

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF DOUBTFUL INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES IN ENGLISH

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Abstract: *This article analyzes the linguistic features of doubtful interrogative sentences in English on a scientific basis. Doubtful interrogative sentences are studied morphologically, syntactically, semantically and pragmatically, and their communicative functions are highlighted. The study analyzes the difference between doubtful interrogative sentences and simple interrogative sentences, the role of modal verbs, the use of inversion and wh-interrogative pronouns, as well as their properties as rhetorical and indirect speech acts. The importance of doubtful interrogative sentences in increasing expressiveness and effectiveness in the communication process is also shown.*

Keywords: *doubtful interrogative sentences, modal verbs, inversion, semantics, pragmatics, rhetorical question, modality of doubt, communicative linguistics.*

ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ СОМНИТЕЛЬНЫХ ВОПРОСИТЕЛЬНЫХ ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЙ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

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Аннотация: В данной статье анализируются языковые особенности сомнительных вопросительных предложений в английском языке на научной основе. Сомнительные вопросительные предложения изучаются морфологически, синтаксически, семантически и прагматически, а также выделяются их коммуникативные функции. В исследовании анализируются различия между сомнительными вопросительными предложениями и простыми вопросительными предложениями, роль модальных глаголов, использование инверсии и *wh*-вопросительных местоимений, а также их свойства как риторических и косвенных речевых актов. Также показывается важность сомнительных вопросительных предложений в повышении выразительности и эффективности в процессе коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: сомнительные вопросительные предложения, модальные глаголы, инверсия, семантика, прагматика, риторический вопрос, модальность сомнения, коммуникативная лингвистика.

Introduction

Interrogative sentences constitute a separate communicative category in the syntactic system of the English language. They allow not only to obtain information, but also to express the speaker's speech intentions in various ways. One of them is doubtful interrogative sentences. Unlike simple interrogatives, doubtful interrogative sentences express a certain mood of suspicion, doubt or distrust. This article analyzes the morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features of doubtful interrogative sentences on a scientific basis.

1. Theoretical foundations of doubtful interrogative sentences.

In the linguistic literature, doubtful interrogative sentences are referred to as modal interrogatives or doubtful questions (Quirk et al., 1985; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). Their main difference is that in these sentences the interrogative form and modal meaning are combined, expressing doubt or suspicion. For

example:

- *Could he really have done this?*
- *Might they be hiding something?*

In these constructions, the interrogative tone and the use of the modal verb serve as a semantic center expressing suspicion.

2. Morphological and syntactic features.

2.1. Morphological aspects. Modal verbs (*may, might, could, would*) are the most important grammatical devices in doubtful interrogative sentences. Auxiliary verbs (*do, have, be*) provide the formal structure of the interrogative construction.

2.2. Syntactic aspects. In doubtful interrogative sentences, inversion plays an important role: the auxiliary verb comes before the possessor. Wh-interrogative pronouns (*why, how, what*) combine with the tone of suspicion, creating semantic breadth:

- *Why would he refuse such an offer?*
- *How could this situation be explained?*

3. Semantic features. The semantic core of doubtful interrogative sentences is the modals of doubt and possibility. They allow the expression of the following semantic nuances:

1. Assumption and suspicion: *Might she be at home now?*
2. Unreliability: *Could this information be false?*
3. Discontent or surprise: *How could he ignore such an important detail?*

4. Pragmatic features. Suspicious interrogative sentences often perform a rhetorical function. Their main purpose is to encourage the listener to think. They are also used as an indirect speech act. For example:

- *Do you really think this is acceptable?* (actually: *"I don't believe it"*). They also strengthen the emotional-expressive connection with the interlocutor and add subjectivity to the speech.

5. Functional types of suspicious interrogative sentences

a) Modal suspicious interrogative sentences: express suspicion through a modal verb (*Might they be wrong?*).

b) Rhetorical suspicious interrogative sentences: no answer is expected, the speech effect is enhanced (*How could anyone believe that?*).

c) Indirect suspicious interrogative sentences: formally a simple question, but in fact express sarcasm or doubt (*Do you call this a solution?*).

Apart from that, suspicious interrogative sentences are used in many speech situations in English, and they serve not only simple doubts, but also emotional and stylistic purposes. Let's consider the main ones:

1. When expressing doubt and distrust: In this case, the speaker does not fully believe the information, expresses doubt. Examples:

- *Could this really be true? — (Could it be true?)*

- *Might she have lied about it? — (Could she have lied about it?)*

In these situations, the speaker does not believe in the truth, but sees it as a possibility.

2. In surprise or astonishment: Most often, suspicious interrogative sentences are used to express strong emotions — surprise, amazement, distrust.

Examples:

- *How could he forget his own birthday? — (How could he forget his own birthday?)*

- *Why would they refuse such a generous offer? — (Why would they refuse such a generous offer?)* The answer is not important, but the speaker wants to express his surprise.

3. In irony or disapproval: Sometimes, suspicious interrogative sentences are used not as direct doubt, but as disapproval or irony. Examples:

- *Do you really call this a victory? — (Do you call this a victory?)*

- *Is this what you call being helpful? — (Do you call this a helpfulness?)*

Here the speaker indirectly expresses the meaning of 'not really like this'.

4. In rhetorical speech: Often the speaker does not expect an answer, but encourages the listener to think. Examples:

- *How could anyone believe such nonsense? — (How could anyone believe such nonsense?)*

- *Who would ever do such a terrible thing? — (Who would ever do such a*

terrible thing?) The goal is to influence the listener, not to answer.

5. In making a probable guess: Sometimes, a doubtful interrogative sentence expresses a probable guess about future or past events. Examples:

- *Could she be waiting for us at the station?*

- *Might they have already left?* The speaker is not certain, he is only guessing.

6. In emotional assessment: The speaker expresses his subjective attitude to the situation through a suspicious question. Examples:

- *Would you really ignore such an important message? — (You really ignore such an important message?)*

- *Could anyone be so careless? — (Who could be so careless?)*

Here the speech takes on an emotional-expressive color. So, suspicious interrogative sentences are widely used in English in situations of: doubt and distrust, surprise and surprise, discontent and irony, rhetorical effect, probable assumption, emotional assessment

Conclusion

In English, suspicious interrogative sentences are morphologically formed by modal and auxiliary verbs, and syntactically rely on inversion and wh-interrogative pronouns. Semantically, they express suspicion, doubt, distrust, and surprise. Pragmatically, they increase the effectiveness of communication as a rhetorical and expressive tool. Therefore, the analysis of suspicious interrogative sentences is relevant not only for syntax, but also for pragmatics, stylistics, and communicative linguistics.

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