

**INTERROGATIVE IN THE HUMANITIES AND LINGUISTICS: THE
EPISTEMOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

**INTERROGATIVA EM HUMANIDADES E LINGUÍSTICA: A EPISTEMOLOGIA
DA PESQUISA**

**INTERROGATIVO EN LAS HUMANIDADES Y LA LINGÜÍSTICA: LA
EPISTEMOLOGÍA DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN**

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ABSTRACT: *The article discusses the epistemological foundations of the study of the interrogative in linguistics and humanities. The purpose of the article is to identify semiotic correlations between the interrogative and the language thinking of native speakers of national languages: Russian and French. The hypothesis is put forward those interrogative constructions serve not only for the direct formation of interrogative statements, but also perform a secondary function of transmitting pragmatic information. Several semiotic correlates of the interrogative and discourses of various types have been revealed. An important element of the found correlations is the belonging of nonverbal and verbal discourses to the phenomenon of interrogative creativity, in particular, the French semiotic tradition. The results of the conducted research can be applied in further research in the field of synergetic correlation of the interrogative and the linguistic picture of the world of national languages.*

KEYWORDS: *Interrogative. Language picture of the world, semiotic code. Verbal. Non-verbal. Discourse analysis. Semiotics of interrogative constructions.*

RESUMO: *O artigo discute os fundamentos epistemológicos do estudo do interrogativo em linguística e humanidades. O objetivo do artigo é identificar correlações semióticas entre o pensamento interrogativo e linguístico de falantes nativos de línguas nacionais: russo e francês. A hipótese é apresentada de que as construções interrogativas servem não apenas para a formação direta de enunciados interrogativos, mas também desempenham uma função secundária de transmitir informações pragmáticas. Vários correlatos semióticos das interrogativas e discursos de vários tipos foram revelados. Um elemento importante das correlações encontradas é a pertença dos discursos não-*

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verbais e verbais ao fenômeno da criatividade interrogativa, em particular, à tradição semiótica francesa. Os resultados da pesquisa realizada podem ser aplicados em pesquisas futuras no campo da correlação sinérgica do quadro interrogativo e lingüístico do mundo das línguas nacionais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Interrogativo. Imagem da linguagem do mundo, código semiótico. Verbal. Não-verbal. Análise do discurso. Semiótica das construções interrogativas.*

RESUMEN: *El artículo discute los fundamentos epistemológicos del estudio de lo interrogativo en lingüística y humanidades. El propósito del artículo es identificar las correlaciones semióticas entre el pensamiento interrogativo y el lenguaje de los hablantes nativos de las lenguas nacionales: ruso y francés. Se plantea la hipótesis de que las construcciones interrogativas sirven no solo para la formación directa de enunciados interrogativos, sino que además cumplen una función secundaria de transmisión de información pragmática. Se han revelado varios correlatos semióticos de los discursos interrogativos y de varios tipos. Un elemento importante de las correlaciones encontradas es la pertenencia de los discursos verbales y no verbales al fenómeno de la creatividad interrogativa, en particular, a la tradición semiótica francesa. Los resultados de la investigación realizada se pueden aplicar en futuras investigaciones en el campo de la correlación sinérgica de la imagen interrogativa y lingüística del mundo de las lenguas nacionales.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Interrogativa. Imagen del lenguaje del mundo, código semiótico. Verbal. No verbal. Análisis del discurso. Semiótica de construcciones interrogativas.*

Introduction

The national language and the interrogative discourse are in synergetic interaction. This means that these semiotic substances, having their grammar, vocabulary, and syntactics specific for each category, reflect the essential characteristics of the ethnocultural worldview and mentality. The national picture of the world has different hypostases of its existence, among which language and interrogative forms are important in terms of generating and accumulating the cultural experience of society.

Any natural language has several characteristics, primarily due to the implementation of its main function – communicative one. The essence of the communicative function in the most general terms is to ensure the transfer of information of various kinds to the interlocutor, depending on the strategic and tactical goals of communication. In other words, the main "task" of language is to ensure communication between people.

The relevance of the work lies in the need to study interrogative statements, since they, being the basis of dialogical speech, can also be considered the basis of colloquial discourse. To master a foreign spoken language, it is necessary to master the

system of the interrogative of the language being studied, that is, to correctly understand, translate and use interrogative sentences in the flow of speech.

Theoretical significance: the work contributes to the study of fragments of the linguistic picture of the world and the national language personality, as well as to the further development of the provisions of the theory of language, linguoculturology, linguistics related to the idiolect and ethnocultural specifics of the methods of interrogative verbalization of the national language personality.

The practical value of the research is seen in the fact that the results obtained in the work can be used in the development of university lecture courses and seminars on the grammar and phraseology of the French language, special courses on the problems of linguistic personality, the theory of intercultural communication, the theory and practice of translation.

The interrogative, as a specific form of human contact with the surrounding world, has existed for as long as the human race has existed. At the dawn of civilization, it is quite likely that the cognizing subject, under the influence of the concept of "curiosity", worked only at the level of linearity of consciousness, in other words, tried to know the external world in direct forms of the interrogative, which was actively introduced into all spheres of life *of homo sapiens*: hunting, fishing, agriculture, etc. Gradually, a "white crow" appears among the members of the tribe (kinship unions, clans, and other "groupings"), who comes up with analytical questions to the inner world, addressed to his/her consciousness, such as: *Who am I? Why do I need this? Why do they treat me like that? When will this end?* The "white crows" turn into priests, advisers, academics over time, and all this, in our opinion, is due to the presence of an innate prerogative in the human mind.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of the study is to reveal the system of meanings and means of expression of French interrogative statements in comparison with the system of Russian interrogative. The set goal determines the solution of the following tasks:

1. To systematize the interrogative constructions in the modern national language.
2. To investigate and describe the lexical and semantic features of interrogative sentences in French and Russian.

3. To compare, analyze and reconstruct the pragmatics of the interrogative in the languages under consideration.

The main purpose and objectives of the research are also the detection and description of the dialectic of the interdependence of interrogative and non-interrogative statements, sharing the opinion that any forms of the interrogative as sign systems represent an integral material-ideal formation that includes the unity of the signified/signifier (Kristeva, 2015).

In most cases, the meaning of an utterance (interrogative or affirmative) – the spiritual-ideal content – is considered as modeling, comprehension, generalization of the phenomena of reality. However, we should not miss the fact that the interrogative meaning is not only the development of existing values, but at the same time, it is a created "new" value that has not existed before and does not exist outside of this speech work (Guillaume, 2004).

Literature review

Most scientific schools of our time put the study of a person at the forefront to improve his/her potential. Anthropocentrism as a research principle occupies a leading place in modern paradigms of humanitarian scientific knowledge. The correlations between natural language and the interrogative have been investigated within the framework of this principle, which implies an appeal not only to the cognitive and communicative characteristics of language and thinking but also to several ideological and ethnocultural aspects of the linguistic-semiotic space.

The theoretical basis of the study was the following works:

- in the field of general problems of the theory of language and communication: V.G. Gak, J. Guillaume, Ferdinand de Saussure, S.G. Ter-Minasova;
- on the study of the problems of linguistic personality: Yu.N. Karaulov, A.P. Sedykh;
- on the study of discourses of various types: V.I. Karasik, Yu. Kristeva, Hofstede (2011);
- on the study of the problems of correlations between the interrogative and language thinking: G.F. Gavrilova, N.I. Golubeva-Monatkina, M.A. Gorte, S.S. Fomina, S. De Boer, L. Foulet.

Methods

Speaking about the correlations of natural language and the interrogative, it is necessary to determine the place of human language in the classification of semiotic systems. It has been proposed to attribute the interrogative to a certain extent to the non-verbal semiotic continuum, and the national language to the verbal one. Nevertheless, the interrogative itself can be considered as a text consisting of non-verbal (interrogative *sui generis*) and verbal components.

Considering the specifics of interrogative and purely linguistic perception, it should be noted that both categories are conditioned by the so-called "spirit of the nation" (Sedykh, 2009; 2016). It can be said that each type of interrogative and dialogic product is to a certain extent "generated" by the national language.

Dialogue is the main form of a person's linguistic existence within the framework of the national linguistic and cultural community. Dialogic speech has repeatedly been the subject of philological research, but any language is in the process of constant evolution, in particular, the mobility of language units and speech structures within the framework of interpersonal interaction of individuals.

To achieve adequate formats of analysis and epistemological description of interrogative constructions, it is proposed to introduce the "dialog-interrogative" term, which, in our opinion, is one of the actively developing forms of modern communication.

The methods and techniques used in the study: observation method, consisting of a selection in the text of the relevant facts and phenomena, and the inclusion of them in the right category; the encyclopedic method, including the study of the meaning of words in close connection with objects and phenomena which they represent; the comparative-typological method, revealing the similarities and differences of interrogative statements in different-structured languages.

The methodological basis of the work was the provision on the semiotic approach to the verbalization of interrogative constructions in language and speech and on the potential for identifying characterological features of a linguistic personality in terminology and discourse. The paper applies the principles of linguistic identification, as well as the provision on the linguistic personality as an interrogative instance of discourse.

The methods and techniques of research have been predetermined by the set goal and objectives of the study, as well as the specifics of the material. The following methods were used in the work: descriptive and introspective, based on the techniques

of reflexive observation of live spoken speech; component analysis of language units and interpretive analysis of the utterance; the method of identification projection, including techniques for establishing the identity of linguistic and interrogative features; methods of rhetorical analysis. The identification of the key features of the language personality's interrogative is based on the symptomatic method of discourse processing. Elements of comparative and component-connotative generalization of language material were also used.

Results

The history of the study of the issue and interrogative sentences in linguistics began in the 16th century when this topic had been found in scattered scientific treatises. Global works on interrogative sentences of the Russian language have been published since the 17th century. This refers to the "Grammars" of V.E. Adodurov (1731) and M.V. Lomonosov (1756).

Further on, a whole galaxy of Russian scholars (a preferably phonetically-intonation aspect of interrogative utterances) is engaged: A.M. Peshkovsky, E.M. Galkina-Fedoruk, V.V. Babaytseva, etc.

The famous "Grammar of the Russian language" was published in the middle of the twentieth century (1952-1954), which belongs to the representatives of the philological school (Vinogradov's School of Russian Studies) under the direction of Academician Vinogradov Viktor Vladimirovich. The historical and philological method of Viktor Vladimirovich was the basis for the innovative systematization of subsections of Russian linguistics, in particular, syntactics and syntagmatics of interrogative statements (according to the purpose of the statement), which are interpreted as sentences, "...in which the speaker expresses his/her desire to learn something from the interlocutor through intonation, as well as through special words or word arrangement" (Russian grammar, 1980). As we can see, the interrogative is considered not only from the point of view of the presence of special pronouns but also through the prism of the intonation contour and the order of words in the utterance.

Taking into account Russian and several foreign philological directions, the scholars create universal concepts of linguistics, the key element of which is the lexeme (word) and the stylistic aspect of the language unit in combination with the system-socio-historical reality. V.V. Vinogradov focuses on the synergy of word-formation, grammatical and lexicological mechanisms in the process of the evolution of the

national (Russian) language. Therewith, the scholar identifies "word formation" as a special linguistic discipline, and also lays the foundations for the development of independent disciplines, such as "The History of the Russian Literary Language" and "The Science of the Language of Fiction".

One of the authors of the "Grammar of the Russian Language", Evdokia Mikhailovna Galkina-Fedoruk, differentiates interrogative sentences according to the principle of goal-setting and distinguishes them into three groups of statements: *actually-interrogative, rhetorical, interrogative-motivational*. Evdokia Mikhailovna not only classifies interrogative sentences but also gives them a detailed description, supporting the scientific argumentation with interesting examples of works by the classics of Russian literature, describes in detail the connector elements of the question: pronouns, adverbs, particles.

With the advent of the structuralist approach in linguistics, the structural and organizational section of the description of interrogative syntactics was developed in the seventies of the last century. The most popular is the description of Professor Natalia Yuryevna Shvedova, who considers the structural schemes of interrogative sentences from the point of view **of the presence/absence** of a pronominal interrogative word in its composition. The scholar also writes about the existence **of free and phraseologized** interrogative statements in the Russian language (*Is he joking? How can I disagree? Isn't this happiness?*). An innovative aspect of Natalia Yurievna's concept is the selection of interrogative sentences characterized by the presence **of unchangeable forms** (*really, unless, what if*).

An important element of the description of interrogative sentences can be considered the classification of their functions (primary and secondary). The secondary functions of sentences of this type are of the greatest interest since they include: *rhetorical questions* (internal negation), a question-confirmation of an order or question, a question-clarification, an emotional-reactive question (Russian grammar, 1980).

The secondary functions of interrogative sentences are most clearly realized in the texts of fiction. The grammar lists the main cases when a question has an expressive coloring: a confident expressively colored statement, a confident expressively colored denial (the so-called rhetorical question), a question-clarification, a question-an incentive to something, a question expressing the emotional reaction of the speaker.

Let us present some features of interrogative means in several languages. In all cases, the general language rules of the interrogative can include the presence of a

question involving the search for an answer (the primary function of the interrogative). Interrogative statements are formed in the Russian language using the interrogative pronoun (who, what, how much, etc.), adverbs (where, why, etc.), particles (unless, whether, but, etc.). This also includes grammaticalized combinations (isn't it, could be, etc.). Therewith, the Russian interrogative is based on three interrogative categories: intonation, word order, and interrogative words (particles, pronouns, and adverbs). Sometimes the question, according to G.F. Gavrilova, can be formed in whole phrases. She introduces the term "communicative" and implies whole phrases under it: *What is it about?; But how is it so?* (Gavrilova, Kozhina, 2002).

Meanwhile, the formal means of the interrogative (pronouns, adverbs, particles) are not always a categorical imperative of interrogatives, since only the intonation contour can generate the format of the question (Fomina, 2001).

Traditionally, three types of intonation of interrogative sentences are described, in particular, the Russian language, depending on the place of the interrogative word in its composition:

The intonation of interrogative sentences can be as follows:

- a) ascending if the word on which the stress falls is at the very end of the sentence.
- b) ascending-descending, if this word is located in the middle of the sentence.
- c) descending if this word is at the beginning of the sentence.

In our opinion, the ascending intonation can be attributed to the typical features of interrogatives. The peripheral interrogative means should include the ascending and ascending-descending melody of the phrase when additional emotional and expressive "notes" are added to the latter (Golubeva-Monatkina, 2013). For a Russian general question, it is characteristic to raise the tone on the question word, and then sharply lower it.

We will focus on the formal signs of the interrogative in various languages for the contrastive accentuation of the main research topic. It should immediately be said that there are rare languages in which there is no formal interrogative marking. In this case, the question can only be generated using the context (Ter-Minasova, 2000). The question is accompanied by a special prosodic intonation in most languages. In some cases, intonation can act as the only marker of the interrogative, this applies, for example, to Italian and Romanian. In French, a similar phenomenon exists, but it limits

its functioning in the colloquial register: *Tu manges?* (Will you eat?); *On ira au magasin ce matin?* (Are we going to the store in the morning?).

Numerous languages include those in which the interrogative is transmitted using special particles (unchangeable parts of speech):

(Japanese) = the *ka* particle is placed at the end of the interrogative phrase;

(Polish) = the *czy* particle is placed at the beginning of the question phrase;

(Finnish) = the enclitic-*ko* or *-kö* is used (following the laws of vocalism), which is placed after the language unit to which the question is asked, and which is placed at the beginning of the interrogative phrase;

(French) = the *si* particle introduces an interrogative subordinate clause;

(Quebec French) = vernacular French of the Canadian province uses (in oral speech) the particle *tu* after the verb of the interrogative phrase, nevertheless retaining the personal pronoun-subject. It should be noted that this pronoun-subject does not move to the postposition with the verb (inversion + hyphen), as required by standard French: *On en achète tu, ou on n'en achète tu pas?* (Are we buying or not buying?) In such cases, since the pronoun *tu*, placed after the verb, is desemanticized, performing the function of an interrogative particle, then the inversion hyphen is not put (*Tu mandes tu?*, and not *Tu manges-tu?*).

(Arabic) = several interrogative pronouns are used in this language, depending on which pronoun acts in the function of the subject. Therewith, the phrase can remain purely nominal, without losing its basic meaning.

(Turkish) = the *mu/mu/mi* particles are used here following the vocal consonance of the preceding word. The particle is placed after the verb base, then verb suffixes (personal and temporary) are put.

As we can see, different languages use specific formal elements of the interrogative, which correspond to both the phonetic mechanisms of phrase construction and the logical structures of each of the languages.

Returning to the degree of study of the interrogative, we note that French philology begins a systematic study of the interrogative constructions of the national language, starting from the New Age (for France, this is the period from the end of the 16th to the end of the 19th centuries). French grammarians note the difficulties of describing and defining interrogative utterances already in this period, even though intuitively all researchers identify them as such (Vaugelas, 1970). One of the reasons for these difficulties is the polyvalence of interrogative markers, which can be found not

only in interrogative statements but also in other types of speeches (affirmative, motivational, stating, etc.). On the other hand, the interrogative system of the modern French language is characterized mainly by an abundance of interrogative constructions that provide the user with an effective tool for transmitting a significant number of semantic nuances (Sedykh, Albert, 2020).

The arsenal of interrogative means of the French language is a complex semiotic device and it is necessary to take into account three levels of functional and stylistic properties when analyzing it: literary language, colloquial discourse, and vernacular. This complexity of the interrogative is compounded by the inevitability of interference of the three above-mentioned registers. Recall that the markers of the French interrogative are: intonation contour, an interrogative morpheme (adjective, adverb, or particle), word order (inversion).

If intonation and inversion retain their relevance not only in the Gallo-Romance language but also in the modern French interrogative utterance, then the interrogative morpheme, since the sixteenth century, has been having specific parameters of functioning (Sedykh, Albert, 2020). The interrogative phrase *est-ce que* (which in this period is called "particle" as an unchangeable part of speech and is often referred to as a colloquial phrase) becomes the most frequent, especially in the "total question": *Est-ce que tu viendras demain? Est-ce que tu aimes ce livre?* This phrase is less frequent in the "partial question" and serves to strengthen the interrogative term: *Où est-ce que tu vas? (Pourquoi est-ce que...? Comment est-ce que ...? Quand est-ce que ... ?)*

Colloquial phrases (*est-ce que; qu'est-ce que*) become "overactive" in French discourse in the classical period (the seventeenth century). Academician Claude Favre de Vaugelas writes about this, preferring new forms of the question to established interrogative constructions ("*Pourquoy est-ce que les Romains firent telle chose?* (est) beaucoup mieux que si nous disons *Pourquoy fut ce que les Romains* " = ("Why exactly did the Romans do it?", sounds better than "Why were it the Romans who did it?")) (Vaugelas, 1970, p. 309).

We find a large number of interrogative constructions with *est-ce que* in the works of the classic of French literature – Moliere: (Imaginary patient) "*Qu'est-ce que cela? vous riez?*"(What is it? Are you laughing?); (Les Precieuses ridicules) "*Qu'est-ce donc que ceci? Qui nous payera, nous autres?*" (What is it? Who will pay us?) "*Qu'est-ce qui nous donnera de l'argent?*"(Who will give us money?); (Bourgeois gentilhomme, Le) "*Qu'est-ce que c'est donc que cela?*"(What is it?) "*Quelle figure!... Parlez donc,*

qu'est-ce que c'est que ceci?" (What a go! ... Tell me, what is it?). In modern French, such utterances are not uncommon in colloquial discourse: "*Qui est-ce qui partira le premier?*" (Who will leave first?), "*Qu'est-ce que tu as vu?*" (What did you see?), "*Où est-ce que nous allons?*" (Where are we going?), "*Quand est-ce que vous partirez?*" (When will you leave?), "*Pourquoi est-ce que tu es là?*" (Why are you here?) (Grevisse, Goosse, 2007).

Many French scholars, both past and present, are interested in the general problems of the evolution of the forms of the French language's interrogative. Thus, the linguist Lucien Foulet poses the following questions:

1. What is the origin of the "picturesque" variety of forms of interrogative in the French language?
2. What is the percentage of randomness or "capriciousness" of this phenomenon?
3. Is it possible to identify the laws and mechanisms of such a variety of interrogatives behind the variability of forms (Foulet, 1921)?

Discussions

Ferdinand de Saussure formulated the main provisions of semiotics in the Course of General Linguistics based on a synthetic approach to language (*langue*) and speech (*parole*), where language is represented as "a common set of means used for all speakers in constructing phrases in a given language" and "a system of differentiated signs corresponding to differentiated concepts" (de Saussure, 2011, p. 25), and speech is represented as an individual implementation of a language system. Here it is appropriate to cite the well-known words of a linguist, bringing together the interrogative and everyday discourse, that a sign is a "two-sided psychic entity" that combines "a concept and an acoustic image" (de Saussure, 2011, p. 18). The acoustic image is understood as the material appearance of the sign (the signifier in the language, the sound form of the interrogative), and the concept is the content side of the sign (the signified, the image of the question).

In our opinion, the initial (historically formed) point of searching for an explication of the phenomenon of the French interrogative is to understand how the national language gradually "abandoned" the Latin form of the question based on the use of special particles (**-ne**, **-num**, **-nonne**). Therewith, the verb was used in the form of subjunctive in the Latin language. Since the 16th century, French has begun to use

subject and verb inversion to formulate interrogative statements. According to grammarians, this is due to the objective necessity of "getting rid of declensions" (Foulet, 1921). In fairness, it should be added that there is a partial rejection of inverse constructions in modern French (especially in colloquial form).

Lucien Foulet calls the initial tendency to use inversion in interrogative statements the term "*chasse à l'inversion*" (lit. 'hunting for inversion'). According to the scholar, the French language got rid of the system of declensions of vulgar Latin in this way: from the Latin "version" of the question *Vobis relinquens filius est?* (*part votre fils* = 'is your son leaving'), to the French interrogative of modern times (*votre fils part-il / est-ce que votre fils part?* = 'your son, is he leaving/isn't your son leaving') (Foulet, 1921).

There is also a somewhat differentiated point of view for the explication of the "hunt for inversion", which comes down to three reasons-factors:

1. Phonetic and morphological factors. The decay of the case system (declension). French did not adopt the case forms of the Latin language, becoming mainly an analytical language
2. The logical factor. The general tendency is to use a progressive construction with the subject in the first place.
3. The psychological reason. Stress on the last syllable of the lexeme (syntagmatic accentuation) (De Boer, 1926)

Let us focus on the purely logical origin of the interrogative construction of the type "*Votre amie danse-t-elle?*", which has stylistic "roots" (the format of a stylistic device). Various linguists call this phenomenon differently: "disjunction selection" (Havet, 2000), "pathetic construction" (Weil, 1978), "prolepsis" (Gorte, 2007), "emphatic word order" (Foulet, 1921). It should be noted that this construction is preserved in many languages and various types of phrases. For example, such a structure retains its stylistic "charge" in Dutch and Italian. The inverse interrogative loses its stylistic coloring only in the French language, that is, it neutralizes its affective function (grammaticalized, crystallized), taking on the name of the "complex issue" (Foulet, 1921). The sacramental question of why this construction retained only its grammatical function only in French and nowhere else (not in any modern language), having lost its emotive-expressive charge, has remained open since the 15th century.

In contrast to the above opinion of respected linguists, we believe that phrases with inverse constructions of the French interrogative can be attributed to the sublime

(refined) register of speech since modern colloquial French discourse tends to "disuse" complex inversion. The complex inversion is used only in written literary discourse, part of which (along with the neutrality of the written-business register, for example) refers to high style.

Conclusion

Thus, the epistemological paradigm of the study of the interrogative, both in Russia and other countries, is at the forefront of the research interests of linguists. Therewith, each national school puts forward original priorities and places its accents in terms of highlighting the essential features of the subject of research. The degree of knowledge of the interrogative is also determined by the degree of frequency of the usage and the general communicative task of the national language.

The theoretical calculations of this article can be interpreted as motivational guidelines for future research of discourse, in particular, an interrogative discourse based on the synergetic principle of selecting empirical material. Within the framework of this approach, it is proposed to use a cognitive-communicative analysis of the discourse formats of the language means of the national language and the interrogative. This will help not only to identify additional semiotic correlates of the interrogative and everyday discourse but also to identify and categorize typological features of the national mentality and the linguistic personality of the creator of the speech work with their help.

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