



PRAGMATIC TRANSPOSITION OCCURRING IN THE SYSTEM OF INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES

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Abstract

Illocutionary or pragmatic transposition is an example of the functional and content interdependence of speech structures, demonstrating a different manifestation of illocutionary force and stimulating the occurrence of new speech acts. This encourages a consistent study of the cases of pragmatic transposition arising in the system of interrogative sentences.

Keywords: interrogative sentences, pragmalinguistics, speech structure, functional-semantic, pragmatic transposition.

The term "transposition" is derived from the Latin word "transpositio" ("transfer, displacement") and has been used in linguistics for a long time. However, this concept has been interpreted in various ways. Traditionally, the change in the grammatical meaning of linguistic units while preserving their general content indicates that transposition is understood in a broad sense. The narrow interpretation of transposition also encompasses examples of linguistic asymmetry, taking into account the inter-categorical shift of words reflecting incomplete or complete morpho-syntactic transfer of units belonging to the lexical layer (Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1990).

According to V.G. Gak, any grammatical and pragmatic function is formed in the process of linguistically expressing meaning, which results from the representation of reality in human consciousness. The realization of this meaning is the primary function of the resulting grammatical form (Gak 1979).

Clearly, the secondary function or meaning is the result of the pragmatic transposition of the interrogative structure and is formed in a specific communicative context. The primary goal of activating interrogative sentences in context is to carry out an information request and obtain information in this way. In such a situation, the question performs the function of a questive speech act, and the addressee is required to answer the given question. For instance, structures like "Haven't you done your homework?" are interpreted as a typical pattern of questive speech acts.

It is evident that the activation of the interrogative structure in the function of constative, directive, and other speech acts is the realization of a secondary function. We have already mentioned that this function is the result of pragmatic transformation. In this case, the communicative value of the speech structure changes. This, in turn, reveals that the meaning of these structures is not a simple sum of the elements participating in their content.

The interrelationship between primary and secondary pragmatic functions arising in the structure of interrogative sentences has a somewhat complex nature. For example, as noted by the authors of well-known scientific works and textbooks, structures like "Why do/don't you do it?" or "Why don't you join in?" can be interpreted depending on the situation either as

advice or as a question (Gordon, Lakoff 1975). When this structure is accepted as an advisory speech act, the primary and secondary meanings do not negate each other. However, when this structure has the status of a direct interrogative (questive) speech act, the secondary meaning is not activated. We can observe the realization of the structure as a questive speech act in the following dialogue:

-Why did you do that?

-Did you object?

-Hell, no. I just want to know why you did it (Irvin Shaw).

When functional shifts occur within syntactic structures, the primary meaning may lose its value, and the secondary meaning can become dominant. As a result, sentences of different forms can express the same speech act.

In most cases, inconsistencies are found in grammatical literature when determining the communicative value of interrogative sentences. For instance, structures like "Am I tired?," "Is he a liar?," "Am I hungry?" are considered interrogative-exclamatory sentences by J. Leech and J. Svartvik (1982), while in other literature they are classified as exclamatory-emotive sentences (Jacobs 1993). In the textbook of English stylistics, structures of this form are presented as examples of the transposition of interrogative sentences into exclamatory sentences (Arnold 1981). Am I hungry? While J. Leech and J. Swartik (1982) consider such constructions as interrogative-interjectional sentences, in other literature they are classified as interjectional-emotional sentences (Jacobs 1993).

Sentences of this type differ from basic interrogative sentences. Firstly, they convey the speaker's certainty about an event, expressing an affirmative or constative speech act. Secondly, they are pronounced with a distinctive intonation; while the intonation of a question rises, the intonation of the speech structures we are examining falls. Additionally, in these sentences, the auxiliary verb and the subject receive emphatic stress: Am I tired! Has she grown! Did he look annoyed? The indicated features allow us to categorize these structures into different communicative types: inversion of word order leads to their interpretation as interrogative sentences, the expression of the message content justifies their inclusion in the category of declarative sentences, and emphatic stress prompts viewing these structures as exclamatory sentences.

Research suggests considering intonation and context as the main linguistic factors in the occurrence of functional-semantic transposition (Shendels 1990). Additionally, in each situation, it is possible to identify specific, individual factors of transposition. The lexical-grammatical structure of the sentence and other structural indicators also play an active role. In the interaction of these factors, a particular semantic feature may become dominant, causing others to weaken.

If we examine the lexical composition of interrogative sentences expressing a constative speech act in a specific context, we observe that they often contain particles such as "oh" and "well," as well as nouns functioning as particles, such as "God," "Jesus," "Christ," and "hell."

Compare: Tot was already at the bus station, revolving like a lighthouse beacon. "By hell, am Ah glad to see you?" he greeted (S. Chaplin).

In the given example, the interrogative sentence "By hell, am Ah glad to see you?" does not actually express a question. On the contrary, in this case, it conveys a statement. To determine the presence of this speech meaning, we turn to a linguistic experiment, namely,

we transform the interrogative structure into a declarative sentence: Tot was already at the bus station, revolving like a lighthouse beacon. "I'm very glad to see you," he greeted.

In English, when the modal verbs can/could are used in an interrogative structure, they do not express the action reflected in the second part of the complex predicate, but rather convey an emotional attitude. Compare: We just danced. God, could that dopey girl dance? (J. Salinger). Boy can you make delicious coffee? (N. Mc. Cawley).

In these examples, the question is not seeking information about whether the interlocutor can make coffee or the girl can dance. Rather, a message (confirmation) indicating the speaker's surprise is being conveyed.

The neutralization of the illocution of asking questions based on the pragmatic transposition of interrogative sentences is especially noticeable in the realization of rhetorical questions. In such cases, the speaker aims to draw the addressee's attention or elicit a judgment. This type of interrogative sentence does not require an answer, but instead encourages the listener to take action by evoking certain emotions. Compare:

-I... I forgive you!

I was stunned in amazement. He forgives? How? Wasn't theft the worst vice for my father? Wasn't it my father who said that theft is the root of all sins? (Khalid Husayni. The Kite Runner, 66).

In the given dialogue, the neutralization of the interrogative meaning and the activation of expressive communication are evident. Here, too, the process of meaning transformation has two stages, as it occurs in the opposition of question/statement and affirmation/negation.

In certain situations, to reflect the weakening of the interrogative meaning, the question mark in writing is replaced by an exclamation mark. The preservation of the interrogative form serves to emphasize the level of expressiveness in the speech act.

Generally, the realization of various types of speech acts through interrogative sentences demonstrates the broad pragmatic possibilities of these sentences. Indeed, the pragmatic function of speech acts in this structure is to influence the listener and call them to action. Therefore, some linguists refer to interrogative sentences used in the function of an imperative or exclamation as "sentences of appeal" (Chomsky 2006).

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