Question Avoidance Study
Annotation Guidelines

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In this study, we are focusing on the phenomenon of question avoidance. It usually happens when: 1) a person doesn't know the answer and doesn't want to show it; 2) a person wants to avoid direct response while being interrogated or debating; 3) a person doesn't want to answer uncomfortable intimidating questions. You will be presented with a set of paired utterances. The task is to assess each pair in 3 levels:

- Is the first utterance (u1) a question? If yes,
  - Does the second utterance (u2) show signs of question avoidance? If yes,
    - What is the avoidance strategy (fight or flight)?

Level 1

- u1 is an (information-seeking) question (Q) vs. u1 is a non-question (NQ)

u1 is a question	u1 is a non-question
▾Closed question:	▽Simple statement:
u1: Do you want to go to the cinema this evening? *u2: I wish I could join you, but I'm busy tonight!*	*u1: I'm going to the cinema this evening.* *u2: Cool, I wish I could join you!*
u1 is a question, the person wants to invite the answerer to the cinema	u1 is not an information-seeking utterance
▾Open question:	▽Rhetorical question:
u1: Where do you want to go to this evening? *u2: Cinema would be great!*	*u1: What has become of me?* *u2: Don't you start...*
u1 is a question, the person wants to know where the answerer wants to go to	u1 is clearly a rhetorical question, it doesn't require any answer
▾Indirect question:	▽Makes no sense:
u1: I wonder where our children are tonight. *u2: They were going to go to the cinema!*	*u1: What?* *u2: The roses are red.*
u1 is an indirect question, the person wants to know where the children are	We can't say for sure if u1-u2 is a question-response pair.

Level 2

- u2 shows signs of avoidance vs. u2 shows no signs of avoidance

u2 shows signs of avoidance	u2 shows no signs of avoidance
u1: Are you still dating that guy? *u2: I don't want to talk about it.* u2 expresses the person's willingness to decline to answer an uncomfortable question. *u1: Is Mary still dating this guy?* *u2: I can't tell you that.* u2 expresses the person's unwillingness to answer (in contrast to 'I don't know' example from the column on the right). (more detailed classification you can find in Level 3 section)	▽Direct answer: *u1: Did you attend this class?* *u2: Yes, I did, it was great.* u2 here is a direct answer with additional information. ▽Indirect answer: *u1: Did you attend this class?* *u2: Oh, the lecturer has an amazing sense of humor!* u2 here is an answer (though indirect), 'yes' is implicit: the person couldn't say anything about the lecturer, if he/she didn't attend the class ▽Clarification request: *u1: Did you attend this class?* *u2: Which class exactly?* u2 here is a clarification request, though it could be a form of avoidance in some situations, but we cannot detect it without additional context. ▽'I don't know': *u1: Is Mary still dating this guy?* *u2: I don't know.* u2 here can possibly be an answer: the answerer can be not aware of Mary's personal life and thus he/she doesn't avoid the question (in contrast to 'I can't tell you that'' example from the column on the left).

We ask you to rate the question-response pair on a 5-point scale based on your certainty (however, we'd like to explicitly ask to not use 2 (uncertain) unless necessary):

| 0 - no avoidance | 1 - rather not avoidance | 2 - uncertain | 3 - rather an avoidance | 4 - avoidance |

Level 3

- u2 is 'fight' avoidance (FLIGHT) vs. u2 is 'flight' avoidance (FIGHT)

u2 is 'fight' avoidance	u2 is 'flight' avoidance
▽Attacking the question:	▽Ignoring the question:

▽Attacking the question:

u1: Who you think killed Mary?
u2: What kind of question is that?!

u1: When is the wedding?
u2: This is an inappropriate thing to ask!

▽Attacking the questioner:

u1: Tell me about your deepest fears.
u2: And who are you to ask such questions?

u1: Tell me about your deepest fears.
u2: We are not that close.

▽Respond with a vague question:

u1: What has happened here?
u2: How would I know?

It can be the case that the respondee is truly not aware of what has happened, but the form of saying that can indicate evasion

▽Reflecting the question:

u1: What has happened here?
u2: You tell me!

u1: What has happened here?
u2: What do you think?

u1: Were you up late again?
u2: And what about you?

▽Respond with a confrontational question:

u1: Are you going to marry him?
u2: Are you so concerned about my marital status?

▽Ignoring the question:

u1: What time is it?
u2: Vladimir Putin is the president of Russia.

u2 has no semantic connection to u1, so we assume that the question u1 was ignored

▽Acknowledging the question without answering:

u1: What shall we eat for lunch?
u2: Good question!

u2 expresses that the respondee heard the question, but it's not an answer

▽Circular reasoning:

u1: Why did your boss lose?
u2: He lost because he didn't get enough votes.

u2 just defines what 'lose' means in this context, but doesn't give any reasons.

▽Declining to answer:

- Unwilling to answer:

u1: What is your greatest fear?
u2: I don't want to talk about it.

- Referring to another person:

u1: Tell me how your friend is today.
u2: I can't speak for someone else.

▽Joking:

u1: How much money do you make?
u2: Not enough!

▽Changing the topic:

- Bridge response

u1: What is the capital of Great Britain?
u2: I can't tell you that for sure, but here's something I do know: the UK is a great country!

- *Slight change*

u1: When will you pay off the loan?
u2: I'm looking for a job day and night!

- *Forced change*

u1: Are you pregnant?!
u2: Look! Isn't it your favorite coffeeshop?