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**Ho et al.**

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(54) **METHOD AND SYSTEM TO ANSWER A NATURAL-LANGUAGE QUESTION**

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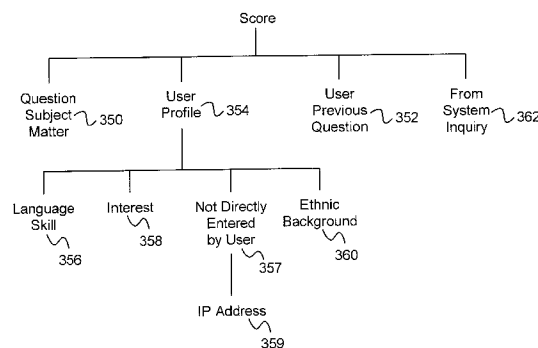
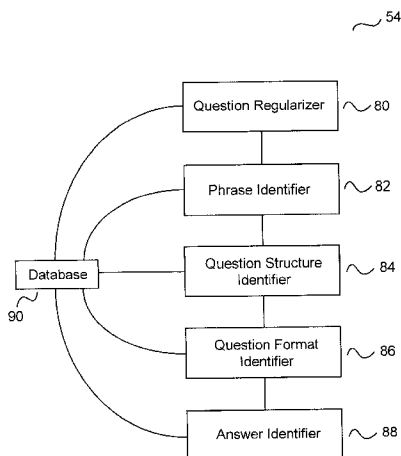
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Providing methods and systems to quickly and accurately respond to a natural-language question. The responses to the question can depend on additional information about the user asking the question, and the subject matter of the question the user asked. For example, the system knows that the user understands French, and can supply French answers to the user. Such additional information can improve on relevancy of the responses to the question. More than one responses can be provided to the user to allow the user to pick the more appropriate one. One embodiment uses a computer with a database having many phrases and question formats. The computer identifies phrases in the question based on at least one grammatical rules and phrases in the database. Then the computer links the phrases to categories based on at least one semantic rule, the subject matter of the question, and information about the user, such as previous questions asked by the user. The computer then selects at least two question formats based on at least the scores. After the question formats are selected, the system allows the user to pick at least one of the question formats so as to have an answer to the question generated.

**34 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets**



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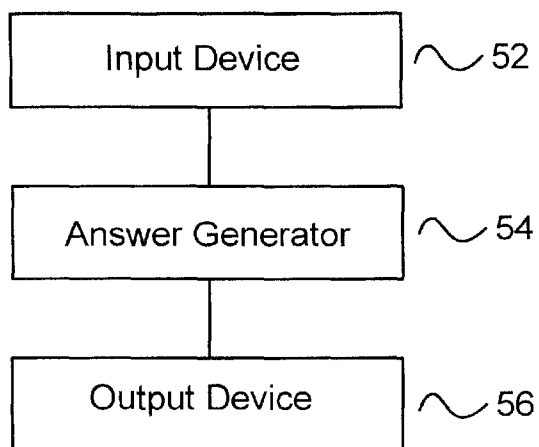


Figure 1

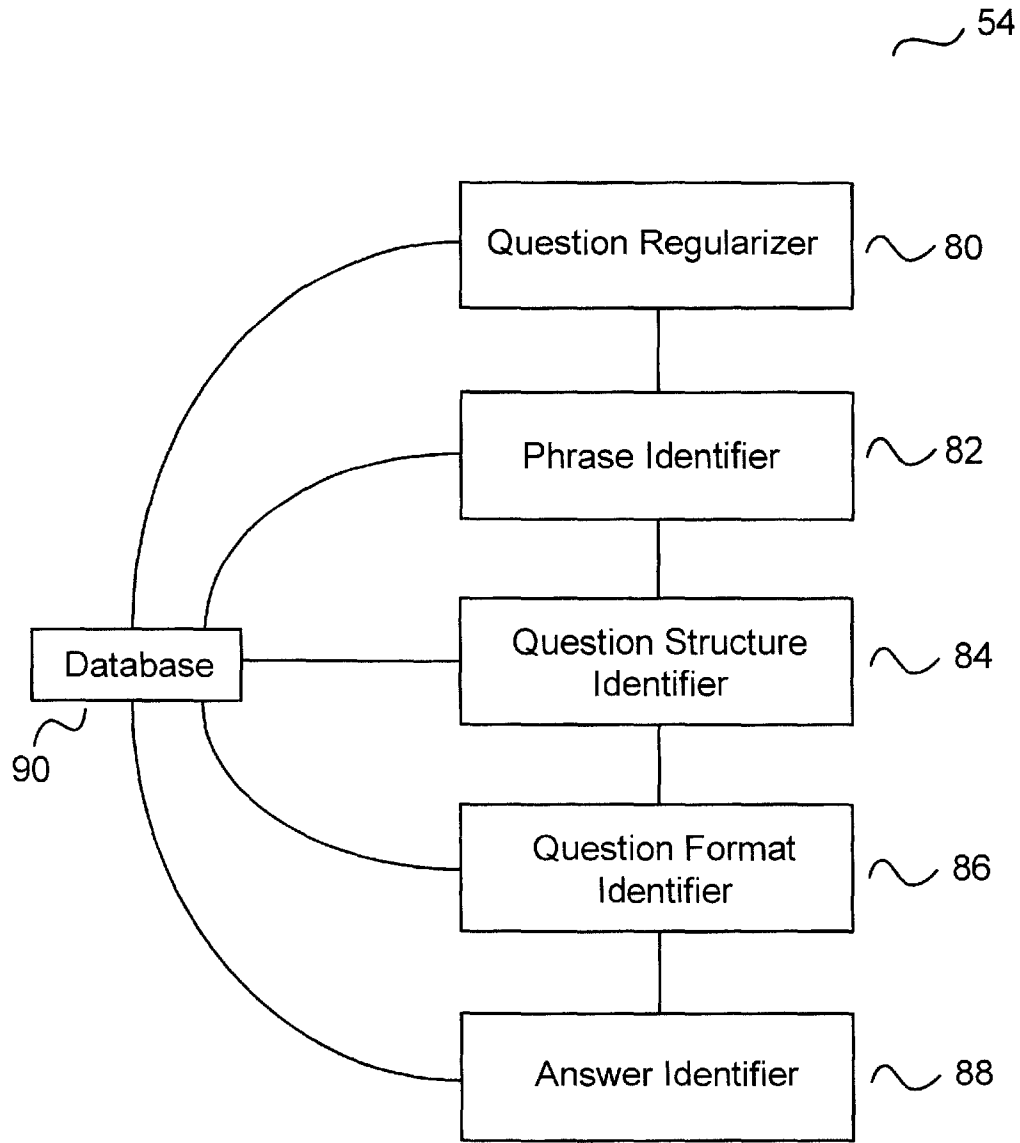


Figure 2

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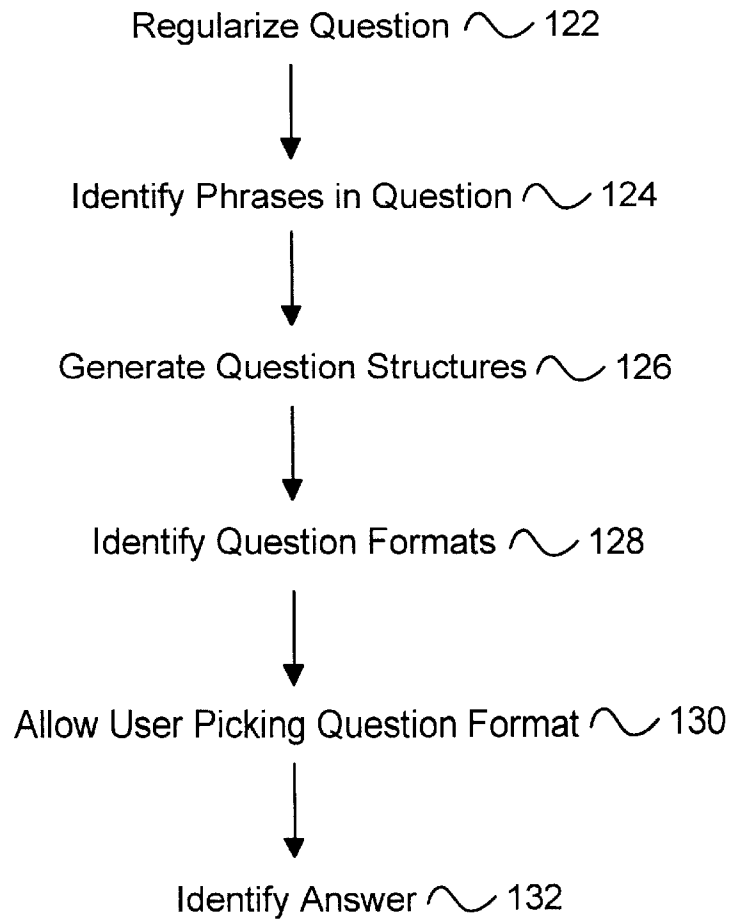


Figure 3

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