

Strategy when describing a language you don't know anything about:

Lexicon



Phonology



NP-structure

- possessives
- demonstratives
- definite/indefinite ('There is a book on the table')
- adjectives



Sentence structure

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-----|
| - agreement | predicative, | |
| - case | transitive and | PPs |
| - tense | intransitive | |



Wh-questions

Yes/no questions

relative clauses

...

The issues

- (1) Placement of the Q-particle in yes/no questions (polar question)
 - a. Initial
 - b. Final
 - c. 'Second position'
 - d. Other (depending on focus)
 - e. Is the particle also used in wh-questions?

- (2) For languages of type (c) and (d): Placement of the Q-particle inside complex focused phrases.

- (3) Do affirmative answers to yes/no questions consist of a particle 'yes', or is it an echo of the finite verb of the question?

- (4) How do you answer a negative question when you want to confirm the negative alternative?
If the question is: "Is he not coming?" do you say 'yes' or do you say 'no' if he is not coming?

- (5) How do you answer a negative question when you want to deny the negative alternative?
How do you say if he is coming?

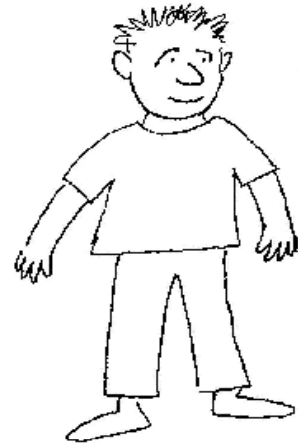
Placement of the Q-particle

1. Does Nina speak Hungarian?
2. What happened here? Did a dog bite a boy?
3. Here is a dog.



3. Did the dog bite a boy?

4. Here is a boy.



4. Did a dog bite the boy? (Was the boy bitten by a dog?)

5. The dog is dangerous. Is the dog dangerous?

6. Did THIS dog bite a boy? (or that dog?)

7. Did the dog bite THIS boy? (or that boy?)

Placement of the Q-particle in complex focused phrases

Finnish:

Puri-**ko** koira poikaa?

bit-Q dog boy 'Did the dog bite a/the boy?'

Poikaa-**ko** koira puri?

boy-Q dog bit 'Was it a boy that the dog bit?'

[Niinan koira]-**ko** puri poikaa?

Nina's dog -Q bit boy

'Was it Nina's dog that bit the boy?'

[Niinan-**ko** koira] puri poikaa?

Nina's -Q dog bit boy

'Was it Nina's dog that bit the boy?'

Answers to yes/no-questions

Does Nina speak Hungarian? Yes. No

Is the dog dangerous? Yes. No

Here is a dog.

Did the dog bite a boy? Yes. No.

Here is a boy.

Did a dog bite the boy? Yes. No.

Did THIS dog bite a boy? Yes. No.

Did a dog bite THIS boy? Yes. No.

Answers to yes/no-questions

(if it is a V-echo system)

Nina speak Hungarian (aux)

Question.

Aux

not Aux

Aux V

not Aux V

Other question w auxiliary (must?)

Aux.

not Aux

Aux V

Not Aux V.

Did THIS dog bite a boy?

Yes.

No.

Did a dog bite THIS boy?

Yes.

No.

Answers to negative questions

(negative answer expected)

Consider the following conversation carried out in Udmurt:

A says to B: “You told me earlier that your brother was going to Paris. But now I see him over there. **Didn't he go to Paris?**”

What does B answer if his brother didn't go (because he changed his mind)?

Does he say “No (he didn't go)” or does he say “Yes (he didn't go)” ?

What does B answer if his brother did go to Paris (but only stayed two days)?

Answers to negative questions

(positive answer expected)

Consider the following conversation carried out in Udmurt:

A says to B: “Here is a photo of my daughter. **Isn’t she pretty?**”

What does B answer if he thinks she is pretty (or just wants to be polite)?

Indefinite subject questions

(in case the V-echo answer system is used)

Context: Yesterday you were waiting for someone to come and help you fix the roof.

Your friend asks: **Did anyone come?**

Answer: Yes. (Can you answer with a bare V, or with Yes V?)

(Check the agreement on the verb: singular or plural)

Negative question with negative copula

Korkaje baddz'ym övöl. [Vilkuna 1998: 211]
house.1SG big NEG.COP

Context: A conversation with your friend.

Your friend asks: Why do you want to move? **Is your house not big enough?**

How do you answer if it's true that your house isn't big enough?

How do you answer if your house is big enough?

Your friends says: You are still working. **Are you not tired?**

How do you answer if you are not tired?