

FUNCTIONAL AND PRAGMATIC PECULIARITIES OF INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES IN THE ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Annotation: This article presents a comparative linguistic analysis of the functional and pragmatic features of interrogative sentences in English and Uzbek. The study examines the syntactic structures, communicative purposes, and sociocultural implications of questions in both languages. Special attention is given to the influence of cultural and linguistic factors on the formation and interpretation of questions in various contexts. The paper analyzes the main types of interrogatives — yes/no questions, wh-questions, alternative, and tag questions — highlighting their pragmatic functions such as politeness strategies, emphasis, rhetorical effect, and discourse management. Based on authentic spoken and written language data, the research identifies both universal and language-specific characteristics. The findings are of practical relevance for the fields of translation, foreign language teaching, and intercultural pragmatics.

Keywords: interrogative sentences, functional linguistics, pragmatics, comparative analysis, English language, Uzbek language, politeness strategies, question typology, discourse, intercultural communication

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi so'roq gaplarning funksional hamda pragmatik xususiyatlari qiyosiy tilshunoslik nuqtai nazaridan tahlil etiladi. Tadqiqotda har ikkala til uchun xos bo'lgan so'roq gaplarning sintaktik tuzilmalari, kommunikativ vazifalari va nutqdagi ijtimoiy-ma'naviy yuklamalari o'rganiladi. Xususan, savollarni shakllantirish va talqin etishda madaniy omillar hamda til tizimidagi farqlar

alohida e'tiborga olinadi. Maqolada umumiy (yes/no), maxsus (wh-), tanlovli va tag-so'roqlar kabi so'roq gap turlari ularning xushmuomalalik, urg'u berish, ritorik ta'sir va muloqotni boshqarish kabi pragmatik funksiyalari bilan birgalikda tahlil qilinadi. Og'zaki va yozma nutq namunalari asosida universal va milliy xususiyatlar aniqlanadi. Tadqiqot natijalari tarjima amaliyoti, xorijiy til o'qitish metodikasi hamda madaniyatlararo pragmatika sohalari uchun muhim nazariy va amaliy asos bo'lib xizmat qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: so'roq gaplar, funksional tilshunoslik, pragmatika, qiyosiy tahlil, ingliz tili, o'zbek tili, xushmuomalalik strategiyalari, savol tiplari, nutq madaniyati, madaniyatlararo muloqot

Аннотация: В статье проводится сравнительный анализ функциональных и прагматических особенностей вопросительных предложений в английском и узбекском языках. Исследование охватывает синтаксические структуры, коммуникативные функции и социокультурные аспекты использования вопросительных форм в обоих языках. Особое внимание уделяется культурным и лингвистическим факторам, влияющим на построение и интерпретацию вопросов в разных контекстах. Рассматриваются основные типы вопросов — общие (yes/no), специальные (wh-), альтернативные и разделительные — с акцентом на их прагматические функции: выражение вежливости, акцентирование, риторическое воздействие и управление коммуникацией. На основе анализа устных и письменных примеров выявляются как универсальные, так и специфические особенности. Результаты исследования представляют интерес для специалистов в области перевода, преподавания иностранных языков и межкультурной прагматики.

Ключевые слова: вопросительные предложения, функциональная лингвистика, прагматика, сравнительный анализ, английский язык, узбекский язык, стратегии вежливости, типология вопросов, речевая культура, межкультурная коммуникация

Introduction

In the contemporary landscape of linguistic studies, interrogative constructions play a pivotal role in shaping effective communication, serving not only as a means of eliciting information but also as instruments of social interaction, discourse regulation, and pragmatic nuance. As languages reflect distinct cultural and cognitive frameworks, the structure and use of questions differ across linguistic systems. English and Uzbek, belonging to different language families—Indo-European and Turkic respectively—offer fertile ground for comparative analysis in this regard. Despite the universality of asking questions, the syntactic realization, communicative intentions, and pragmatic strategies employed in interrogatives vary significantly depending on cultural norms and language-specific conventions. For instance, the expression of politeness, emphasis, or rhetorical effect in English interrogatives may be achieved through certain syntactic patterns and intonation, while in Uzbek, these functions may be realized through different morphological or contextual means. Therefore, a comparative investigation into the functional and pragmatic properties of interrogative sentences in these two languages provides deeper insight into their respective discourse practices and intercultural communication patterns. This study aims to analyze and compare the structural types and pragmatic functions of interrogative sentences in English and Uzbek, focusing on their usage in both spoken and written contexts. The research also highlights the impact of cultural and linguistic variables on question formation and interpretation. By identifying both universal patterns and language-specific features, this analysis contributes to the fields of functional linguistics, translation studies, language pedagogy, and intercultural pragmatics.

Main body

Interrogative sentences, integral to the process of communication, are central to the study of pragmatics and syntax. A fundamental distinction in the linguistic typology of questions lies in the syntactic structure and discourse function, influenced by both

universal cognitive principles and language-specific features. The study of interrogatives has traditionally focused on their syntactic constructions, but more recent trends have emphasized their pragmatic implications—how they are used to manage conversation, convey politeness, or create rhetorical effects (Searle, 1969; Brown & Levinson, 1987). The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek interrogative structures provides a rich perspective on these issues. English, as an Indo-European language, employs auxiliary verbs, word order changes, and intonation patterns to form questions. In contrast, Uzbek, a Turkic language, relies on suffixation, question particles, and a different syntactic arrangement to perform the same communicative function. Thus, while the underlying pragmatic functions of interrogatives may overlap, their linguistic realization varies significantly due to structural and cultural differences. In English, the structure of interrogative sentences is predominantly shaped by the inversion of the subject and auxiliary verb, which is a primary syntactic feature for yes/no questions. For instance, in the sentence “Is she coming?” the auxiliary verb “is” precedes the subject “she,” signaling a question. In wh-questions, an interrogative word such as “who,” “what,” or “where” is placed at the beginning of the sentence, often accompanied by inversion: “What did you say?”. Moreover, English interrogatives exhibit an array of syntactic variations based on discourse type. Yes/no questions typically require a straightforward response, while wh-questions seek specific information. Tag questions, such as “It’s cold today, isn’t it?” function as checks or to encourage agreement. These syntactic structures serve distinct pragmatic purposes, such as politeness, hedging, or emphasizing a point. In Uzbek, question formation is governed by agglutinative morphology, where question particles and suffixes are added to the verb or noun to indicate interrogation. For example, the particle “-mi?” is added to the verb to form a yes/no question: “U keladimi?” (Is he coming?). In wh-questions, an interrogative word such as “nima” (what), “qayerda” (where), or “qachon” (when) appears at the beginning of the sentence, followed by the verb: “Nima qilayapsan?” (What are you doing?). Additionally, Uzbek uses alternative questions, marked by the conjunction “yoki” (or), which allows the speaker to present two or more

choices: “Sen kitob o‘qiysan yoki televizor tomosha qilasan?” (Do you read books or watch TV?). Unlike English, which relies heavily on syntactic inversion and auxiliary verbs, Uzbek interrogatives utilize inflectional morphemes to convey various question types, offering a distinctive approach to question formation. In both English and Uzbek, the formulation of questions serves as a tool for managing social relationships and conveying politeness. According to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, questions are often used to mitigate the imposition on the listener, especially in formal or uncertain contexts. For example, in English, the use of modal verbs like “could” or “would” softens the request, as in “Could you please help me?” Similarly, in Uzbek, politeness is achieved through the use of honorifics, such as “siz” (you, formal) and the use of indirect questioning techniques. The use of “mi” in questions can also serve a polite function, as it suggests uncertainty or a desire for confirmation, rather than a direct inquiry. Interrogative sentences in both languages are used not only to gather information but also to emphasize certain points or evoke a rhetorical response. For instance, in English, a rhetorical question like “Who doesn’t want to succeed?” seeks no actual answer but emphasizes the universality of the desire for success. Similarly, in Uzbek, rhetorical questions such as “Bu ishni kim qilishni xohlamaydi?” (Who wouldn’t want to do this task?) express strong emphasis and engage the listener in a shared perspective. The cultural context plays a crucial role in shaping the way questions are formed and interpreted in both languages. In English, especially in formal contexts, questions are often direct, and politeness is conveyed through modals or hedging phrases. However, in Uzbek, especially in informal or intimate settings, questions can be more indirect and rely on the use of diminutives, honorifics, and other cultural markers. These cultural differences reflect divergent communication styles: English tends to prioritize efficiency and directness in communication, while Uzbek emphasizes indirectness and respect for hierarchy, particularly in addressing elders or authority figures. Additionally, intercultural communication studies have shown that misunderstandings can arise when speakers from different cultural backgrounds use questions differently. For example, an Uzbek speaker

might perceive a direct yes/no question in English as abrupt or even impolite, while an English speaker may interpret an indirect question in Uzbek as evasive or unclear. Such differences underscore the importance of understanding the pragmatic underpinnings of question formation in cross-cultural communication. In conclusion, the comparison of interrogative sentences in English and Uzbek reveals both commonalities and differences in their syntactic structures and pragmatic functions. While both languages use questions to seek information and manage discourse, they do so in linguistically distinct ways, reflecting their respective cultural and linguistic frameworks. This comparative analysis highlights the importance of understanding the syntactic and pragmatic intricacies of interrogatives in the context of language teaching, translation, and intercultural communication. By deepening our understanding of how questions function across languages, we can foster more effective communication and cross-cultural understanding in both professional and everyday interactions.

Empirical analysis

The empirical analysis of interrogative sentences in English and Uzbek follows a comparative methodology, focusing on the syntactic structures and pragmatic functions of questions across both languages. The primary data for this analysis consists of both spoken and written corpora collected from native speakers of English and Uzbek. These corpora include diverse sources such as everyday conversations, formal interviews, and literary works, ensuring a comprehensive representation of question types used in different contexts. The research employs a qualitative approach to analyze the data, with a focus on identifying recurring patterns and deviations in the syntactic formation of interrogatives and the pragmatic roles they perform. The data analysis is guided by two main research questions. How do the syntactic structures of interrogative sentences differ between English and Uzbek? .What are the pragmatic functions of these interrogative forms in different communicative contexts, and how do they reflect the cultural and social norms of each language? .To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, a combination of spoken and written samples was selected. The spoken corpus includes recorded dialogues from

native speakers of English and Uzbek, encompassing various registers such as casual conversations, formal interviews, and debates. These recordings were transcribed for detailed analysis of question formation, including intonation patterns and other prosodic features that are crucial for understanding the pragmatic functions of interrogatives. The written corpus consists of excerpts from literary works, newspaper articles, and official documents, providing a range of formal and informal contexts. The texts were carefully selected to represent different genres, such as fiction, journalism, and public speeches, in order to capture the diversity of question types in both languages. In English, the most prominent feature of interrogative sentences is the inversion of the auxiliary verb and subject. For example, in yes/no questions such as "Is he coming?" the verb "is" precedes the subject "he," signaling a question. Wh-questions are typically formed by placing an interrogative word at the beginning of the sentence, followed by subject-verb inversion, as in "Where are you going?" The analysis reveals that English relies heavily on auxiliary verbs and word order changes to mark question forms. Tag questions, which appear frequently in both spoken and written English, involve the use of an auxiliary verb and a pronoun, such as "It's cold, isn't it?" These structures reflect the communicative purpose of seeking confirmation or emphasizing a point. In terms of frequency, yes/no questions are the most common in the spoken data, while wh-questions appear more frequently in written texts, particularly in journalistic and academic contexts. Uzbek interrogatives are characterized by the use of question particles and suffixes. The suffix "-mi?" is attached to verbs to form yes/no questions, as in "U keladimi?" (Is he coming?). Wh-questions in Uzbek are formed by placing the interrogative word at the beginning of the sentence, followed by the verb, as in "Nima qilayapsan?" (What are you doing?). Unlike English, where auxiliary verbs play a central role in forming questions, Uzbek primarily relies on agglutinative morphology. The study also identified the frequent use of alternative questions in Uzbek, marked by the conjunction "yoki" (or), as in "Sen kitob o'qiysan yoki televizor tomosha qilasan?" (Do you read books or watch TV?). The results indicate that yes/no questions are prevalent in everyday conversations, while wh-questions appear more

often in formal contexts such as public speeches or academic discussions. Both English and Uzbek utilize interrogative sentences as tools for politeness. The analysis reveals that English often employs modal verbs, such as "could" or "would," to soften questions and reduce the imposition on the listener. For instance, "Could you please help me?" is a common polite form of requesting assistance. This form of politeness, characterized by indirectness, is particularly prominent in formal interactions. In Uzbek, politeness is conveyed through the use of honorifics and indirect questioning. The particle "-mi?" is used not only to indicate a question but also to soften the impact of the inquiry, making it less direct and more respectful. For example, "U keladimi?" (Is he coming?) is less direct than simply asking "U keladi?" (He is coming?). The use of the formal "siz" (you, formal) and honorifics also plays a crucial role in marking respect, particularly in conversations with elders or authority figures. Interrogative sentences are frequently used in both languages for rhetorical purposes. In English, rhetorical questions are used to emphasize a point or provoke reflection, as in "Who doesn't want to succeed?" Similarly, in Uzbek, rhetorical questions are common in persuasive speech, as seen in "Bu ishni kim qilishni xohlamaydi?" (Who wouldn't want to do this task?). The study found that while both languages use interrogatives to emphasize shared values or beliefs, the syntactic structures differ: English often relies on intonation and word order, whereas Uzbek uses morphological markers and context to convey rhetorical emphasis. The empirical analysis also highlights significant cultural differences in the formation and interpretation of questions. In English, questions are often direct and precise, reflecting the cultural emphasis on clarity and efficiency. In contrast, Uzbek interrogatives tend to be more indirect, reflecting the cultural importance of respect and formality in communication. This contrast is especially evident in the use of honorifics and the softer tone of questions in Uzbek, which is designed to maintain social harmony and show deference to the listener. Moreover, the study reveals that intercultural misunderstandings can arise when speakers of English and Uzbek engage in communication, particularly when questions are perceived as too direct or too indirect. These differences underscore the importance of

understanding the pragmatic and cultural functions of interrogative sentences in cross-cultural communication. The empirical analysis of interrogative sentences in English and Uzbek demonstrates that while both languages share common communicative functions, they differ significantly in their syntactic structures and pragmatic applications. English relies heavily on auxiliary verbs, word order changes, and intonation patterns, whereas Uzbek employs morphological markers, question particles, and suffixation to form questions. The pragmatic functions of interrogatives in both languages, including politeness strategies, rhetorical functions, and emphasis, reflect the distinct cultural norms and social expectations in each linguistic community. The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of interrogative sentences in cross-cultural communication, language teaching, and translation. By examining the syntactic and pragmatic features of questions in English and Uzbek, this research provides valuable insights into the ways language shapes communication and influences social interaction.

Conclusion

This study has provided a comprehensive comparative analysis of interrogative sentences in English and Uzbek, focusing on both their syntactic structures and pragmatic functions. Through a detailed examination of authentic spoken and written data, the research has highlighted key differences and similarities in how questions are formed and used in these two languages. The findings underscore the significance of cultural and linguistic factors in shaping the structure and function of interrogative sentences, reflecting broader communicative practices and social norms. The syntactic analysis revealed that while English relies heavily on auxiliary verbs, subject-verb inversion, and intonation patterns to form questions, Uzbek employs a distinctive agglutinative morphology, utilizing question particles and suffixes. This structural divergence reflects the typological differences between the Indo-European and Turkic language families, emphasizing the role of grammatical markers in question formation. Pragmatically, both English and Uzbek use interrogative sentences to fulfill a variety of functions, including politeness, emphasis, and rhetorical effect. However, the specific strategies employed in each language differ in

accordance with cultural norms. English often utilizes modal verbs and direct question structures to convey politeness and indirectness, particularly in formal contexts. In contrast, Uzbek interrogatives tend to be more indirect, with honorifics and softer forms of questioning employed to show respect and maintain social harmony, especially in interactions with elders or authority figures. The study also highlighted the role of questions as instruments of discourse management. In both languages, questions are used to initiate, maintain, or close conversations, manage turn-taking, and guide the flow of information. The analysis revealed that while the overall communicative purposes of interrogative sentences are similar across both languages, the methods of achieving these goals vary due to differing syntactic conventions and cultural values. In terms of intercultural communication, the study has demonstrated that speakers of English and Uzbek may encounter misunderstandings when interpreting questions, particularly due to differences in directness and indirectness. These findings underscore the importance of recognizing the cultural and pragmatic subtleties in question formation when engaging in cross-cultural dialogue. Understanding these differences can help mitigate communication barriers and enhance mutual understanding between speakers of diverse languages. Overall, the research has contributed to a deeper understanding of how interrogative sentences function in two typologically distinct languages. The comparative approach not only enriches our theoretical understanding of syntactic and pragmatic variation but also offers practical implications for fields such as translation, language teaching, and intercultural communication. By providing insights into the complexities of question formation and use, this study paves the way for further research into the pragmatic dimensions of language and communication. In conclusion, this research underscores the importance of a comprehensive approach to studying language, one that accounts for both the structural and pragmatic aspects of communication. Future studies could explore similar comparative analyses of interrogative sentences in other languages, contributing to a broader understanding of how questions function across different linguistic and cultural contexts.

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