French questioning declaratives in question[1]

1. Introduction

Ginzburg and Sag (2000) define the notion of clause type independently of illocutionary force: a clause type is a construction which associates a family of clausal forms and a content type. The content of a declarative clause is a proposition, and that of an interrogative is a question. Each clause type is further associated with constraints on the type of speech act it enables the speaker to perform when used in root sentences. A root declarative clause is used to make an assertion, a root interrogative clause is used to make a query (provided the felicity conditions of the speech act are met). In this respect, there is a class of utterances which raise a difficulty. On the one hand, they have a declarative form, on the other one, they have been analyzed as interrogatives, or as conveying a query or as having the effect of a query. They are known under different labels: 'intonation question', 'rising declarative', 'declarative question', 'questioning declarative'. We examine the French version of such utterances, which we call 'Q-declarative'. In the French tradition, they are analyzed as interrogatives. Accordingly, French is said to have three ways of expressing a polar question (a.o. Borillo 1978, Mosegaard-Hansen 2001, Marandin 2005): they use the complementizer *est-ce que* (1a), a verbal suffix identical to the subject prefix (or pronoun) (1b) and Q-declaratives (1c).

(1)   a. Est-ce que Paul sera là ?   (will Paul be there ?)
       b. Paul sera-t-il là ?
       c. Paul sera là ?

We revisit the arguments that led to the analysis of Q-declaratives as interrogatives and propose that they are declaratives. Qua declaratives, they convey a proposition p and allow a dialogical move that steers the conversation to a stage where the addressee has to ratify (or reject) the proposition. Thus, proposition p ends up as a joint commitment of speaker and addressee by virtue of addressee's ratification of p. As for the effect that is currently described as 'questioning', we propose that it is related to the type of commitment of the speaker. The speaker's commitment to p is part of the use of root declaratives (a.o. Gunlogson 2003, Beyssade & Marandin 2006). However, building on Gunlogson 2008, we distinguish between two types of commitment, which may be independent from the addressee's ratification or contingent on it. In the first case, the assertion results in a statement (or assertoric assertion), in the second, it results in a proposal. The act corresponding to a Q-declarative is a proposal.

In section 2, we dismiss some received ideas about French Q-declaratives. In section 3, we review a number of properties that undermine the hypothesis that Q-declaratives denote questions. In section 4, we show that the moves allowed by Q-declaratives resemble more assertions than queries. In section 5, we propose our analysis, according to which Q-declaratives are pragmatically proposals to the addressee, resulting (or not) in the grounding of p in the shared ground. Finally, we adduce results from a corpus study to substantiate and

illustrate our claims (Abeillé, Crabbé, Godard & Marandin 2012).[2]

Given the three way distinction that we adopt from Ginzburg and Sag (2000) (form, meaning, force), we use the following labels:
- *declarative, interrogative, Q-declarative* refer to clause types or subtypes,
- *proposition, question* refer to content types,
- *assertion, statement, proposal, query*, refer to speech acts or speech act varieties.
In the conversation domain, *response* refers to a type of turn, *uptake* to the content of the turn. *Ratification, rejection, answer* are types of content of turn.

2. On some received ideas about French Q-declaratives

2.1. Intonation

The labels 'intonation question', 'rising declarative' or 'question intonation' all imply that the intonation contour is the factor that identifies – or even coerces – declaratives as interrogatives or as questioning. However, the common wisdom that rising intonation is correlated with interrogatives or querying or the attitude associated with querying (doubt, uncertainty or call on addressee) has been called into question and there is now a consensus that "it is not possible to identify tune types [=intonation contour] with sentence types in any simple way" (Ladd, 1996: 9). Concretely, it has been shown on the basis of several corpora (everyday conversations and radio news) that intonation is not a reliable criterion for distinguishing between declaratives used to assert and declaratives putatively used to query (Beyssade *et al.* 2007). It is not always the case that declaratives used to make a statement (assertoric assertions) have a final falling contour, or that Q-declaratives have a final rising contour. Rather, the choice of the contour and its import in context cut across clause types and speech acts (see a. o. Beyssade & Marandin 2007 and references therein).

2.2. Use

In the literature on French, it is claimed (a) that the preferred construction for a polar query is the Q-declarative, (b) that Q-declaratives are the most frequent form in everyday interactions, (c) that they belong to the informal register while interrogatives with *est-ce que* or with a suffixed verb belong to a more formal register (see a.o. Borillo 1978, Šafářová 2007). We are still lacking the relevant quantitative surveys to seriously address those claims; nonetheless, we are in a position to shed some light on the data. The first quantitative study available (Mosegaard-Hansen 2001) is based on a mixed corpus (4h35' recordings) comprising everyday dialogues, radio programs and school examinations. The raw distribution in that corpus seems to support claim (a): Q-declaratives greatly outnumber the two other constructions. However, the distribution is different when the discourse genre is taken into account: Q-declaratives are less dominant in radio debates (Table 1) and we show in section 6 that they can outnumber *est-ce-que* questions (Table 3). In fact, as Mosegaard-Hansen strongly suggests, the genre is not the relevant factor: the role Q-declaratives play in the conversation and more broadly in the interaction is much more relevant. In addition, she notes that the difference between the forms cannot be register dependent, since they can all occur in the same dialogue.

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[2]   We base our analysis on several corpora: Mosegaard-Hansen 2001 (= corpus PIII), the recorded dialogs of CID (Bertrand et al. 2008), and Microfusées (Laurens, Patin & Marandin, 2013), and the radio corpora Ester (as in Beyssade *et al.* 2007) and EPAC which has been annotated for questions by Bazillon *et al.* 2011.

	Q-declaratives	est-ce-que-inter	suff-verb-inter	total
In the corpus as a whole	204 (83%)	36 (14%)	7 (2%)	247
In radio debates	31 (61,5%)	16 (28%)	6 (10,5%)	53

Table 1. The distribution of the forms from (1) in Mosegaard-Hansen's corpus

3. Are Q-declaratives interrogatives?

We examine diverse properties that establish a contrast between interrogatives and Q-declaratives. Although we do not have a full analysis of all the data, the general picture indicates that Q-declaratives differ semantically from interrogatives.

3.1 Morpho-syntactic properties

The three forms in (1) share the property of being main clauses. Polar embedded questions are expressed by a clause introduced by the complementizer *si* (construction (2b) with the complementizer *est-ce que* is possible, but non-standard). Thus, if Marie has used any of the forms in (1), her act is uniformly described by (2a). However, no conclusion can be drawn as regards the content of (1c), *contra* Ginzburg and Sag (2000: 287): it is the act which is reported, not the clause type used to perform the act. So, (2a) merely indicates that the move performed by the three forms can be described by the same verb *demander à quelqu'un si* p ('ask someone whether p'): the appropriateness of (2a) as a description of (1c) could be a hint for its force, not its content type.

(2) a.   Marie a demandé si Paul allait venir.   (M. wondered if Paul was coming)
    b.   !M. a demandé est-ce que Paul allait venir.
    c.   *Marie a demandé Paul allait-il venir

The same caution is in order regarding the use of the French noun *question*. Q-declaratives are not natural for the elaboration of this noun, as illustrated in (3)-(4).[3] However, the noun *question* can refer to the content or to the act, which undermines the value of this observation concerning the content type of Q-declaratives.

(3)   a   Est-ce qu'il réussira ? Telle est la question.
      (will he succeed ? Such is the question.)
    b   Réussira-t-il ? Telle est la question.
    c   #Il réussira ? Telle est la question.

(4)   a. mais la question fondamentale est : est-ce qu'on peut faire des élections libres aujourd'hui, accessibles à tout le monde ? (TS 08/13/2004)[4]
    (but the fundamental question is, is it possible to organize free elections nowadays, open to everybody)
    b. la question fondamentale est : peut-on faire des élections libres aujourd'hui ?
    c. #la question fondamentale est : on peut faire des élections libres aujourd'hui ?

No conclusion can be drawn either from the fact that (1c) shows no specific marking that could be associated with the interrogative clause type, since there is no homogeneous

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[3]   Gunlogson 2003 makes a similar observation for the English noun *question*.

[4]   TS refers to the daily popular radio program *Le téléphone sonne*. All data from this program come from the annotated corpus EPAC (see below).

interrogative marking, as shown by the difference between (1a) and (1b). *Est-ce que* is a complementizer[5], while (1b) contains a verb hosting a pronominal suffix identical to the subject prefix (Miller and Sag 1997) and can be used in contexts (after some modal adverbs a.o.). Moreover, no conclusion can be drawn from *wh*-in-situ questions (5) (a frequent form used to make *bona fide* queries in French). Admittedly, they are declarative as to their clausal form, but their questioning value is overtly contributed by the *wh*-phrase (Ginzburg & Sag 2000).

(5) a. Tu vas où cet été ? (you are going where this summer)
     b. Il votera pour quel projet, à ton avis ? (he will vote for which project, in your estimation)

3.2 Coordination

The two types of interrogatives (1a,b) can be conjoined with *et* ('and') together (6a,b) or with *wh*-interrogatives (7a,b). On the other hand, it is difficult to conjoin Q-declaratives with any of the interrogative types (6c), (7c) while it is often possible with an assertive declarative (6d). This is expected if Q-declaratives are of a different semantic type given the general constraint on symmetrical coordination (with *et*), which requires that the conjuncts be of the same semantic (ontological) type. This is all the more striking that there are limited cases of coordination of unlikes in clausal types on the basis of a similarity in role (Hobaek-Haff 1987). Were Q-declaratives questions or querying, they should be amenable to coordination with other questions or querying utterances.

(6) a**.** **Est-ce que** tu es prêt et **est-ce qu'**on peut encore arriver à l'heure ?
        ('are you ready and can we still make it on time?)
     b. **Est-ce que** tu es prêt et **peut-on** encore arriver à l'heure ?
     c. # {**Est-ce que** tu es prêt/ Es-tu prêt}**et on peut** encore arriver à l'heure ?
        ('are you ready and you think we can still make it on time)
     d. Tu n'es pas prêt et tu penses qu'on peut encore arriver à l'heure ?
        (you're not ready and you think we can still make it on time)

(7) a. **Pourquoi** reçoit-on cet avis **et doit-on** le rajouter aux revenus imposables ?
        (TS 03/26/2004)
        (why do we receive this notice and must we add it to our taxable income)
     b. **Pourquoi** reçoit-on cet avis **et est-ce** qu'on doit le rajouter aux revenus imposables ?
     c. * **Pourquoi** reçoit-on cet avis **et on doit** le rajouter aux revenus imposables ?
        (why do we receive this notice and we must add it to our taxable income)

3.3 Polarity subjunctive

Some predicates (verbs of communication, propositional attitudes), which select indicative complement clauses, may, in certain non-positive environments, interrogatives among them, take a subjunctive clause. We illustrate the fact with a suffixed main verb (mood alternation is possible, but less frequent, with *est-ce que,* see Huot 1986) (8a). Q-declaratives differ from

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[5] *est-ce que* is originally an inverted verb (='is it (the case) that'); thus, there is a limited variation in tense in formal register (*Serait-ce que vous avez décidé d'accepter la proposition ?* lit. would it be the case that you have decided to accept our proposal). We do not analyze *serait-ce que* as a complementizer, and it may be necessary to admit two analyses for *est-ce que*, at least in formal registers.

interrogatives: they do not license the subjunctive (8b).

(8) a. Et moi, croyez-vous que je craigne$_{SUBJ}$ votre jugement ?
        (do you think that I am afraid of your appraisal)
     b. *Et moi, vous croyez que je craigne$_{SUBJ}$ votre jugement?

Broadly, in a semantico-pragmatic approach, the subjunctive mood is motivated in contexts where the interpretation requires taking into account alternative situations (to the one described in the sentence) (Farkas 1992, Godard 2012). An interrogative or a negated belief verb creates such an environment, hence the subjunctive in (8a). The fact that Q-declaratives do not license the subjunctive in the complement of a belief verb is an indication that its interpretation does not require alternative situations, as does an interrogative.

3.4 Epistemic adverbs

Q-declaratives as well as interrogatives may host epistemic adverbs. However, they belong to different classes. Both interrogatives and Q-declaratives are compatible with propositional adverbs expressing an alethic modality (*incontestablement, indubitablement* all corresponding to 'true without question') (9a), (10a). But only Q-declaratives are compatible with epistemic adverbs expressing the speaker's assessment of the truth of the proposition, either its probability (*peut-être* 'may be', *sans doute* 'no doubt') or his/her degree of confidence (*évidemment* 'evidently', *certainement, sûrement* 'surely'). The question in (9a) is equivalent to 'Is it indubitable that Paul has discovered the virus', in the same way as *Est-ce que Paul va nécessairement trouver une solution ?* means 'Is it obligatorily the case that Paul will find a solution'. As for Q-declaratives, adverbs expressing a speaker's epistemic attitude towards p are better than propositional adverbs: *sûrement* is better than *vraisemblablement* 'probably'.

(9)   a. Est-ce que Paul a indubitablement   découvert le virus ? / Paul a-t-il indubitablement découvert le virus ?
           (has P. indubitably discovered the virus)
       b. #Est-ce que Paul a sûrement envie de venir ? / #Paul a-t-il sûrement envie de venir ?
           (does P. certainly feel like coming)
       c. #Est-ce que Paul a peut-être / apparemment découvert le virus ? / #Paul a-t-il peut-être / apparemment découvert le virus ?
          (has P. perhaps / apparently discovered the virus)

(10)   a. Mais Paul, il a indubitablement découvert le virus ?
          (Paul, he has indubitably discovered the virus)
       b. Et Paul, il a sûrement envie de venir ?
          (and P., he certainly feels like coming)
       c. Et Paul, il a apparemment / peut-être découvert le virus ?
          (and P., he has apparently discovered / he may have discovered the virus)

Q-declaratives are compatible with all sorts of markers expressing positive degrees of certainty, like *je crois*, *j'espère* (11), which are not felicitous in interrogatives. In this respect, Q-declaratives are closer to assertions than to queries.

(11) a. Marie a réussi, **je crois** ?   (M. has succeeded, I think)
     a'. *Est-ce que Marie a réussi, je crois ? (has M. succeeded, I think)
     b. Marie a réussi, **j'espère** ?   (M. has succeeded, I hope)
     b'. * Marie a-t-elle réussi, **j'espère** ? (has M. succeeded, I hope)

3.5 Negative polarity items

Gunlogson (2003) said that NPIs are impossible in Q-declaratives in English, on the basis of the behavior of *any,* and *ever*. If true for French, this would be a motivation to analyze them differently from interrogatives, which do allow for NPI as is well-known. Beyssade & Marandin (2006) observe that NPI such as (positive) *jamais, quiconque, qui que ce soit* do not occur in Q-declaratives (12c, 13c) or declaratives (12d, 13d), as they do in interrogatives (12a,b, 13a,b). [6]

(12) a. Est-ce qu'il y aurait **qui que ce soit** pour nous aider?
     b. Y aurait-il **qui que ce soit** pour nous aider ?
     c. # Il y aurait **qui que ce soit** pour nous aider ?
     d. # Il y aurait **qui que ce soit** pour nous aider.

(13) a. Est-ce que ces jeunes gens avaient **jamais** lu un roman classique ?
       (had these young people ever read a classical novel)
     b. Ces jeunes gens avaient-ils **jamais** lu un roman classique ?
     c. # Ces jeunes gens avaient **jamais** lu un roman classique ?
     d. # Ces jeunes gens avaient **jamais** lu un roman classique.

However, the data are more complicated. A number of NPIs used in non positive contexts are felicitous in Q-declaratives as well as in interrogatives: predicates denoting a minimal quantity (*lever le petit doigt* 'to lift a finger', *avoir le rapport le plus lointain* 'to have the remotest connection') (14a,b) *vs* (14c), or a maximal quantity (*si Adj que ça* 'so Adj as that') (15a,b) *vs* (15c).

(14) a. Est-ce que vous voyez **le rapport le plus lointain** entre les deux hypothèses ?
       (Do you see the remotest connection between the two hypotheses)
     b. Vous voyez **le rapport le plus lointain** entre les deux hypothèses ?
       (You see the remotest connection between the two hypotheses)
     c. #Les deux hypothèses **ont le rapport le plus lointain**
       (The two hypotheses have the remotest connection)

(15) a. Est-ce que l'hypothèse est **si bête que ça** ?
       (is the hypothesis that stupid)
     b. L'hypothèse est **si bête que ça** ?
     c. #L'hypothèse est **si bête que ça**

Thus, the properties of NPIs do not constitute a clear-cut criterion for contrasting interrogatives with Q-declaratives, however tempting it may look at first.[7] The partition among NPIs remains an open question.

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[6]   Sentence (13c) is acceptable if *jamais* is taken to be the negation (without *ne*) rather than the NPI.

[7]   Nor does it correspond to the division proposed for instance in Krifka (1995) between strong and weak NPIs.

To sum up, we do not have semantic arguments supporting the hypothesis that Q-declaratives have the defining feature of the interrogative type: a question denotation. On the other hand, we have some indication that they resemble declaratives.

4. Are Q-declaratives questioning?

We turn to the illocutionary potential of Q-declaratives, which is the primary motivation to consider them as interrogatives: they seem to be in free variation with polar interrogatives in many contexts. For example, a physician called for a cardiac emergency said (16a) when entering the apartment. He could very well have said (16b) or (16c) (Marandin 2005). So, is the behavior of Q-declaratives similar, or closer to that of assertoric declaratives or to that of interrogatives?

(16)   a. Le Samu est prévenu ?   (EMS have been alerted)
       b. Est-ce que le Samu est prévenu ?
       c. Le Samu est-il prévenu ?

4.1 Working assumptions

We briefly present the basic assumptions which we rely on to describe the illocutionary import of Q-declaratives as compared to other declaratives and interrogatives (Ginzburg 2001, 2012, Beyssade & Marandin 2006, Gunlogson 2003, 2008, Farkas & Bruce 2010, Farkas & Roelefsen 2012, Malamud & Stephenson 2011). We assume the following:

(i) Speech acts should be analyzed along two dimensions: the commitment of the speaker and the projected conversational response of the addressee. [8]
(ii) Epistemic speech acts (assertions and queries) are oriented towards the same goal when they are used in on-topic talk, that is, enriching the common ground, or the set of facts shared by the conversation participants for the purposes of conversation (Stalnacker 1978, Zaefferer 2001).
(iii) Assertions and queries aim at enriching the common ground in a different manner. By asserting, the speaker proposes that a proposition be ratified by the addressee and added to the set of shared facts. On the other hand, by querying, the speaker proposes that a question be resolved by the addressee so that the chosen alternative gets added to the set of shared facts (if ratified by the questioner).
(iv) Assertions and queries also differ in the way they commit the speaker. It is commonly accepted that assertions commit the speaker to the asserted content; we take it that queries commit the speaker to the issue raised by the query (Beyssade & Marandin 2006). The difference shows up when addressees react negatively. As Farkas & Bruce (2010) put it, a negative response to an assertion as in (17a) brings about a conversational crisis while it does not do so when it is used to answer a query (17b). In (17a), after Ben's rejection of Ann's proposition, the participants have to come to terms: either one of them revises his/her commitment or they agree to disagree. In some cases, no enrichment of the shared ground is feasible. Nothing of the sort occurs with a negative answer to a question: none of the participants have to revise and the shared ground may be updated with the resolving proposition.

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[8]   The projected conversational response corresponds to the call on addressee in Truckenbrodt 2004 and Beyssade & Marandin 2006.

(17) a. Ann: Sam is home.
          Ben: No, he is not.
      b. Ann: Is Sam home?
          Ben: No, he is not.

(v) Assertions must be ratified by the addressee in order to be successful.[9] Ratification has two facets: the assessment of p and the grounding of p among the facts shared by participants for the purposes of conversation. Assessment and grounding are distinct. Assessment (of the truth of p) is rooted in knowledge or belief, while grounding rests on the dominance relationships between the participants (as felt or played by the participants in a given interaction). Assessment belongs to the private sphere of each participant, while grounding is crucial for assertion as a move towards enriching the shared facts: speaker A proposes p to addressee B for grounding (A has his own basis to assess p), speaker B grounds (or not) p using his/her own basis of assessment.

4.2. Addressee's responses

The analysis of Q-declaratives as questioning moves is based on the observation that they call for a response from addressees and on the claim that responses to Q-declaratives are closer to those expected after queries (conveyed by interrogatives) than assertoric assertions (conveyed by declaratives). However, the data do not lead to such a definitive conclusion.

It is a fact that Q-declaratives are followed by explicit responses: this is the most robust and stable cue to recognize them as opposed to assertoric declaratives. Queries also call for an explicit response, that is, an answer or a reply related to the issue raised by the query; on the other hand, statements do not require an explicit response (although implicit ratification is necessary for the conversational working of assertions). However, requiring an explicit response does not imply that the response should be an answer – i.e. the resolution of a question. In other words, one cannot exclude the hypothesis that Q-declaratives convey a type of assertion requiring an explicit ratification.

Concerning the type of responses to Q-declaratives, the data are more intricate than what is commonly accepted:

– Responses with *oui, non, si* ('yes', 'no') are appropriate to react to interrogatives, Q-declaratives or assertoric declaratives. Correlatively, we are led to assume that they convey either an answer (resolving a question) or a ratification (grounding a proposition). Those adverbs give rise to a gamut of phonetic realizations associated with several contours. We lack detailed empirical studies showing whether those realizations make a systematic difference between queries and statements.

– Although reverse reactions with Q-declaratives are rare (see section 6), reverse reactions to Q-declaratives seem to pattern more like those to queries than to assertions: addressee's reverse uptake is smoother with Q-declaratives than with assertoric declaratives.

– Assertoric declaratives, but not queries or Q-declaratives, can be responded to with such factive adjectives as *génial*, 'great' (18b,c). Assuming that these adjectives require the propositional content to be part of the common ground (Fernandez & Ginzburg 2002), they are felicitous in (18a) with an implicit ratification of S1's assertion. They are not in (18b,c) if the proposition is not yet part of the common ground. Here, Q-declaratives side with interrogatives rather than with assertoric declaratives.[10]

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[9] Accordingly, assertions in general are discourse contingent in Gunlogson's 2008 sense: "a discourse move can be presented as linked to the outcome of a succeeding move, with the update of the first move carried out or accepted only if some contextually salient condition is met by the second" (Gunlogson, ibid.: 128).

[10] Note that factive adjectives are also felicitous when the declarative is interpreted as an offer as in the

(18) a. S1. Il va neiger demain.   (it will snow tomorrow)
   S2. Super / Génial !   (great)
   b. S1. Est-ce qu'il va neiger demain? (will it snow tomorrow ?)
   S2. # Super / # Génial
   c. S1. Il va neiger demain ?
   S2. # Super / # Génial

– Assertoric declaratives can be responded to with adverbs (*absolument* 'absolutely'*, effectivement* 'indeed') (19a) conveying the speaker's agreement with the addressee's axiologic judgment (*être beau* 'to be handsome' in (19)). Those adverbs cannot be used to answer or reply to queries (19b), but they are felicitous with Q-declaratives (19c). In this respect, Q-declaratives resemble assertoric declaratives.

(19)   a. S1.   Il est beau, son nouveau copain.
             (he is handsome, her new boyfriend)
        S2.   Absolument / Effectivement. (absolutely/ right)
     b. S1.   Est-ce qu'il est beau, son nouveau copain?
             (is he handsome, her new boyfriend?)
        S2.   # Absolument / # Effectivement
      c. S1.   Il est beau, son nouveau copain ?
        S2.   Absolument / Effectivement

Clearly, Q-declaratives bear some resemblance to interrogatives. However, there is no decisive argument to analyze the response as an answer and accordingly, Q-declaratives as questioning.

4.3. Felicity conditions

Queries are submitted to the following felicity condition: the resolving answer must not be in the common ground. According to Ginzburg (2012: 114), the constraint is even stronger: it should not be in his category 'facts', "the shared knowledge conversational participants utilize during a conversation".[11] This explains why (20a) is not felicitous. On the other hand, (20b), a Q-declarative, is perfectly natural; in fact, it corresponds to a prototypical use of Q-declaratives (see section 4.4.1). Moreover, while assertions are assumed to behave like interrogatives in this respect (20c), we find that things are different: it is sufficient that the speaker add some sort of mirative marker (20d) to make the assertion felicitous. The same distribution holds with another prototypical use of Q-declaratives, when the content is inferred from what the addressee (or the speaker) has just said (21); in (21d), the marker *donc* is inferential.[12]

(20) [S1's addressee enters the room with his jacket soaking wet]
   S1.   a. # Est-ce que tu es mouillé ?/ # Es-tu mouillé ? (are you wet)
       b. Tu es mouillé ?   (you are wet)

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following dialog:
    S1- Je fais des lasagnes ce soir ? (I cook lasagnas tonight)
    S2- Super !(great).
[11] "The presence in facts of a resolving answer to the question vitiates the possibility of a successful interrogatory use" (ibid).
[12] The notation <n> in (21) and onwards indicates the turn for easier reference.

        c. # Tu es mouillé.   (you are wet)
        d. Tiens,/ Dis donc, tu es mouillé !   (well/Hey, you are wet)

(21)   [Paul, S1 and S2 are friends; S1 and S2 know that Paul was in the hospital]
        <1> S1. Paul vient d'arriver au bureau.   (Paul has just arrived at work)
        <2> S2. a. (Donc) il est sorti de l'hôpital ? (so, he is out of the hospital)

                b. #Est-ce qu'il est sorti de l'hôpital ? / #Est-il sorti de l'hôpital ?
                                  (is he out of the hospital)
                c. #Il est sorti de l'hôpital.   (he is out of the hospital)
                d. Il est donc sorti de l'hôpital.   (he is out of the hospital, then)

In general, a declarative whose content is given is felicitous when used to reassert its content or combined with an explicit account of how speaker got committed to the content; on the other hand, it is almost impossible to ask again a question whose resolution is given in the current context. In this respect, Q-declaratives are closer to assertions than to queries.

4.4 Q-declaratives in context

We now turn to Q-declaratives in a broader context, presenting two sets of contexts that afford their use: in the former, the content is given, in the latter it is discourse-new. We focus here on how Q-declaratives behave in comparison with interrogatives, declaratives and questioning *n'est-ce pas*.

4.4.1. Context 1: the content (p) is given

The content p (or the basis for asserting p) is given when it has been mentioned in the previous discourse or turn(s), or has just been grounded as the result of the current interaction. In addition, we assume that the situation where the conversation takes place provides participants with given content. In such contexts, polar interrogatives would be inappropriate, as well as declaratives associated with the questioning tag *n'est-ce pas*. On the contrary, assertoric declaratives with the same content and roughly the same conversational import would be appropriate providing that the redundant character of p is salvaged by a mirative, an inference or an evaluative marker (20d). We illustrate each case in turn.

(i) The content of the Q-declarative has just been mentioned. This corresponds to various forms of reprise. For example, in (22), at turn 3, S2 reprises S1's turn literally. In (23), at turn 2, the speaker reprises part of addressee's long turn; interestingly, the reprise concerns the speaker himself. In both cases, the use of *n'est-ce pas* would be utterly weird and that of an interrogative out of place

(22) [S1 and S2 are two young men: they are making small talk about their experience as a
    recent father or father to be (corpus CID)]
    <1> S1. Tu avais assisté à l'accouchement, toi, de …
                         (you were present, you, for the delivery of)
    <2> S2. Nan. J'ai pas voulu   (nah. I did not want to)
    <3> S1. T'as pas voulu ?   (you did not want to)
    <4> S2. Nan nan   (nah nah)
      [silence]
    <5> S1. T'avais eu ?… C'était quoi ? T'avais ? […]

(you had … it was what … you had)

(23) [In a radio show, the expert answers questions about obesity. The host is the moderator
      of the show (TS 08/05/2004)]
    <1> Host. je voudrais revenir sur une phrase que j'ai pu lire dans la presse, euh une que
        vous avez prononcée professeur Patrick Tounian : vous avez dit euh à propos de cette
        progression de l'obésité : "nous assistons" vous dites "à une véritable épidémie d'une
        maladie que l'on peut qualifier de mortelle". qu'est-ce que vous avez voulu dire par là ?
        (I want to go back to a sentence that I has found in an newspaper, euh, something you
        have said, Pr T. you said regarding this progression of obesity "we are witnessing, you
        said, a true epidemy of a disease which we can say is deadly")
    <2> Expert. c'est moi qui l'ai écrit ?   (I wrote that)
    <3> Host. oui oui oui oui j'ai lu ça .   (yes, yes, yes, yes, I read it)

(ii) The basis for p has just been grounded, see for example (21) at turn 2 above. In (24), at
turn 2, the host draws a consequence from the lengthy turn of the expert. The tag *n'est-ce pas*
would be appropriate in (24), while it would sound weird in (21).

(24) [The expert answers questions about the rise of gas prices. The host moderates the show
      (TS 08/06/2004)]
    <1> Expert. dans le gazole (il) y a deux tiers deux tiers de taxes, de taxe intérieure et de
    TVA. en fait, sans les taxes, le prix du gazole et le prix de l'essence sont à peu près
    identiques. c'est donc les taxes qui font le différence () qui font la différence, et dans
    des niveaux dans des niveaux très importants. (in oil, there are 2/3 of taxes, domestic tax
      and VAT. in fact, without taxes, the price of oil and the price of gas are roughly
identical;   thus it is taxes which make the difference, and so in amounts in very big amounts)
    <2> Host. donc le gouvernement pourrait très bien euh réduire les hausses à la pompe, s'il
    le voulait ? (so the government could very well euh reduce the increase in price at the
    petrol station, if they wanted to)
    <3> Expert. ah, le gouvernement pourrait effectivement très bien réduire les hausses à la
    pompe (ah, yes, the government could very well reduce the increase at the petrol station)

Q-declaratives are also felicitous when the basis for p has been elaborated by both participants
during several turns: this corresponds to checking moves in the closing section of activities in
conversations. In (25), at turn 4, tutor closes the selection of the best rockets before choosing
the best one; it has taken about 20 turns.

(25) [Mia (a teenager in a day camp) has ranked rockets under the supervision of a tutor.
      Yves' one is the last to be ranked (Corpus Microfusées)]
    <1> Tutor. Et Yves, tu as mis quoi ? (And, Yves'[rocket] how did you grade it?)
    <2> Mia. Yves ? Haut aussi mais pas très loin. (high too, but not very far)
    <3> Mia. Voilà.   (That's it)
    <4> Tutor. D'accord. Donc à ton avis, c'est celles-ci qui ont le mieux volé ? (OK, then,
according to you, those are the ones that flew best ?)
    <5> Mia. Oui. (yes)
    <6> Tutor. D'accord. Et celle qui a le mieux volé ? (OK, and the one which flew best ?)

(iii) The basis for p is given in the situation of utterance: this is illustrated in (21) above.

4.4.2. Context 2: the content (p) is discourse new

Discourse-new content is not inferred from the situation or the previous conversation. Nevertheless, there is some connection between Q-declaratives and the ongoing conversation. In such contexts, assertoric declaratives with the same content are completely inappropriate, while interrogatives are most of the time felicitous, as well as declaratives with questioning tag *n'est-ce pas* for a subset of contexts. However, the use of an interrogative or *n'est-ce pas* would often change the type of interaction.

(i) The speaker has some private basis to believe p. In fact, p corresponds to speaker-old information that is relevant for the ongoing conversation or activity. The proposition may refer to an event primarily known to the addressee or to an objective state of affairs (B-events or O-events in Labov and Fanshel 1977). In (26), at turn 3, an interrogative would be appropriate, but not the questioning *n'est-ce pas*. On the contrary, in (27), at turn 3, *n'est-ce pas* would be appropriate and the interrogative strange.

(26) [Mother and son are on the phone. Tony, a relative, has been taken to the hospital recently. Example noted by one of the authors]
    <1> M. A propos, t'as téléphoné à Tony ?   (by the way, did you call T.)
    <2> S . Non, j'ai pas eu le temps   (no, I did not have time)
    <3> M. Tu dis toujours ça, t'avais dit que tu le ferais. (you always say that, you said you
               would do it)

(27) [S1 calls information at the Bourg railway station (Constructed example on the basis of recordings of interactions at commercial counters)]
    <1> S1. Bonjour, y a-t-il un train au départ de Bourg pour Thonon le dimanche matin ?
         (Hello, is there a train from Bourg to Thonon on Sunday mornings)
    <2> S2. Un moment. [..] Oui, il y en a deux; le premier part à 8h30 et le second à 11h.
         (One moment. Yes, there are two; the first one departs at 8h30, and the second at
         11h)
    <3> S1. Le billet coûte vingt euros ?   (the ticket costs about 20 €)

(ii) The speaker may have a private belief, but essentially he makes a guess. In both (28) and (29), the use of an interrogative or of *n'est-ce pas* would be appropriate, but would rely on a different conversational setting. In (28) at turn 1, the use of *n'est-ce pas* would mean that speaker has some non publicized reason to believe p, which would ruin the tentative character brought by the use of a Q-declarative. In (28), using an interrogative would narrow down the center of the discussion on the material and imply a greater asymmetry between the participants in resolving the issue.[13] In (29) at turn 2, the Q-declarative is only interpretable as a possible answer suggested by the questioner, while an interrogative would introduce another question whose answer could influence the resolution of the question *pourquoi*.

(28) [S1 and S2 are friends; they are looking at a Roman vase at le Louvre (Example noted
  , by one of the authors)]
    <1> S1. C'est du bronze ?   (it is bronze)
    <2> S2. Possible .   (possibly)

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[13]   Use of quasi-tags like *tu penses, tu crois* (you think/ believe) as in *c'est du bronze, tu crois ?* are typical of that type of interaction.

(29) [Example (59), Mosegaard-Hansen's corpus]
<1> S1… j'étais allongée dans mon lit et je me suis endormie
    (I was lying in my bed and I fell asleep)
<2> S2. Pourquoi? T'as pris un calmant?   (how come, you took a tranquilizer ?)

4.4.3. Summary

The distribution of Q-declaratives with respect to the informational status of content is summarized in table 2, and compared to the possibility of polar interrogatives, declaratives with a questioning tag *n'est-ce pas*, and assertoric declaratives. [14]

Status of content of a Q-declarative		Examples	Polar interrogative	Questioning *n'est-ce pas*	Assertoric Declaratives
Given	Reprise	22	–	–	+
		23	–	–	+
	Inferred from the conversation	21	–	–	+
		24	–	+	+
		25	–	–	+
	In the situation	20	–	–	+
Discourse-new	Speaker-old	26	+	(+)	–
		27	–	+	–
	Speaker-new	28	(+)	(+)	–
		29	(+)	(+)	–

Table 2. Distribution of Q-declaratives with respect to informational status of p

Three generalizations emerge from table 2.
1. The family of contexts affording Q-declaratives cuts across those affording interrogatives and assertoric declaratives. Interestingly, assertoric declaratives with given content are felicitous insofar they bring information about the speaker's assessment of p (for example, it has just occurred to the speaker that p) (20)-(21).
2. The family of contexts affording Q-declaratives does not coincide with those affording *n'est-ce pas*. Assuming that *n'est-ce pas* signals that speakers have an independent basis for assessing p, we may infer that Q-declaratives are felicitous whether speakers have or fail to have an independent basis for assessing p. This shows up most clearly when the content is discourse-new: p may be a speaker's presupposition or just a conjecture made on the fly. This is in keeping with the observation (see section 3.4 above) that Q-declaratives are compatible with expressions of the speaker's state towards assessing p.
3. The family of contexts where the addressee is committed to p or to the basis for assessing p (given content) is a subset of those affording Q-declaratives (20)-(25). The family of contexts where speakers attribute p to addressees is also a subset (e. g. when p is a speaker's presupposition). Thus, the use of Q-declaratives does not require the addressee's previous commitment to p or attribution of p to addressee.[15]
Generalization 1 leads us to reconsider the observation illustrated in (16) that there are contexts where the three forms in (1) are in free variation. It is not possible to simply claim

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[14]   The notation '–' means impossible, and '(+)' means possible, but with a different import.

[15]   The quasi tag *c'est ça ?* (that's it) signals attribution of p to the addressee. As it has other felicity conditions that are not clear to us, we do not include it here. But, clearly, contexts affording *c'est ça?* cut across those affording Q-declaratives.

that Q-declaratives are a sort of interrogative. Generalization 2 shows that Q-declaratives have felicity conditions and conversational import different from declaratives with tagged *n'est-ce pas?* They differ regarding the assessment of p: *n'est-ce pas* presents the speaker as a potential source of assessment, while Q-declaratives leave the source of assessment underspecified. Generalization 2 is neutral with respect to the claim made for English in Gunlogson 2008 that Q-declaratives imply that the addressee is a better source of commitment than the speaker. Generalization 3 leads one to reject the claim made for English Q-declaratives (Gunlogson 2003, Malamud & Stephenson 2011) that addressee's commitment to p (actual or attributed) is a felicity condition for Q-declaratives.

We conclude that there are no compelling arguments to analyze Q-declaratives as queries or questioning. They convey a speech act of their own. We show in the next section that it is a variety of assertion.

5. Q-declaratives are *bona fide* declaratives

We are now in a position to propose our analysis of Q-declaratives as declaratives. First, their content is a proposition. Second, their illocutionary potential as root clauses is constrained: the speaker is committed to p and they steer the conversation to a stage where the addressee has to ratify (or reject) p. This goes a long way towards explaining their behavior in actual conversations. However, it does not explain why they are considered 'questioning'. We derive this effect from the type of commitment associated with Q-declaratives. Adopting the notion of contingent commitment proposed by Gunlogson 2008, we distinguish between two types of commitment. When a speaker uses a declarative with an independent commitment, the move is an assertoric declarative that carries a statement; when a speaker uses a declarative with a commitment contingent on the addressee's ratification, the move is a Q-declarative that carries a proposal.

5.1. Assertion behavior

Q-declaratives are root declaratives. As such, they abide by the usual constraints on their use:
– the speaker is committed to p, which means that speaker is liable for putting p under discussion;
– the conversation is steered to a state where the addressee has to ratify or reject p. By ratifying p, the addressee grounds p and commits himself to p.

Speaker's commitment to p is responsible for the bias of declaratives in favor of p. By using a declarative, the speaker excludes non-p or alternatives to p from discussion. Addressees may revive them, but this requires rejection of p as a first step. This explains why Q-declaratives are optimal in contexts where p is the only plausible option for discussion. The same contexts make the use of interrogatives out of place. Take (20): it is so obviously the case that it rains outside that it would be vacuous to even consider other weather conditions. Accordingly, the speaker verbalizes the weather condition for reasons other than arriving at the truth about p. Hence the use of Q-declaratives as a strategy to start an interaction. Similarly in (25), the tutor, taking into account the fact that Mia had trouble choosing the best rockets, uses a Q-declarative to check whether they both agree on the selection, without reopening the discussion, which would leave room to Mia's procrastination. The same bias effect holds even in contexts where alternatives to p have not been closed off, for example in (26-29). Such contexts make interrogatives possible, and correlatively also queries, but in those contexts, by using a Q-declarative instead of an interrogative, speakers narrow down the options left to addressees to just one.

Note that the dialogical commitment to p is different from the epistemic attitude towards p.

In fact, the use of a declarative is compatible with the whole gamut of epistemic attitudes, from utter certainty to mere plausibility. But epistemic certainty does not correspond to a statement, or plausibility to a proposal. Consider (21). The speaker, using robust world knowledge, can be certain that Paul is not in the hospital any longer, but he is not in a position to ground the corresponding statement. On the other hand, the addressee is in such a position since he is the one who might know more about Paul's situation. By using a Q-declarative, the speaker yields to the addressee, leaving it to him to take the conversational responsibility of grounding p, and elaborating on it.

5.2. The questioning flavor

The questioning flavor which is associated with Q-declaratives lies in the nature of the speaker's commitment. Following Gunlogson 2008, the speaker may commit him/herself to p either unconditionally or tentatively pending the addressee's ratification of p.[16] This is what makes an assertion either a statement or a proposal. The contingency of the speaker's commitment on the addressee's ratification is central to the working of the pair 'Proposal / Ratification'. In particular, it explains one of the main properties of Q-declaratives: proposals, unlike statements, call for an explicit response by addressees. The role of the addressee as the key agent in making p a commitment shared by both participants is the common feature between queries and proposals. In both cases, addressees play the key role in making individual commitments a joint commitment. But joint commitment is achieved differently. With an interrogative, it takes three turns (query + commitment to p by answerer + ratification of p by questioner), while it takes two with a Q-declarative (contingent commitment to p by speaker + ratification of p by addressee).

The fact that the commitment is contingent on the addressee's ratification is not specifically marked. One can speculate that some aspect of prosody provides the participants with cues for recognizing it, but this is still poorly understood for French.[17] Nevertheless, it should be inferable given the content of the clause, the speaker's relation to the addressee and the context of utterance: the speaker lets the addressee ground p. It has been proposed (Mosegaard-Hansen 2001, Gunlogson 2008) that this is due to an epistemic asymmetry between the participants, the addressee being in a better position to ground p because s/he has more knowledge about p. We are not in a position to discuss Gunlogson's judgments about English. However, it is clear that, at least with some of her interrogative examples, Q-declaratives would be more appropriate in similar settings in French. Moreover, as already observed, Q-declaratives are felicitous in contexts where both participants are (potentially) equal in knowledge (25), (27), or ignorance (28). Take (27). At turn 3, both speaker and addressee may use the same source (say the website of the railway company), nevertheless the attendant is the only one that can publicize the price of the ticket. It has been noted that the content of Q-declaratives frequently refers to private states of the addressee (B-events). This may well be true, but it does not indicate that addressees are a better source of knowledge. Assessment of private matters involves intricate (and changing) politeness or face considerations that prevent making a public issue of private matters via the use of interrogatives. Thus, epistemic asymmetry is not the primary factor which affords the use and recognition of Q-declaratives in French.[18] The decisive factor for the use of Q-declaratives

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[16]   "Contingent commitment criterion: an utterance of a declarative with content ϕ is questioning to the extent that the speaker's commitment is understood as contingent on the addressee's ratification of ϕ." (Gunlogson, 2008 : 129).

[17]   Gunlogson 2008 claims that rising intonation is such a cue in English.

[18]   While it is the most relevant factor for the use of interrogatives

pertains to the grounding of p, rather than its assessment.

By using a Q-declarative, speakers step down in favor of their addressee for grounding a proposition. They achieve such a move by committing themselves conditionally, either because they cannot assess p, but are nonetheless ready to commit themselves to p (28), or because they can assess p but are not entitled to ground p in the situation or the conversation (21), or because they can assess p but want the addressee to engage in conversation about p or in relation with p (21). As we will see in the next section, such a working is put to use in the monitoring of conversation.

5.3. Types of assertions

The present analysis is true to form; it modifies one aspect only of the current theories of speech acts. It maintains that declaratives commit the speaker to p, but, following Gunlogson 2008, it proposes that commitment has two subtypes: it is either independent of the addressee's ratification of p or contingent on it. Such a divide gives rise to two speech acts that speakers perform by using a declarative: statements or proposals. In schema 1, we tentatively propose a classification of subtypes of proposals, which follows from the contextual status of the content (given *vs* discourse-new; speaker's old *vs* speaker's new).[19]
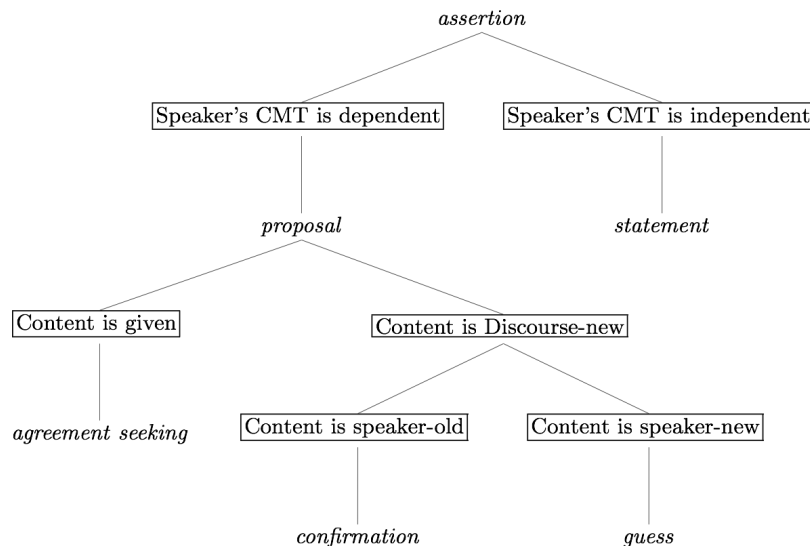
Schema 1. Types of assertion

6. Corpus-based support

We now adduce results from a corpus study to substantiate our proposal (Abeillé, Crabbé, Godard & Marandin, 2012). First, we present some preliminary results of a pilot quantitative study aiming at describing the main patterns of use of Q-declaratives compared to polar interrogatives. Secondly, we focus on the conversational role of Q-declaratives compared to interrogatives in a specific conversational setting.

6.1. General description
We support the analysis by a study of the EPAC corpus (Bazillon *et al*. 2011), which corresponds to a 20h's recording of a popular radio program *Le téléphone sonne* (France

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[19] CMT stands for commitment in schema 1.

inter) in 2005.[20] It has been annotated for interrogatives and Q-declaratives. We randomly extracted 227 annotated root clauses out of about half of the corpus (10 hours) and studied them for several parameters. The first main result is that the distribution of the three constructions in (1) is almost even in the corpus (see table 3). More importantly, the distribution is correlated to the role played by the speaker: the host produces around half of the 'questioning' moves (i.e. interrogatives + Q-declaratives) and among them, more than half are Q-declaratives.

speaker	Est-ce-que- inter	Suff-verb-inter	Q-declaratives	Total
host	61	51	144	256 (47%)
callers	79	92	5	176 (32%)
experts	74	11	29	114 (21%)
total	214 (39%)	154 (28%)	178 (31%)	546

Table 3. Interrogatives and Q-declaratives by speakers (Bazillon et al.)

Such a result does not support the claim that Q-declaratives belong to an informal register (see section 2.2). Moreover, it strongly suggests that the use of Q-declaratives is correlated to specific roles in conversation. We may conjecture that the host uses Q-declaratives to perform the actions required by his moderating the interaction between the different conversation participants. Such a suggestion is supported when one observes that 45% of his Q-declaratives pertain to the monitoring of the conversation and that he uses most of the remaining 55% to manage the elaboration of topics by callers and experts.

    Two other quantitative results are clear (Table 4):
– Q-declaratives are almost always followed by a response (only 15% are left without a response). Paradoxically, lack of response is much more common with interrogatives (46% of polar *est-ce que* and 23% of inv-cl interrogatives are not followed by answers), which is explainable by the fact that this activity favors the use of self-addressed interrogatives as topic management devices (see below).
– Q-declaratives are most often followed by ratification (75% of them whatever the polarity of the declarative).[21]

	Same polarity answer	Reverse polarity answer	No direct answer	Total
Est-ce que Int	21 (23,8%)	26 (29,5%)	34 (38,6%)	88
Suff-verb Int	25 (39%)	24 (37,5%)	15 (23,4%)	64
Q-declaratives	56 (74,6%)	8 (19,6%)	11 (14,6%)	75

Table 4. Answers to interrogatives and Q-declaratives (total 227)

6.2. Conversation monitoring

Making conversation requires the participants to coordinate with each other at all levels of organization. As Clark (1994) stresses, cooperation should be optimal at all levels: from

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[20]   It is a daily radio program. Callers ask questions over the internet or the phone about an issue of general concern (tax systems, war in Irak, etc.), the host reads the questions or gives the floor to the callers, then he asks experts to elaborate on the topic. Interrogatives and Q-declaratives have been identified and annotated by (Bazillon et al 2011): 546 root clauses have been identified and classified as *est-ce que*-Int, Suff-inter and Q-declaratives (alternative and rhetorical questions have been excluded). The annotators included Q-declaratives among interrogatives.
[21]   Positive *est-ce-que* questions receive as many positive as negative answers and positive inverted questions only receive 36% positive answers.

attention of the participants towards the conversation, to understanding the turns, grounding the contents and performing the activities-in-conversation. In particular, the participants anticipate problems of coordination, they try to prevent them and when they occur, they resort to strategies to repair them in order to restore the coordination. Preventing problems of cooperation is one of the main functions Q-declaratives are put to use to in everyday interactions.[22] They are used to check the attention of the addressee at the lowest level (30) as well as the intended meaning or intention of addressee at the highest one (31).

(30) S1. Pierre,
[Pierre is looking blank]
S1. Pierre, tu m'écoutes ? (Pierre, are you are listening to me?)

(31) S1. Il fait froid ici !   (It's cold in here)
S2. Tu veux que je ferme la fenêtre ? (You want me to shut the window?)

Indeed, they are particularly well suited for such a use inasmuch (a) the addressee is the only one to be entitled to ground a proposition describing his state towards the ongoing conversation, (b) Q-declaratives are not inquisitive (they do not make an issue out of a problem that has not arisen yet), and (c) participants accept the consequences of their ratification. Indeed, with the monitoring function, ratification amounts to showing positive orientation towards the ongoing conversation and activity. [23]

In the EPAC corpus, the host uses Q-declaratives to monitor the conversation: to introduce the participants in the program (32), to check their attention and readiness for floor taking (33), to give the floor by proposing uptake by a participant (mainly the experts) (34), to clarify a caller's question (in order to prevent misunderstandings), etc.[24]

(32) a. Host to caller : vous êtes je crois à Issy-les Moulineaux Fatiha ? Bonsoir ! (TS 03/25/2004) (you are I think in Issy-les M. Fatiha ? Good evening)
Caller :   oui bonsoir (yes Good evening)
b. Host to caller : Xavier dans l'Isère en ligne. Vous êtes médecin aussi je crois ? (TS 03/25/2004) (Xavier in Isère on the phone. You are also a doctor I think)
Bonsoir, Xavier ! (Good evening, Xavier)
Caller :   euh bonsoir messieurs (euh good evening sir)

(33) a. Host to expert [on the phone from New-York]: vous avez entendu la question de Xavier ? vous l'avez compris ? (TS 08/13/2004)
(you heard Xavier's question? you understood it)
b. Host to caller [on the phone]: vous vouliez poser une autre question ?
(TS 04/02/2004) (you wanted to ask another question)
c. Host to expert [in the studio]: vous vouliez ajouter également quelque chose ? (TS 05/02/2004) (you wanted to add something else)

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[22] Mosegaard-Hansen noted such a use under the label of next-turn repair initiator.

[23] Declarative reprises are another paradigmatic example of this role: foreseeing that s/he is not ready to ratify the addressee's information, the speaker repeats the addressee's turn, which gives the latter the opportunity either to re-assert its content, or to elaborate on it in order to prevent speaker's potential rejection.

[24] Correlatively, they fulfill a role specific for such a setting: they describe what's going on to the audience that is listening to the radio. Media analysts independently have shown that media agents use the same strategies to moderate talk-shows, interviews, etc as those used in everyday conversations (a. o. Léon 1999). That makes corpora of media interactions relevant resources for linguistic analysis.

(34)   a. Host to expert [in the studio]: vous confirmez, monsieur Doudrich ?
                (TS 09/20/2004) (You confirm, Mr Doudrich)
        b. Host to expert : Élisabeth Dupoirier, vous êtes euh (), vous partagez cette analyse?
                (TS 03/19/2004) (E.D., you are euh, you share this analysis)

The host also, but much less often, uses interrogatives with the same conversational roles. Interrogatives are indeed possible since addressees are the relevant agents to solve the problems pertaining to their attitudes towards the ongoing conversation.

(35)   a. Host to caller: Frédéric ne nous entend pas. Frédéric, est-ce que vous m'entendez
                bien là, Frédéric ? Frédéric ? non, visiblement il ne nous entend pas
                (TS 08/25/2004) (F. does not hear us. F. do you hear me F. ? F.?
                no, clearly, he does not hear us)
        b. Host to caller: êtes-vous toujours là, madame ? non, elle n'est plus là
                (TS 03/26/2004) (are you still there, madame ? no, she is no
                longer connected)
        c. Host to expert: est-ce qu'on peut en dire un mot ? […] monsieur Dubois ?
                [no answer] (TS 09/20/2004) (can we say a few words about it,
                Mr D.)

Crucially, there is a contextual difference between Q-declaratives and interrogatives: the host uses Q-declaratives when the conversation and the show unfolds smoothly, while he uses interrogatives (both forms of polar interrogatives are used) after trouble has occurred in order to characterize it and make it explicit to the participants and to the audience. This difference follows directly from the fact that a declarative steers the conversational flow to the ratification of one alternative (corresponding to what is expected from the participants), while the use of an interrogative puts on the table several options (corresponding to what is expected and what is impeding the normal course of the show). In other words, the appropriateness of Q-declaratives as a monitoring device preventing troubles crucially hinges on their being declaratives.

6.3. Topic promotion

The other typical use of Q-declaratives in everyday interactions is as a topic promotion device when the speaker is the topic initiator and addressee the main elaborator. Such topic promotion requires a fine-tuned cooperation: it involves selecting and highlighting a topic which the addressee is in a position to elaborate on, showing one's interest for it and checking that the addressee is also positively oriented towards elaborating on it (Button & Casey 1984). Q-declaratives are used for the two first steps. Take (20) and (21) above: the Q-declaratives initiate on-topic talk, that is, chatting about the weather in (20) and about Paul's condition in (21). Declarative reprises may also be used with such a role. The speaker repeats the addressee's move, which results in highlighting its content or part of it. By handing it back to the addressee for confirmation, the speaker gives him/her the opportunity of showing his/her positive orientation towards its elaboration. The dialogue (22) above is an interesting example of such a strategy that misfires. At turn 3, S1 reprises S2's turn; at turn 4, S2 responds to p with an explicit ratification (same polarity *nan nan*), but shows no desire to elaborate on it. Thus, the conversation comes to a stop, which is marked by a long silence and a crisis: S1 is obliged to reinitiate the topic with explicit topic eliciting devices *c'était quoi? T'avais?*
    The host in EPAC consistently uses Q-declaratives in such strategies. He uses reprising with the same function: reprise in (36) below at turn 2 has the same role as that in (22), at turn

3. Similarly, he draws inferences from addressee's turn to elicit or center on-topic talk: compare (21) at turn (2a) with (24) at turn 2.

(36)   <1> Expert: alors ce numéro donc, cancer info service, au 818 118 121, **est un numéro qui a ouvert lundi** et qui est un numéro d'information pour le public sur le cancer […] donc toute l'information et tous les services de proximité dont peuvent avoir besoin les gens sur les questions du cancer
(so, this phone number, then, cancer info service, 818 118 121, is a number which started on Monday […] thus all the information and services that people may need abot cancer)
        <2> Host : **il est d'ores et déjà opérationnel ce numéro** ?
(it's already operational, this number)
        <3> Expert : oui il est ouvert depuis lundi   (TS 03/25/2004)
(yes, it's been in operation since Monday)

As is well known, interrogatives also may be used by the participants to define and promote discourse topics. Once again, the conversational settings for the use of Q-declaratives and that of interrogatives are different. Here, we list a sample of settings where Q-declaratives are strongly dis-preferred and interrogatives optimal. [25]

– Q-declaratives are appropriate when the speaker is primarily interested in the ratification of p, while interrogatives are used when the question under discussion crucially hinges on the choice between p and its alternatives. While Q-declaratives project a course of discourse where on-topic elaboration is about p, interrogatives project one that is more specifically centered on the whereabouts of the choice itself (37).

(37)   <1> Caller: je voudrais savoir : je vis en concubinage et j'ai un enfant ; c'est moi qui vais le prendre sur ma declaration. je voudrais savoir si mon conjoint peut me verser une pension alimentaire ? **est-ce que** c'est légal ? (TS 03/26/2004)
(I would like to know. I have a living in companion, and I have a child. I am putting the child on my tax declaration. I want to know whether my companion can give me a maintenance allowance. Is it legal)
        <2> Host: **est-ce** légal euh g() des concubins , un enfant, Frédéric Iannucci ?
(is it legal, euh, cohabiting companions, a child, FI)
        <3> Expert: euh s() la (en)fin la la réponse dépend un peu de la question de savoir si euh (en)fin la la personne que vous avez en () à charge […]
(euh, then, the answer somewhat depends on the question whether euh, then the person who is in your charge […])

– Interrogatives are preferred when the speaker initiates but does not elaborate on the topic and is not in a position to commit him/herself to one of the alternatives. This is typically the caller's strategy in (38). This is also the host's strategy when he is the mouthpiece of the callers and does not want to commit himself to the content of the question (39).

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[25]   From a broader perspective, conversational analysts distinguish two main strategies for topic promotion and management (see Button & Casey 1985). Either the participants select topics and sub-topics segregated from one another ('boundaried topic flow'), or they concatenate them, presented as if they evolved from one another ('stepwise topic flow'). Q-declaratives are the primary vectors of the second strategy, while *est-ce que* interrogatives are most often used for the first one.

(38)   Caller: j'aimerais connaître le point de vue de vos intervenants sur le plan du ministre
            de la Santé présenté il y a quelques jours […] pour euh mieux diagnostiquer et
            prendre en charge la maladie. **va-t-on** effectivement enfin dégager des moyens
            suffisants pour faire face à ce fléau ? (TS 09/20/2004)
            (I would like to know the position of your experts about the plan that the the
            Health minister presented a few days ago […] in order to ensure a better
            diagnosis and treatment of the illness. Is it really the case that sufficient means
            will be released to counter this plague)

(39)   <1> Host: **Est-ce que** ce discours radical, donc c'est la question qui revient sans cesse
            sur France Inter point com, n'est pas là pour finalement euh donner un p()
            p() pour donner un sens euh existentiel à un mouvement qui serait en train
            de décliner ? (TS 08/23/2004) (is this radical talk, this is the question that
            comes again and again on FI dot com, not intended to finally euh give a, to
            give meaning to a movement which would tend to be on the decline)
         <2> Expert: non, je ne le crois pas du tout (no, I don't think that at all)

– Interrogatives are the only option when the speaker is the initiator and the primary
elaborator of topic. This usage (often dubbed self-addressed question) is the primary strategy
of experts. Q-declaratives are just impossible with such a use (40).

(40)   Expert : je constate qu'il n'y a pas le minimum requis pour faire des élections li()
            libres et dignes de ce nom-là. **Faut-il** les préparer sous supervision des Nations
            Unies ? oui. **Est-ce qu'il** y a aujourd'hui un danger que les islamistes i(ls)
            prennent le pouvoir par les élections ? Euh oui c'est possible. Mais la question
            fondamentale est : **est-ce qu'on** peut faire des élections libres aujourd'hui,
            accessibles à tout le monde ? j'en doute.
            (I observe that the minimal conditions for organizing elections free and worthy
            of the name is not there. Should they be prepared under the supervision of
            United Nations, yes. Is there today a danger that Islamists come into power
            following elections? Well, yes, this is possible. But the fundamental question
            is: is it possible to organize free elections today, open to everybody? That, I
            doubt.)

7. Conclusion

We have shown that there is no strong argument to analyze French Q-declaratives as
interrogatives or as having an impact resembling that of interrogatives. In fact, the analysis in
terms of interrogative, question or query was plausible as long as the interactive nature and
discourse contingency of assertion was not fully recognized and the adjacency pair
Question/Answer (inherited from conversational analysis) was the only format available to
capture the compelling nature of all speech acts or dialogical moves. Recognizing that
assertions are discourse contingent and that they require a response of their own, even if it is
not necessarily publicized and different from that of questions paved the way for our analysis.
Conversely, analyzing Q-declaratives as *bona fide* declaratives led us to a simple account of
their import and use.
    Our analysis is in the same vein as previous 'true to form' analyses (Gunlogson 2003,
2008, Beyssade & Marandin 2006). Indeed, it brings support to their claim that clause types
deterministically constrain the speech acts they allow when used by speakers in root clauses.

It constrains the call-on-addressee: the declarative type requires the addressee to ratify (reject) the proposition which the asserter has selected and for which s/he projects the status of joint commitment. It commits the speaker to the propositional content. However, the speaker's commitment may either be independent or dependent on the addressee's ratification. This gives rise to two subtypes of assertion: statements (the speaker is committed on his/her own ground) and proposals (the speaker is committed pending addressee's ratification). Q-declaratives are associated with proposals. There are different situations in which the speaker chooses a proposal rather than a statement. In particular, the addressee is more entitled than the speaker to ground the proposition, or the speaker gives way to the addressee for some interactive or conversational purpose.

Comparison of French Q-declaratives with their equivalent in English lies outside the scope of this paper. At first sight, French Q-declaratives have a broader spectrum of usage, but we lack an empirical study. Interestingly, the difference does not seem to lie in the semantics of declaratives or their use as assertion carriers, but rather in the conditions under which speakers can make a contingent commitment. The classification of contexts based on the discourse status of their content (table 2) could be a good starting point for a systematic comparison.

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