la sangría]F.
Consuelo prepared the sangria

(8) A: Qué preparó Consuelo?  
‘What did Consuelo prepare?’

B: [Consuelo preparó]B [la sangría]F.
Consuelo prepared the sangria
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What about other contexts of occurrence?

**Goal:** make explicit the way the listener/reader recovers the information structure of ALL utterances of a text.

**How?**
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Assumptions:
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- there’s a direct link between sentence information structure and discourse structure (Roberts 1996, Buring 2003…)
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Assumptions:

- there’s a direct link between sentence information structure and discourse structure (Roberts 1996, Buring 2003…)

- discourse is hierarchically organized in the form of a **discourse tree**… (Mann and Thompson 1988, Roberts 1996/2012, Asher and Lascarides 2003)

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QUD structure —> linking rules —> IS at sentence level

Velleman and Beaver 2016:

The QUD approach to discourse relates IS marking to the interlocutors’ beliefs, desires, and intentions. QUDs represent the intention of finding out the answer and making it part of the common ground.
Introduction

What about other contexts of occurrence?

**Goal:** make explicit the way the listener/reader recovers the information structure of ALL utterances of a text.

**How?**

- reduce any context to a Q-A context where Q is implicit and A is the utterance whose IS we intend to provide.
- provide constraints to the formulation of implicit Qs
- provide linking rules that “translate” the QUD-structure into IS-structure at sentence level
Preliminaires
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Split the text into separate utterances (assertions), including coordinated sentences (or VPs).
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(9) [French, EUR]

A1: La construction européenne c’était un moyen d’assurer la paix entre les pays d’Europe de l’Ouest

‘The construction of Europe was a means to ensure peace among the Western European countries’

A2: et c’était en même temps un moyen d’assurer une prospérité commune

‘and at the same time (a means) to ensure a common prosperity’

A3: et c’était un moyen d’assurer une défense vis-à-vis la menace soviétique.

‘and a defense against the Sovietic threat.’
Formulating Questions
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**Q-A-Congruence:**
Qs must be answerable by the assertion(s) that they immediately dominate.

(cf. Roberts 1996)
Formulating Questions

Q-A-Congruence:
Qs must be answerable by the assertion(s) that they immediately dominate.

(10) [French, www.monde-diplomatique.fr]

A5 : Le parti était soupçonné d’avoir été financé par des caisses noires alimentées par des commissions touchées sur des ventes d’armes
‘The party was suspected to be funded by slush funds supplied by commissions earned on arms sale’
Q-A-Congruence:
Qs must be answerable by the assertion(s) that they immediately dominate.

Q5: What happened?
Q5: What happened to the party?
Q5: What was the party suspected to do?
Q5: By what was the party suspected to be funded?
Q5: #What was suspected to be funded by slush funds?

A5 : Le parti était soupçonné d’avoir été financé par des caisses noires alimentées par des commissions touchées sur des ventes d’armes
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**Q-A-Congruence:**
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Implicit Qs should contain as much given material as possible.

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   par des commissions touchées sur des ventes d’armes, dont celle de chars à
   l’Arabie Saoudite pendant la première guerre du Golfe.
   ‘The party was suspected to be financed by slush funds supplied by commissions
   earned on arms sale, among which the one of tanks to Saudi Arabia during the
   first Gulf war’
> Q6: What was the consequence of this, for arms sale to Saudi Arabia?
>> A6: Depuis, les ventes d’armement allemand à Riyad n’ont cessé de faire débat.
   ‘Since then, German arms sale to Riyadh never ceased to be debated’
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**Q-Givenness:**
Implicit Qs can only consist of given (or, at least, highly salient) material.

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‘The party was suspected to be funded by slush funds supplied by commissions earned on arms sale, among which that one of tanks to Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf war’

> Q6: # What did arms sale to Saudi Arabia never cease to do ever since?

>> A6: *Depuis, les ventes d’armement allemand à Riyadh n’ont cessé de faire débat.*

‘Since then, German arms sale to Riyadh never ceased to be debated’
Parallelisms
Simple parallelism
Les signes peuvent être une aide pour la vie de tous les jours
‘Signs can be of help for everyday life’

et les signes peuvent aussi aider l’enfant à s’exprimer dans des moments d’urgence, de stress.
‘and signs can also help the child to express himself in moments of crisis or stress’
Simple parallelism

(13) French [http://www.bloghoptoys.fr/]

>> Q3: What kind of help can signs give (to children)?

>>> A3': Les signes peuvent être une aide pour la vie de tous les jours
   ‘Signs can be of help for everyday life’

>>> A3’”: et les signes peuvent aussi aider l’enfant à s’exprimer dans des
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Puis l’enfant, par son jeu d’observation, va constater que vous vous dirigez ensemble vers la cuisine,
‘Then the child, by means of his observation skills, observes that you are going together towards the kitchen’

l’enfant va constater que vous sortez les gâteaux du placard…
‘the child observes that you take the cookie out of the cupboard…’
Simple parallelism

(12) French [http://www.bloghoptoys.fr/]

>> Q19: {What does the child observe then?}

>>> A19': Puis l'enfant, par son jeu d'observation, va constater que vous vous dirigez ensemble vers la cuisine,
‘Then the child, by means of his observation skills, observes that you are going together towards the kitchen’

>>> A19’’: l’enfant va constater que vous sortez les gâteaux du placard…
‘the child observes that you take the cookie out of the cupboard…’
Complex parallelism: CT+F
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(14) [French, CFPP2000]
spk1: et ils travaillaient dans quelle profession?
‘and what was their [=spk2’s parents] profession?’
spk2: maman elle était soudeuse des agrafes (…)
‘Mum was a staple welder’
spk1: Et votre père?
‘And your father?’
spk2: mon père il était monteur en bronze
‘My father was a bronze fitter’
Complex parallelism: CT+F

(14) [French, CFPP2000]
Q₁₅: spk₁: et ils travaillaient dans quelle profession?
   ‘And what was their profession?’
> Q₁₅.₁: {What was your mother?}
>> A₁₅.₁: spk₂: maman elle était soudeuse des agrafes (…)
   ‘Mum was a staple welder’
> Q₁₅.₂: spk₁: Et votre père?
> Q₁₅.₂: spk₁: Et votre père?
   ‘And [what was] your father?’
>> A₁₅.₂: spk₂: mon père il était monteur en bronze
   ‘My father was a bronze fitter’
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Q₁₅: spk₁: et ils travaillaient dans quelle profession?
  ‘and what was their profession?’

> Q₁₅.₁: {What was your mother?}

>> A₁₅.₁: spk₂: maman elle était soudeuse des agrafes (…)
  ‘Mum was a staple welder’

> Q₁₅.₂: spk₁: Et votre père?

>> A₁₅.₂: spk₂: mon père il était monteur en bronze
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Information Structure - QUD structure linking rules
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tag</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus (F)</td>
<td>The part of a clause <strong>that answers the current Q.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus domain (~)</td>
<td>A piece of discourse which contains both a focus and, usually, some background. <strong>The focus domain directly corresponds to the Q.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>The non-focal part of a focus domain (<strong>that part which is already mentioned in the current Q</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Aboutness) topic (T)</td>
<td>A referential entity in the background which constitutes what the utterance is about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrastive topic (CT)</td>
<td>A topic that represents a variable and which <strong>signals the existence of a hierarchically higher Q.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-at-issue content (nai)</td>
<td>The part of a clause which provides <strong>optional information with respect to the current Q.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Q5: By what was the CDU suspected to be funded?

A5: [[Le parti] était soupçonné d’avoir été financé [par des caisses noires…]F]~ the party was suspected to be funded by slush funds…”
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>> Q3: How can signs help (children)?

>>> A3’: [[Les signes]T peuvent être une aide [pour la vie de tous les jours]F]~
    signs can be of help for everyday life

>>> A3’’: et [les signes peuvent aussi aider l’enfant [à s’exprimer dans
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Q₁₅: spk₁: et ils travaillaient dans quelle profession?
‘and what was their [=spk₂’s parents] profession?’

> Q₁₅.₁: {What was your mother?}

> > A₁₅.₁: spk₂: [[maman]CT [elle]T était [soudeuse des agrafes (...)][F]~

    mum  was  a staple welder

> Q₁₅.₂: spk₁: Et votre père?
‘And [what was] your father?’

> > A₁₅.₂: spk₂: [[mon père]CT [il]T était [monteur en bronze][F]~

    my father  was  a bronze fitter
Not-at-issue content
Not-at-issue content

Simons et al 2010, Tonhauser et al 2013

Not-At-Issue:

An expression whose deletion has no effect on the truth-conditions of the main proposition denoted by the utterance.

relative to Q:
Part of the utterance that does not relate to the current Q, or in other words, that remains outside the focus domain.
Not-at-issue content

Simons et al 2010, Tonhauser et al 2013

Typical *nai* content:

- supplements: parentheticals, non-restrictive modifiers, appositions and other adjunct-like material.

- evidentials and other speaker-oriented material
Q1: {What is your relationship with Nathalie?}

Q2: {What is the connection between Nathalie and 'sign language with babies'?

A2': [Infirmière,] nai [elle] a découvert [le principe d’associer signes et parole avec sa fille aînée]~ nurse she discovered the idea of combining signs and speech with her elder daughter’

A2'': [et elle] a créé [par la suite] nai Kestumdis [la communication à portée de mains]~ and she then created Kestumdis hand who offers family workshops…}
Q₃: {What is the debate on linguistic policy about?}

> A₃: [Bien que les règles statutaires définissent des langues officielles (...)][nai

even though statutory rules define official languages

[[un monolinguisme de fait s’impose peu à peu.][F]]~

a  monolingualism in fact is imposing little by little

‘Although statutory rules define official languages and working languages (...) monolingualism is in fact imposing little by little’
Q6: {What did Patrice Bouveret do?}


leader of the Monitoring center of the arms Patrice Bouveret

[avait relancé, lors du colloque organisé le mois dernier par des
had revived at the time of the conference organized the month last by INDEF

sénatrices communistes] naï une série de propositions pour un meilleur contrôle…] F]

senators communist a series of propositions for a better control.

‘As the leader of the Arms Monitoring Center, Patrice Bouveret revived, during a
conference organized last month by some communist senators in front of an
audience of trade unionists, a series of propositions for a better control (…)’
Q₁: {What about the use of English in international organisations?}

> A₁: [Les défenseurs de l’anglais affirment] naï


that it has become internationalised.’
Not-at-issue content

...in sentence-final position (cf. AnderBois et al 2010, Syrett and Koev 2015)
> Q4: {Who else is she receiving during the family workshops?}

>>A4: [Dans ses ateliers, [elle]T accueille aussi [les enfants différents]F]~
[(autiste, syndrome d’Angelman, Trisomie 21…)]nai

‘During these workshops, she also receives special children (autist, Angelman syndrome, Down syndrome…’)
(18) French [http://www.bloghoptoys.fr/]

> Q4: {Who else is she receiving during the family workshops?}

>> A4: [Dans ses ateliers, [elle]T accueille aussi [les enfants différents]F]~
‘During these workshops, she also receives special children’

>> Q5: {What kind of special children?}

>>> A5: [((autiste, syndrome d’Angelman, Trisomie 21…)]F]~
‘(autist, Angelman syndrome, Down syndrome…)’
> Q2: {What is the connection between Nathalie and ‘sign language with babies’?}

>> A2': [Infirmière,\textit{nai} [[elle]\textit{T} [a découvert]\textit{F} le principe d’associer signes et parole [avec sa fille aînée]\textit{F}]\textit{~}

‘Being a nurse, she discovered the combination of signs and speech with her elder daughter’

>> A2’’: [et elle]\textit{a créé [par la suite]nai Kestumdis, [la communication à portée de mains]nai, [qui propose des ateliers familiaux…]nai]\textit{~}

And she then created Kestumdis, communication at hand, which offers family workshops…

(19) French http://www.bloghoptoys.fr/
Q2: {What is the connection between Nathalie and 'sign language with babies'?}

A2': [Infirmière,]naître [elle] a découvert le principe d’associer signes et parole avec sa fille aînée.

‘Being a nurse, she discovered the coupling of sign and speech with her elder daughter’

A2'': [et elle] a créé par la suite Kestumdis

‘and she then created Kestumdis,

Q3: {What is Kestumdis?}

A3: [la communication à portée de mains]

‘communication at hand,’

Q4: {What does Kestumdis do?}

A4: qui [propose des ateliers familiaux…]F

which offers family workshops…’
> Q2: {What is the connection between Nathalie and 'sign language with babies'?}
>> A2': [Infirmière,]nai [[elle]\Atlas{1} a découvert]F le principe d’associer signes et parole [avec sa fille aînée]\Atlas{1}~
    ‘Being a nurse, she discovered the coupling of sign and speech with her elder daughter’
>> A2’': [et elle]\Atlas{1}a créé [par la suite]nai Kestumdis,\Atlas{1}F~
    ‘and she then created Kestumdis,’
>> Q3 : {What is Kestumdis?}
>>> A3: [la communication à portée de mains]\Atlas{1}F~
    ‘communication at hand,’
>> Q4: {What does Kestumdis do?}
>>> A4: qui [propose des ateliers familiaux…]\Atlas{1}F~
    which offers family workshops…’
Q1: {What is your relationship with Nathalie?}


‘Nathalie, mother of two children born in 2007 and at the end of 2011, has been introduced to us by a blogger mom’

\[ Q_1 \]
\[ | \]
\[ A_1 \]
some problematic cases
some problematic cases:
embedded focus
some problematic cases: embedded focus

(22) French http://www.bloghoptoys.fr/

A33: Cet outil de la parole appuyée par les signes de la LSF permet aussi aux enfants présentant des troubles de communication d’accéder au langage

Q34: {What is ‘sign language with babies’ for communication disorders?}

>Q34.1: {What solution isn’t ‘sign language with babies’ to all situations of communication disorders?}

>> A34.1: [Ce [n’est pas [LA]F solution à toutes les situations]F]~
‘It is not THE solution to all situations’
some problematic cases: crossed CTs
some problematic cases: crossed CTs

(28) French http://www.bloghoptoys.fr/

L’enfant utilise très tôt ses bras et ses mains,

alors que le langage apparaît beaucoup plus tard.
some problematic cases: crossed CTs

(28) French http://www.blogspot.fr/

>> Q12: {**When** does the child develop **what** developmental skills?}

>>> Q12.1: {**What** developmental skills does the child’s develop very early?}

>>>> A12.1: [[L’enfant]_{T} utilise [très tôt]_{CT} [ses bras et ses mains,]_{F}]~

the child uses very early his arms and his hands

>>> Q12.2: {**When** does the child develop language?}

>>>> A12.2: alors que [[le langage]_{CT} apparaît [beaucoup plus tard.]_{F}]~

while language appears much later
some problematic cases: contrasting NAI content
some problematic cases: contrasting NAI content

(20) French http://www.bloghoptoys.fr/

de la même façon que vous dites «au revoir!» en agitant la main,
‘in the same way as you say “goodbye” by waving your hand’

vous allez lui dire: «tu veux manger?» en faisant en parallèle le signe
de «manger»
‘you are going to say “do you wanna eat?” by making in parallel
the “eating” sign’
some problematic cases: contrasting NAI content

(20) French http://www.bloghoptoys.fr/

Q3: How do you say what?

>Q3.1.: How do you say “au revoir”?

>>A3.1: de la même façon que [vous dites «au revoir!»]CT [en agitant la main]F]~,

‘in the same way as you say “goodbye” by waving your hand’

>Q3.2.: How do you say “do you wanna eat?”?

>> A3.2.: [vous allez lui dire: «tu veux manger?»]CT [en faisant en parallèle le signe de «manger»]F]~

‘you are going to say “do you wanna eat?” by making in parallel the “eating” sign’
some problematic cases: contrasting NAI content

(20) French http://www.bloghoptoys.fr/

Q3: How do you say what?

> Q3.1.: How do you say “au revoir”?

>> A3.1.: de la même façon que [vous dites [«au revoir!»]CT [en agitant la main]F]~,

‘in the same way as you say “goodbye” by waving your hand’

> Q3.2.: How do you say “do you wanna eat?”?

>> A3.2.: [vous allez lui dire: [«tu veux manger?»]CT [en faisant en parallèle le signe de «manger»]F]~

‘you are going to say “do you wanna eat?” by making in parallel the “eating” sign’
Conclusions

- IS is discourse structure surfacing at sentence level. By helping to identify the Current Question, it helps speakers to coordinate on strategies for meeting communicative goals.

- IS linguistic marking (morpho-syntactic or prosodic one) is not (does not need to be) exhaustive nor unambiguous: discourse rules and discourse-IS linking rules complete the job.
Future work

• Crosslinguistic comparison (non-european languages)
• Comparison of QUD structure in different text genres
• Other illocutionary forces: imperatives, exclamatives
• NAI content: an independent QUD structure?
• ...

Merci à Etienne Riou, Muriel Assmann, Vincent Segonne et Samia Slimani pour leur collaboration dans l’annotation des textes.
Selected references


merci
Q5: By what kind of funding was the CDU suspected to be funded?


‘The party was suspected to be financed by slush funds supplied by commissions earned on arms sale, among which the one of tanks to Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf war’
Q5: By what kind of funding was the CDU suspected to be funded?


‘The party was suspected to be funded by slush funds supplied by commissions earned on arms sale,’

Q6: Which arms sale among others?


‘among which that one of tanks to Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf war’
Not-at-issue content
Q1: {What about French arms export?}
   > A1: Les exportations françaises d’armement ne font l’objet d’aucun débat en France
   ‘French arms export isn’t the object of any debate in France’

Q2: {What are the exceptions to this?}

> A2': sinon [en cas de scandale] (frégates de Taiwan ou Angolagate), ‘except in case of scandal (frigates of Taiwan or Angolagate)’

> A2'': [de drame] (l’attentat de Karachi), ‘of drama (the suicide attack in Karachi)’

> A2'': ou [lorsque l’exécutif se prend les pieds dans le tapis] (as with that projection and commandment ship sale to Russia)
Simple parallelism

(25)  [English, SNO]

A_{14}: When you are on the inside and you go into work everyday and you sit down at the desk and then you realize the power you have.

Q_{15}: {What power do [employees of the NSA] have?}
> Q_{15.1}: {Whom can you wire tap?}

>> A_{15.1'}: [You can wire tap [the President of the United States]\_F]\sim,

>> A_{15.1''}: [you can wire tap [a Federal Judge]\_F]\sim
L’export permet à l’Etat de réduire quelque peu ses engagements consentis au titre du soutien à des industries nationales d’importance stratégique

‘(arms) export allows the State to reduce a little its commitments to support national industries of strategic importance’

et l’export contribue donc à alléger ses dépenses budgétaires en matière de défense.

‘and (it) therefore contributes to reduce the government's budgetary expenses in terms of defense.’
Simple parallelism

(12) [French, www.monde-diplomatique.fr]

Q₁₂: {What is the effect of (arms) export?}

> A₁₂: L'export permet à l'État de réduire (...) ses engagements consentis au titre du soutien à des industries nationales (...) ‘(arms) export allows the state to reduce (...) its commitments to support national industries (...)’

> A₁₂′: et l'export contribue donc à alléger ses dépenses budgétaires en matière de défense.

‘and the export therefore contributes to reduce the government’s budgetary expenses in terms of defense.’
Simple parallelism

(11) French [CFPP2000]

donc c'est sûr que c'est un atout pour le quartier
‘so it’s sure that it’s an advantage for the neighborhood’

aussi bien un atout financier
‘both an economic advantage’

qu'un atout euh pour euh les habitants
‘and an advantage for the inhabitants’
Simple parallelism

(11) French [CFPP2000]

Q7: {What **is it (=the new museum) for the neighborhood?**}

A7: donc c'est sûr que c'est un atout pour le quartier
   ‘so it’s sure that it’s an advantage for the neighborhood’

Q8: {**What kind** of advantage is the new museum for the neighborhood?}

>A8': aussi bien [un atout [**financier**]F]~
   ‘both an economic advantage’

>A8'': qu’[un atout euh [**pour euh les habitants**]F]~
   ‘and an advantage for the inhabitants’
Q25: {Which countries are knocking at the door of the European Union?}
> Q25.1: {Countries which are not European in WHAT sense of the term are knocking at the door?}

>> A25.1': mais voilà que maintenant [des pays [qui ne sont pas européens au sens [géographique]F du terme] frappent à la porte]~

‘But now countries that aren’t European in the geographical sense of the word are knocking at the door’

>> A25.1'': ni même parfois [des pays [qui ne sont pas européens au sens [historique]F du terme]F frappent à la porte]~

‘and sometimes not even in the historical sense of the word are knocking at the door’
Formulating Questions

**Q-A-Congruence:**
QUDs must be answerable by the assertion(s) that they immediately dominate.

**Maximize-Q-Anaphoricity:**
Implicit QUdS should contain as much given material as possible.

**Q-Givenness:**
Implicit QUdS can only consist of given (or, at least, highly salient) material.

**NB:** All function words and very general concepts like status, name, event, or property, may always be used in the formulation of a Q.
parenthesis:
explicit questions
Quelles sont les perspectives qui s’ouvrent aux jeunes au Grand-Duché et quels sont les défis à relever par eux?

‘What are opening perspectives to young people in the Grand-Duché and what are the challenges to take up by them?’

When/if asked about their own view concerning their future perspectives, the great majority of young people in Luxembourg appears optimist.
(27) [French, http://www.ogbl.lu]

Q₁: Quelles sont les perspectives qui s’ouvrent aux jeunes au Grand-Duché?
   'What are opening perspectives to young people in the Grand-Duché?'

> Q₂: {What is the attitude of young people in Luxembourg, when
questioned about their own view on their future perspectives?}

>> A₂: [Questionnés sur leur vue propre concernant leurs perspectives
d’aventir]nai, [[les jeunes Luxembourgeois]T [se montrent en majeure

'When asked about their own view concerning their future perspectives,
the great majority of young people in Luxembourg appeared optimist'