

QUD trees: Between discourse structure and topicality

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In this talk I will review the QUD tree annotation framework (Riester, Brunetti and De Kuthy 2018), a method for the joint analysis of information structure and discourse structure of monological and conversational discourse, which I will demonstrate on sections of speeches by Barrack Obama. The method is based on the reconstruction of text-inherent Questions under Discussion. QUDs are either givenness-oriented (backward-looking), in which case they give rise to subordinating structures, or contrast-oriented (forward-looking), reflecting discourse-structural coordination. In the second half of the talk, I will touch upon two recent developments in this framework: (i) the role of adjuncts and adjunct clauses as independent discourse segments, and (ii) a first shot at a new interpretation of the topic terminology in the light of existing tree structures. Some of the results are visualised using the Cytoscape tool.

Reference:

- Arndt Riester, Lisa Brunetti and Kordula De Kuthy. 2018. Annotation guidelines for Questions under Discussion and information structure. In Evangelia Adamou, Katharina Haude and Martine Vanhove (eds.) *Information Structure in Lesser-Described Languages: Studies in Syntax and Prosody*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, pp. 403–443.