# QUD trees, coherence and corpus data

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According to a common assumption (von Stutterheim & Klein 1987, van Kuppevelt 1995, Büring 2003, Roberts 2012, Beaver & Velleman 2016 and others), Questions under Discussion (QUDs) are the key concept underlying the structural organisation of discourse. Often, however, researchers have found it very difficult to determine implicit QUDs within natural discourse, and false conclusions have been drawn from ill-constructed examples, in which overt questions followed by incongruent responses have been mistaken for the actual QUDs.

QUD trees (Reyle & Riester 2016, Riester et al. 2018, Riester 2019) are a discourse-analytic framework which defines precise rules for the reconstruction of QUDs in natural data. A QUD tree is a discourse representation in which (implicit or explicit) QUDs form the non-terminal nodes, thereby reflecting the topical organization of a text. The QUD-tree method is simpler and arguably less ambiguous than approaches to discourse structure that are based on the identification of rhetorical relations. Moreover, it allows for a reliable assessment of the focus/background (plus at-issue/non-at-issue) divide of each utterance.

The resulting analyses are of interest in various fields of linguistics in which an objective, pragmatic analysis of discourse is required. I will briefly address two such areas: the notion of coherence in political speeches, and information structure in field-work data.

**References**

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