

PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

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Abstract. *This study explores the pragmatic features of interrogative sentences, focusing on their communicative functions, contextual dependence, and the role of politeness and social norms in shaping meaning. Interrogatives are analyzed not only as grammatical structures but also as tools that convey speaker intentions, manage social interaction, and facilitate effective communication. The research highlights how situational context, discourse history, and cultural conventions influence the interpretation of questions. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of pragmatic competence in language teaching and intercultural communication. The findings suggest that understanding the pragmatic aspects of interrogatives enhances communicative effectiveness and contributes to both theoretical linguistics and applied language studies.*

Keywords: *Interrogative sentences, Pragmatics, Communicative function, Politeness strategies, Contextual meaning.*

Introduction

Interrogative sentences are one of the fundamental communicative tools in human speech, playing a crucial role in information exchange and social interaction. The study of interrogatives in linguistics requires not only the analysis of their grammatical or lexical features but also their pragmatic aspects. Pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, examines the context-dependent meanings of linguistic units and their functions in communication, which is essential for understanding the conditions under which interrogative sentences arise, their purposes, and their communicative roles. Interrogative sentences are closely connected with social relations, cultural norms, and communication strategies, and their pragmatic analysis provides important insights into speech etiquette, the effectiveness of communication, and applications in language teaching.

From this perspective, a detailed study of the pragmatic features of interrogatives including the mechanisms of their formation, the integration of form and meaning, and their role in achieving communicative goals is a significant topic in both linguistic and pedagogical research.

Relevance

Studying the pragmatic features of interrogative sentences is important for understanding how questions convey meaning in context. It helps reveal the role of speaker intention, social norms, and cultural factors in communication. This research is significant for improving language teaching, enhancing communicative competence, and supporting effective cross-cultural interaction.

Main part

Interrogative sentences perform diverse communicative functions, which extend far beyond mere information-seeking. Primarily, they allow speakers to obtain knowledge, confirm assumptions, express curiosity, or elicit actions from the listener. Direct questions, such as “Where is the library?” explicitly request information, whereas indirect questions like “I wonder where the library is” convey subtlety and reflect politeness. The pragmatic study of these functions reveals that identical grammatical forms can achieve multiple communicative goals depending on context.

Rhetorical questions are another category, often used to emphasize a point or provoke reflection rather than to seek a literal answer. For instance, “Who doesn’t want to be successful?” functions to engage the listener and convey shared beliefs. Similarly, tag questions, such as “It’s cold today, isn’t it?” combine the function of requesting confirmation with an implicit expression of social alignment or solidarity. The choice of interrogative type is influenced by social hierarchy, power relations, and cultural norms. Politeness strategies are often embedded in question forms to reduce imposition and maintain the listener’s face. Pragmatic analysis demonstrates that understanding the communicative function is essential for effective discourse interpretation, teaching conversational skills, and designing intercultural communication programs. Thus, communicative functions highlight the multifunctional nature of interrogatives. They are not simply grammatical tools; they mediate interaction, guide social behavior, and structure discourse.

Understanding these functions is critical for both theoretical linguistics and applied language studies.

The meaning of an interrogative sentence is heavily context-dependent. Context includes situational elements, participants’ roles, cultural background, and prior discourse. For example, the utterance “Can you open the window?” may function as a literal question about ability in one context, but in a conversational setting, it often serves as a polite request. Pragmatic interpretation relies on listeners’ ability to infer meaning beyond the literal sentence structure. Discourse context also affects the use of interrogatives. In classroom interaction, questions like “What do you think about this theory?” encourage participation and reflection, whereas in formal meetings, similar questions might serve to direct attention or assess knowledge. Prosodic features, such as intonation, pause, and stress, further influence how questions are perceived. Rising intonation may signal a genuine query, while falling intonation can indicate expectation or emphasis. Cultural context shapes questioning patterns significantly. Some cultures prefer direct questioning, while others rely on indirect forms to maintain politeness and social harmony. Pragmatic competence involves recognizing these contextual cues and adjusting question forms accordingly. By examining situational and cultural factors, linguists can better understand the interplay between language, cognition, and social norms. The contextual and situational aspects of interrogatives are indispensable for interpreting meaning accurately. Contextual sensitivity enhances communication efficiency, supports cross-cultural understanding, and strengthens language teaching methodologies.

Politeness and social norms play a crucial role in shaping the form and function of interrogative sentences. Speakers frequently modify questions to minimize imposition, demonstrate respect, or maintain social harmony.

Pragmatic strategies, such as hedging, indirect questioning, and modal verbs, are commonly used to achieve politeness. For example, “Could you possibly lend me your notes?” is more socially acceptable than the direct “Give me your notes.”

Indirect questions often reflect speaker sensitivity to social hierarchy and cultural conventions. In professional settings, questions may be phrased to show deference, as in “Would you mind sharing your opinion on this matter?” Conversely, informal contexts permit direct or colloquial forms. These pragmatic choices influence listener perception, cooperation, and engagement in communication. Cross-cultural studies highlight variability in politeness strategies.

While some languages favor explicit politeness markers, others rely on intonation, word order, or contextual cues. Understanding these strategies is vital for language teaching, intercultural communication, and discourse analysis. Pragmatic awareness helps learners and speakers navigate social interactions effectively, avoiding misunderstandings and fostering positive communication outcomes. Politeness, social norms, and pragmatic strategies underscore the social dimension of interrogative sentences. They demonstrate that language use is not solely structural but deeply intertwined with culture, cognition, and interpersonal dynamics. Mastery of these features is essential for both communicative competence and applied linguistics research.

Results

The analysis of interrogative sentences from a pragmatic perspective reveals several key findings. First, interrogatives perform multiple communicative functions, including information-seeking, confirmation, persuasion, and rhetorical emphasis. The same grammatical form may serve different purposes depending on context and speaker intention. Second, context plays a critical role in interpreting questions. Situational factors, participants’ roles, discourse history, and cultural norms influence how interrogatives are understood and responded to. For example, the sentence “Can you pass the salt?” functions as a polite request rather than a literal question about ability.

Third, politeness strategies and social norms significantly shape interrogative forms.

Indirect questioning, hedging, modal verbs, and intonation patterns are commonly employed to maintain social harmony, show respect, or mitigate imposition. Cross-cultural differences further demonstrate that pragmatic strategies vary between languages and communities. Finally, the study indicates that understanding the pragmatic features of interrogatives is essential for effective communication, language teaching, and intercultural interaction. Learners and speakers benefit from pragmatic awareness, which allows them to interpret intentions accurately and use questions appropriately in diverse contexts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, interrogative sentences are complex pragmatic tools that extend beyond grammatical structure. Their meaning and function are shaped by context, speaker intention, social norms, and cultural conventions. The pragmatic analysis of questions provides insights into effective communication, revealing how speakers use interrogatives to interact, persuade, and maintain social relationships. Understanding these features is crucial for linguists, educators, and language learners. By integrating pragmatic knowledge into teaching and communication practices, it is possible to enhance communicative competence, avoid misunderstandings, and promote effective interpersonal and cross-cultural interactions.

The study of interrogative sentences thus contributes both to theoretical linguistics and practical applications in education and professional communication.

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