Interrogative Words in Dialogue and Their Sementic Composition

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Abstract: This article explores the semantic field of questions within dialogic discourse, a dynamic and significant area of study in contemporary linguistics. It examines the various types of questions employed in conversation, highlighting their structural and functional differences. Special attention is given to both linguistic and extralinguistic factors that influence the pragmatic interpretation of interrogative sentences. The study also emphasizes the importance of the situational basis in question-answer exchanges, illustrating how context and speech situation shape communicative intent. Examples are provided to support the analysis and to demonstrate how these factors operate in real-life dialogue.

Keywords: Dialogic discourse, interrogative sentences, pragmatics, semantic field, question types, speech situation, context, situational basis, conversation analysis, linguistic factors.

Introduction: In the context of dialogue, the semantics of a question reveal its deep cognitive and communicative significance. A question is not merely a syntactic construction or a request for information—it is a specific form of thought that arises when existing or acknowledged information is perceived as incomplete. This incompleteness introduces a sense of uncertainty, which lies at the heart of every interrogative utterance. The primary communicative function of a question, therefore, is to reduce or resolve this uncertainty by prompting a response from the interlocutor.

From a pragmatic perspective, every question inherently carries an imperative component—an implicit directive that urges the listener to provide the missing information. In this way, questions function as speech acts that reflect the speaker's epistemic stance, expressing varying degrees of certainty, doubt, curiosity, or assumption. The epistemic modality embedded in a question indicates the speaker's level of confidence about the subject being questioned and often shapes the form and tone of the inquiry. Furthermore, the formation and interpretation of questions in dialogue are influenced by a range of linguistic and extralinguistic factors. Morphological markers, lexical choices, syntactic patterns, and prosodic cues all contribute to how a question is constructed and understood. At the same time, situational context, shared knowledge, and the roles of the interlocutors also play a crucial role in shaping the meaning and function of questions in real-time communication. Understanding the semantics and pragmatics of interrogatives in dialogue thus requires a comprehensive analysis that encompasses not only their formal characteristics but also the cognitive, social, and functional dimensions of language use.

METHODS

Questions always play a prominent role during the conversations, as their content includes a great deal of components which belong to the participants of a dialogue.

Below we can analyze it in context:

Who wrote this letter? = I want to know who wrote this letter.

Tell me who wrote this letter.

According to one of the linguists, Berkash (1968), questions can be divided into two large groups: questions requiring negation or affirmation, and

predicative. In this case, questions requiring a negative or affirmative answer are asked in order to move from a probable idea to a certain one and, of course, serve to determine the negative or positive connection of the idea. We can include general interrogative sentences that can be answered with "yes" or "no":

1. Will the presentation of your new project be ready today? -Yes.

2. Are you a doctor? –No

3. Is she preparing a salad?-Yes.

4. Are they ready to the competition?-No.

A predicative question is asked in order to understand the unknown properties and characteristics of an object and for getting more meaningful transition from one idea to another. This type of interrogative sentence includes special interrogative sentences formed using interrogative words. The logical structure of an interrogative sentence is the basis for explaining the semantics of the question. For example, "Where did the largest volcano on Earth erupt?" The interrogative pronoun "where" in this sentence requires a complete and accurate answer to the question posed. There are a number of pronouns which belong to this group:

Who is the first owner of Nobel prize?

What kind of items are required for this trip?

How many apples do you eat in a week?

When do they go to the concert hall?

For understanding different systems of interrogative sentences, we should also pay special attention to the analysis of the question in terms of dictum (the substantive core or basis of the sentence) and style. In this regard, we should separately consider the system of Balli (1955), which is a perfect example of classical logical analysis. According to Balli's concept, "A question can belong to a whole dictum or to a part of it, to a method or to a part of it. But it can never belong to both a dictum and a method at the same time (Balli, 1955). The construction of an interrogative sentence expresses motivation, question, and message colors. For example, "Are you going to meet your father?" The sentence serves to convey the message "Dad has arrived, welcome him."

In addition, if we consider their pragmatics, we can clearly notice the shades of doubt, determination, or emotional-evaluative coloring:

Do you see how beautifully the snow is falling? (meaning expressing the speaker's emotion)

At this point, we can say that in the process of dialogic communication in the form of a question and answer, the meanings of the message that motivate, direct to do something, or call for cooperation may prevail in the

conversation process:

Girls, let's get together today and go to the flower festival? (content that directs to do something).

In their place, such sentences are delivered to the next member of the dialogue in a fully formed extralinguistic, lexical-morphological and syntactical sense. It is also very important to distinguish the "imperative operator", which is reflected in the semantic structure of the question in the form of imperative (command mood) or motivational seme, from the logical structure of the interrogative sentence. For example, the sentence "Are you completing the task?" actually clearly expresses the command in the content of "Complete the task".

One of the researchers, Voronin (1992), describes this process as follows: "Any interrogative sentence contains an element of instruction, a command, because it implies the reaction of the interlocutor". Since this phenomenon is considered a very strong element of the structure, questions are often perceived as one of the methods of stimulation, that is, as an impetus for speech action. According to Rakhmonkulova (1991), at the centre of the semantics of the question is always the function of requesting information, along with the meaning of the proposal. In this situation, the question contains known (proposal) and unknown aspects, which require a direction in which to search for an answer. It is also important to know that the color of uncertainty is present not only in interrogative sentences, but also in the semantics of declarative sentences. Below we will consider several examples: Who cried? = Someone cried.

Will it rain tomorrow? = It seems like it will rain tomorrow.

In conclusion, we can say that both sides of the above sentences express the same meaning of uncertainty. This means that in the process of dialogic speech, we can get an answer or opinion to ambiguous and ambiguous situations not only with the help of interrogative sentences, but also with the help of indicative sentences that contain uncertainty. To summarize, the semantic structure of an interrogative sentence has three main meaning constructions: imperative (command), ambiguity (questions asked to clarify doubtful things) and reporting. The wide functional range used in question-answer discourse is formed from various combinations of these three semes. The change in the meaning of an interrogative sentence is explained by the exchange of semes. For example, in sentences with a strong interrogative meaning, the semes of ambiguity and imperative prevail. The seme of imperativeness brings more additional colors to the conversation process, such as

criticism, reproach, and rejection. In addition, in the formation of a question-answer dialogue, it creates a connection between the interrogative sentence and the response replicas and provides a mandatory answer. Therefore, we can call the imperative seme a force that drives the coherence of the dialogical text and the dynamics of communication. In imperatives, intrusiveness (influence on the interlocutor in some way) is manifested in such forms as apologizing for the question asked:

-Can I ask you something? How do I get to the central building?

-Do you mind if I ask you to tell me about your new job?

In our opinion, in the process of communication, a question, which is asked from the point of view of actively influencing the interlocutor, should occupy an intermediate position between statements. It should be noted that the story, motivation and question are the three main settings for generalizing communicative goals. When something is asked in the process of conversation, the speaker's full attention is focused on the answer or action to be taken. The narrative form practically does not require a reaction from the interlocutor, in this case the speaker's position in relation to the listener becomes passive, and the expressiveness of the statement is significantly reduced. Sentences in the sense of doubt have such basic meanings as requests and proposals, therefore we can say that such sentences are completely different from imperative sentences. The semantics of doubt in interrogative sentences clearly shows that the speaker avoids expressing his thoughts directly, and intends to present them among other statements. By considering the example of the given sentence, we can fully understand: Do you have an extra pen?

In the example above, despite the fact that the speaker actually wants to get a pen from his partner, he is expressing his request in the form of an interrogative sentence. According to the linguist Pocheptsov (1978), the semantics of a dialogue in the form of a question-and-answer form reflects a request about the addressee's qualifications and knowledge, that is, the person asking the question asks a question, indicating whether the interlocutor has knowledge on the subject. The examples given below can serve as clear evidence for the above points:

-Do you know how cold it is outside?

-Do you know where this village is and how long it takes to get there?

But questions that are asked to test the interviewer's knowledge (for example, in exams) are considered dominant questions. Because they are formulated in

accordance with the requirements and goals set:

- Name the smallest bird in the world?

- What is the formula for calculating the sum of positive and negative numbers?

- What is the process of plants getting food from sunlight called?

When we talk about the structure of interrogative sentences, its main components are intonation, word order, the use of interrogative pronouns, and the presence of information to be obtained. At the same time, it is worth knowing that one of the main criteria is whether the answer has the necessary structural components. So, the classification of interrogative sentences is actually based on the question-answer pair.

In terms of grammatical structure, expression, and content, we can say that interrogative sentences are divided into two large groups. These groups are general interrogative sentences and special interrogative sentences. General interrogative sentences are questions that require the denial or affirmation of a given idea or proposition:

-Have all the participants of today's meeting arrived? - No. Not yet.

According to Zaikin (1985), general interrogative sentences emphasize that as part of a dialogic unity, the answer to a general interrogative sentence contains an implicit or explicit expectation of the addressee. In this case, we can also divide the expectation process into three types: negative, positive and neutral. If the addressee has no idea about the answer to be received, this is a neutral expectation. Answers to general interrogative sentences are expressed in the form of yes/yes, no/no, or their synonyms. General interrogative sentences, which have caused discussions among many dialogue researchers, contain hidden special questions in their essence. In this case, the answer to the question should contain not only the meaning of confirmation or possibility, but also an additional explanation:

-Do you have four children?

A positive answer (yes) to this type of question can be considered complete, but a negative answer in itself requires an explanation and explanation from the respondent. That is, if the answer to the question "Do you have four children?" is "no", the respondent is obliged to provide information about how many children he actually has. In this case, a special interrogative sentence is hidden under the general interrogative sentence, and it takes the form of "How many children do you have?"

This situation also exists in the alternative form of

special questions: to questions of the form "So, are you coming on Monday or Wednesday? , in addition to the answers "on Monday" and "on Wednesday", it is possible to give answers such as "on Tuesday", "after Saturday lunch", "on Thursday morning". That is, the question "When will you come?" is based on this statement, and the answer itself can be of a similar variety.

According to our conclusions, questions, depending on how they are presented in the speaker's mind, each of them has a separate "special" form, according to its semantics. Its task is determined by filling a specific gap in the mind and knowledge of the questioner, finding information unknown to him. Nevertheless, the questioner can partially "rework" it when forming it, that is, narrowing the search space using knowledge and assumptions. According to the views of one of the linguists Berdnik (1993), we can also arrange the types of questions on a scale, at one end of which there are special questions that allow the respondent to freely choose an answer, and at the other end there are general questions that narrow the range of choices. In order for the questioner to receive the information he needs, he must "rework" the question, choosing one of these two structures. Thus, answer forms such as "yes" or "no" are only used for "interrogative-affirmative" and "interrogative-predictive" questions.

In the process of asking a question, the speaker can move from ambiguity to clarity using various means. In this case, the question restores the original purpose of the question with the help of another contextual set and a separate program:

-Are you a pilot? (What is your profession, who are you?)

- Will you stay in this city for a long time? (When will you leave?)

- The girl who is coming, Sarah? (Who?)

These types of questions are also clearly visible in the question-answer category of English dialogic discourse:

-Is she ten years old? (How old is she?)

-Do you live in this city? (Where do you live?)

- Would you like a cup of coffee? (What do you want to drink?)

In dialogic speech, the role of grammatical means, along with lexical units, in the formation of relations between semantics and pragmatics is incomparable.

Grammatical categories such as tense, person, and mood play an important role in the emergence of pragmatic meaning in the speech process. Pragmatics and semantics serve equally to achieve the communicative goal, and each has its own role in the formation of communicative meaning.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, questions serve not only as tools for eliciting information but also as means of conveying a range of modal meanings, such as irony, suggestion, and command. These pragmatic functions of interrogative sentences are shaped through diverse morphological, semantic, and lexical structures, reflecting the complexity and richness of their use in spoken discourse.

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