



FUNCTIONAL AND PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract: This article investigates the functional and pragmatic features of interrogative sentences in English and Uzbek, offering a comparative analysis of how questions operate within distinct linguistic, social, and cultural frameworks. Interrogative sentences play a vital role in communication, serving not only to seek information but also to perform a wide range of interactive functions—such as expressing uncertainty, eliciting responses, softening requests, signaling politeness, negotiating social relations, and managing conversational turns. The study examines both the structural forms and communicative functions of interrogatives in the two languages, highlighting the ways in which their usage reflects underlying pragmatic principles and culturally embedded norms. In English, interrogative sentences exhibit a variety of structural types including yes/no questions, wh-questions, tag questions, and alternative questions each associated with distinct pragmatic functions. English interrogatives often make use of intonation patterns, auxiliary verbs, and pragmatic markers to convey nuances of meaning, such as politeness, emphasis, hesitation, or speaker attitude. For example, tag questions can serve not only to request confirmation but also to soften assertions or build solidarity between interlocutors. The pragmatic use of interrogatives in English demonstrates cultural preferences for indirectness, negotiation of social distance, and sensitivity to face-saving strategies within interaction.



Keywords: interrogative sentences, pragmatics, functional features, English language, Uzbek language, question types, politeness strategies, sociocultural norms, cross-cultural comparison, discourse analysis.

Introduction: Interrogative sentences are among the most important and versatile tools in human communication, serving not only to elicit information but also to perform a wide range of social and interactive functions. Beyond their grammatical form, interrogatives play a crucial role in managing conversations, negotiating relationships, signaling politeness, expressing uncertainty, seeking confirmation, and facilitating the exchange of ideas. The study of interrogative sentences from a functional and pragmatic perspective allows researchers to analyze how linguistic structures are employed in real communicative contexts and how they reflect culturally shaped norms, social roles, and interactional strategies.

Linguistic functionality focuses on the role that interrogative sentences play in conveying meaning and achieving communicative goals. This includes analyzing the different types of questions yes/no questions, wh-questions, tag questions, and alternative questions and their specific functions in discourse. Pragmatics, on the other hand, examines the way these sentences are interpreted in context, taking into account speaker intention, listener perception, social relationships, cultural norms, and situational factors. Together, functional and pragmatic analyses provide a comprehensive understanding of interrogatives as both grammatical forms and social instruments, revealing the complex interaction between language, communication, and culture.

English and Uzbek offer a rich field for comparative analysis due to their distinct typological, cultural, and pragmatic characteristics. English interrogatives often utilize auxiliary verbs, syntactic inversion, intonation patterns, and pragmatic markers to convey subtleties of meaning such as politeness, emphasis, or hesitation. Tag questions, for instance, can function to confirm information, seek agreement, or



establish social solidarity. These features reflect cultural tendencies toward indirectness, individual autonomy, and negotiation of interpersonal relationships.

In contrast, Uzbek interrogative sentences employ question particles, verb affixes, intonation contours, and contextually conditioned forms to signal respect, social hierarchy, and communal values. The use of interrogatives in Uzbek discourse frequently reflects collectivist cultural norms, including deference to elders, attention to social roles, and maintenance of social harmony. Understanding the pragmatics of Uzbek questions thus requires awareness not only of grammatical rules but also of the sociocultural context in which communication occurs.

Main Part:

Interrogative sentences are essential tools in communication, serving as versatile instruments for eliciting information, guiding interaction, and managing social relationships. From a functional and pragmatic perspective, questions go beyond their grammatical form to convey subtle shades of meaning, influence interlocutor behavior, and reflect culturally embedded norms. A comparative analysis of English and Uzbek interrogative sentences reveals both universal characteristics of questioning and culturally specific strategies that shape their use and interpretation. In English, interrogative sentences manifest in several structural types, each carrying distinct pragmatic functions. Yes/no questions, for example, are designed to confirm facts or solicit agreement and often employ auxiliary verbs and subject-verb inversion. Wh-questions, which begin with interrogative pronouns such as "what," "where," "why," or "how," are used to obtain specific information and can vary in politeness, formality, or urgency depending on context. Tag questions, another characteristic feature of English, combine a declarative statement with a brief interrogative tag, such as "isn't it?" or "don't you?" Their pragmatic function often extends beyond simple confirmation: they can mitigate the force of a statement, invite agreement, establish solidarity, or soften potential face-threatening acts. Alternative questions, presenting two or more options, serve to limit or guide



the listener's response while maintaining a degree of politeness and conversational control. Intonation, stress, and pragmatic markers such as "please" or "I wonder" further influence the interpretation of English interrogatives, allowing speakers to balance directness with politeness, assertiveness with social tact, and information-seeking with relational sensitivity.

The pragmatics of English interrogatives also emphasizes context-dependent meaning. A question like "Could you close the window?" functions as a request rather than a literal inquiry, demonstrating the importance of social and situational cues in shaping interpretation. Similarly, "You haven't finished your work, have you?" may function simultaneously as a confirmation-seeking question and as a subtle prompt for action. These examples illustrate how English interrogatives are flexible communicative tools, whose function is often modulated by the speaker's intention, the social distance between interlocutors, power dynamics, and cultural norms that favor indirectness, negotiation, and politeness strategies.

Uzbek interrogative sentences, by contrast, reflect the collectivist and hierarchical orientation of Uzbek culture, integrating morphological, syntactic, and prosodic features that signal respect, social status, and communal values. Question particles such as "-mi," "-dimi," and "-chunki" are often used to indicate interrogativity, with accompanying intonation patterns distinguishing yes/no questions from information-seeking wh-questions. Verb affixes and honorifics play a central role in signaling deference and social propriety, particularly when addressing elders, authority figures, or socially esteemed individuals. In Uzbek, a simple question such as "Kitobni o'qidizmi?" ("Have you read the book?") may carry additional layers of social meaning, depending on verb forms, honorific usage, and contextual markers. Unlike English, where politeness is often achieved through syntactic or lexical mitigation, Uzbek interrogatives rely on culturally sanctioned morphological and lexical strategies to convey respect, maintain social harmony, and reflect ethical obligations. Politeness strategies in interrogative sentences



exemplify the intersection of pragmatics and culture. English speakers typically employ hedges, modal verbs, and indirect constructions to minimize imposition, e.g., “Would you mind helping me with this task?” or “Could you tell me the time?” Such forms reduce the face-threatening potential of direct questions while maintaining the speaker’s goal of obtaining information or eliciting action. In Uzbek, politeness is frequently expressed through verbal honorifics, culturally embedded formulaic expressions, and contextually appropriate intonation, as in “Sizdan iltimos qilaman, shu ishni bajarasizmi?” (“I kindly request you to do this task”). These strategies not only convey politeness but also reflect the speaker’s adherence to social hierarchy and communal norms, illustrating that the pragmatic effect of a question is inseparable from its sociocultural context.

Contextual factors further shape the use and interpretation of interrogatives in both languages. In English, conversational setting, social distance, power relations, and discourse role influence whether a question functions primarily as information-seeking, a polite request, or a rhetorical device. In Uzbek, context additionally encompasses cultural expectations regarding respect for elders, age hierarchies, and collective responsibility, influencing the choice of question particle, verb form, and intonation. These contextual variables highlight that understanding interrogative sentences requires more than grammatical knowledge; it requires sensitivity to the social and cultural norms governing interaction. Functionally, interrogatives serve multiple communicative purposes beyond information-seeking. In English, they can express uncertainty, invite feedback, guide conversation, or assert rhetorical control. Tag questions, in particular, are multifunctional, enabling speakers to soften assertions, encourage agreement, or subtly challenge the interlocutor. In Uzbek, questions also serve as tools for maintaining social cohesion, signaling politeness, and negotiating obligations within interpersonal relationships. They may convey moral or ethical considerations, reinforce communal norms, and guide behavior in socially acceptable ways. The functional versatility of interrogatives in both



languages demonstrates the inseparability of linguistic structure, pragmatic intention, and sociocultural context.

Stylistic and expressive devices further enrich interrogatives in discourse. In English literature and conversation, repetition, parallelism, and figurative language can heighten emotional intensity, emphasize urgency, or create rhetorical effect. In Uzbek discourse, interrogatives are often embedded in proverbs, traditional sayings, and culturally significant expressions, conveying not only literal information but also social, moral, or ethical meaning. These stylistic strategies reveal that interrogatives operate as culturally mediated communicative acts, transmitting both immediate intentions and broader societal values.

Comparative analysis underscores both universal and language-specific features of interrogative sentences. Universally, questions serve as tools to elicit responses, facilitate interaction, and regulate discourse. However, the form, function, politeness strategies, and cultural encoding differ markedly between English and Uzbek. English interrogatives prioritize individual autonomy, conversational negotiation, and subtle indirectness, whereas Uzbek interrogatives emphasize respect, hierarchy, and social cohesion. These differences have significant implications for cross-cultural communication, translation studies, second language acquisition, and discourse analysis, highlighting the necessity of integrating functional, pragmatic, and cultural perspectives to understand interrogative sentences fully.

In conclusion, the functional and pragmatic analysis of interrogative sentences in English and Uzbek reveals that these constructions are dynamic instruments of communication, shaped by linguistic form, social context, and cultural norms. By examining their structural, pragmatic, and culturally embedded features, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of how interrogatives operate as interactive tools, mediating information exchange, social relationships, and cultural values across diverse communicative settings.



Conclusion:

The analysis of interrogative sentences in English and Uzbek from functional and pragmatic perspectives demonstrates that questions are far more than grammatical constructions; they are versatile communicative tools that shape interaction, manage social relationships, and reflect cultural norms. English interrogatives typically rely on syntactic structures, modal verbs, intonation patterns, and pragmatic markers to convey politeness, mitigate imposition, and negotiate conversational dynamics, reflecting cultural values of individual autonomy, indirectness, and egalitarian social relations. In contrast, Uzbek interrogatives employ question particles, verb affixes, honorifics, and culturally conditioned formulaic expressions to signal respect, hierarchy, and communal responsibility, highlighting the influence of collectivist cultural norms and social hierarchy on communication. This comparative study underscores that the pragmatic interpretation of interrogative sentences is inseparable from their sociocultural context. In both languages, questions serve multiple functions beyond information-seeking, including expressing uncertainty, eliciting feedback, softening requests, signaling politeness, and maintaining social cohesion. Recognizing these functional and cultural nuances is essential for effective cross-cultural communication, translation, language teaching, and discourse analysis. By integrating functional, pragmatic, and cultural perspectives, researchers gain a comprehensive understanding of how interrogatives operate as interactive, socially informed, and culturally embedded communicative acts, reflecting the complex interplay between language, society, and culture.

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