Echo - Questions as a Pragmatic Type of Interrogative Sentences and a Special Type of Communication

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Abstract: This article deals with researching of echo-questions. It is admitted that echo-questions are a pragmatic type of interrogative sentences where they can repeat a part or all of what someone has asked. And they are also a special form of interrogative statements. The purpose of the article is to point out the importance of the usage them in the dialogue speech. It is admitted that echo-questions are used in dialogue speech but they can be used in monologue speech too. Speakers usually repeat a question because they didn't fully understand or hear what was said, or they simply can't believe someone would ask such a question or express feelings and emotions where intonation allows us to clarify what we are thinking. Echo-questions as an interrogative sentence can have different interrogative form: general, special, alternative, disjunctive. It is noted that they can repeat questions of different forms but they are not able to create them and it differs them from interrogative sentences. But echo-questions can transform the question which is repeated by them. The transformations depend on their pragmatic intention. It is important to note that echo-questions can express different emotions and feelings of the speaker which is not possible for interrogative sentences which can only be used for request. It is admitted that echo-questions can repeat the previous statement which can be not only interrogative sentences but affirmative and negative ones partially and fully. It depends on the intention which is followed by the speaker. Echo-questions as linguistic phenomena are very important for communication because speakers can understand each other better. Researching of the pragmatic peculiarities of echo-questions is important for specification of dialogue speech.

Keywords: Echo-Questions, Interrogative Sentences, Interrogative Statements, Dialogue Speech, Pragmatic Intention

1. Introduction

Considering echo-questions as a special type of interrogative sentences in speech, it can be noted that echo-questions can repeat not only affirmative sentences, but also interrogative ones. [1]

The usage of echo-question constructions to express indirect speech acts is a well-known linguistic phenomenon which can give some pragmatic information and have some communicative functions. [2]

It is noted that echo-questions are pragmatic in accordance with their features and structure. One semantic feature of echo-questions is that they are anaphoric to a previous statement. A preliminary statement usually immediately precedes a question and determines its content in speech. Echo-questions in speech acquire special features that give speech a pragmatic meaning.

The variety of communicative intentions is so rich that in individual speech acts the interrogative form can convey an expressive statement, such as encouragement, authorized assessment, emotions. Identification and interpretation of communicative intent becomes possible only in a certain context, which is an important factor that reveals the nature of the speech phenomenon in terms of content. [2]

The purpose of the article is to analyze echo-questions as a pragmatic type of interrogative sentences and to point out their differences. The task of the article is to show the pragmatic features of echo-questions, to point out the structural features of echo-questions and interrogative sentences, to analyze echo-questions in dialogic speech.

2. Pragmatic and Semantic Peculiarities of Echo-Questions

We can admit that an interrogative sentence expresses only a request, a search aimed at finding out certain information. The semantic structure of an interrogative sentence contains a request for the competence of the addressee which is a universal communicative function of the question category, determines in the system of sentences of the interrogative modality functional-semantic types that are combined on the basis of primary and secondary functions. Echo-questions are aimed at obtaining specific information and expressing of emotions, assessments, polite encouragement, expressive affirmation or denial, maintaining contact, etc. The values of echo-questions are revealed in the process of communication. [3, 4].

In the next dialogue:

Sexton: Ohhh! Ohhh!

Kuryatin: Ahh, greeting, Father. What bring you here?

Sexton: The pain is unbearable… It is beyond unbearable… It is unendurable!

Kuryatin: Where exactly is the pain?

Sexton: *Where isn't it?* Everywhere! It's not just the tooth. It's whole side of my mouth.

Kuryatin: How long have you had this agony?

The echo-question *Where isn't it?* has the communicative and pragmatic functions and repeat the special question adding some special negative emotions using negative particle *not* missing some words of the previous statement.

Echo-questions can repeat different types of interrogative sentences because they are a form of reflection of reality and are aimed at expanding knowledge. [4-8]

Echo-questions can repeat the previous statement to show the attitude to the speaker to express different emotions. They can be divided into partial -echo-questions that can repeat the previous statement partially following pragmatic intention and full -echo-questions which can repeat the previous statement fully. But the identity of them is in expressing positive or negative emotions and feelings and the speaker has a complete picture of the situation, but does not know whether it corresponds to reality, so he needs to confirm or deny the information. [9-11]

The semantics of the echo-question is considered as containing modal parts. These concepts, introduced into the wide linguistic circulation, are defined as distinguishing, on the one hand, the message itself (that is, the object meaning of the sentence) - dictum, proposition - and, on the other hand, the relationship of the speaker to the message, i. e. sentence mode, its modality.

The other features of the echo-questions are the same as those of the narrative and persuasive ones:

a) all communicative echo-questions are structurally divided into simple and complex, two-syllable and one-syllable, common and uncommon;

b) echo-questions belong to grammatically articulated syntactic units, which are characterized by an abstract structural model and paradigmatic relations;

c) echo-questions correlate with reality and reflect it, therefore, they have certain modal meanings.

It is noted that the syntactic form of an echo-questions aims at the desire to learn something from someone and the communication of this desire [12, 13].

The following structural elements are characteristic of the situation reflected by the echo-question: question, addressee, addressee, answer. Not all elements can be expressed at the same time, one of them can dominate, some are sometimes absent, and sometimes occupy an optional position. The category of the question occupies a leading position, although it can have additional nuances: message, assumption, inducement, denial, confirmation, and others. The category of the addressee is a mandatory component of the semantic structure of the interrogative sentence, since the question is repeated in order to get information. [14, 15]

Echo-questions can repeat the general questions completely or partially to show the attitude to the speaker. In the next dialogue:

Linda: Well, then… Can I call you?

Mariel: *Can you?*

Linda: Should I? I mean? Can I call you? Or how do you want to leave this, Mariel? Because I don't really think I could do without this … without your friendship… Oh… what am I saying? I'll just be at work, and you can call me if you want to. Do you think you'll want to? [Cinoman: 30]

The echo-question *Can you?* is repeating the general question partially following the pragmatic intention.

In the next dialogue:

"Is it possible" exclaimed Mr. Lorry.

"*Is it possible*?" repeated De Farge, bitterly.

"Yes. And a beautiful world we live in, when it is possible, and when many other such things are possible, and not only possible, but done, see you! – under that sky there, every day long live the Devil. Let us go on." [Dickens: 57]

The full- echo-question is repeating the previous general question fully following the pragmatic intention too.

It is admitted that echo-questions can repeat the special questions.

In the next dialogue:

Annabel said "Isn't there any message from Luigi Leopardi?"

"Who's he?"

"Who's he? You know who he is" Billy said.

"I'm feeling rotten what do you want Leopardi for?" [Spark: 94]

the echo-question *Who's he?* is repeating the special question fully. It helps the speaker clarify information and express surprise.

In the next dialogue:

"It is a weapon for my size. What a weapon". And he had pulled it out and showed Nisus the inch-wide barrel, and the wide fridges. What do you do with it?"

"What do you do with weapons?"

"It's for killing". [Aldridge: 220].

the echo-question *What do you do with weapons?* is repeating the special question changing pronoun *it* into the

noun *weapons* to clarify information.

In the next dialogue:

"Where do you think we should go?" Pilar asked.

"*Where?*"

"Yes, where" [Hemingway: 178]

The echo-question *Where?* is repeating only special word of the special question. It helps the speaker express surprise and clarify information.

In the next dialogue:

"Holes?" Marie looked about her as if searching for them.

"Where is he?"

"Where's who?"

"Both well", she replied absently.

"He's the one who saved you, not I". [Gibbs: 226]

The convert echo-question *Where's who?* which is used for clarification information, is repeating the special question changing personal pronoun *he* into the relative one *who*.

It is noted that echo-questions can repeat the affirmative statement into the interrogative one. In the next dialogue:

Wilmer: Rewind the tape, the tape, the tape.

Aide: *What tape?*

Wilmer: Your Sony TCS – 3 mini cassette recorder, here, purchased under Title Five and activated by a button – there. (Feels under lip of desktop). Tapes here. (Side compartment of desk). Button's there. [Hill: 133].

The echo-question *Where's who?* is repeating the previous affirmative statement transforming it intro interrogative one. And the same time it is clarifying information.

It is admitted that echo-questions can repeat the afirmative or negative statements without transformation.

In the next dialogue:

Ella: I wouldn't mind.

Jim (humbly): *You wouldn't mind?*

Ella: No, I wouldn't mind. (An awkward pause). [O'Neil: 87-88].

The echo-question *you wouldn't mind?* is repeating the negative statement fully and is conveying shyness of the speaker.

3. Echo-Questions as a Special Type of Communication

We can admit that echo-questions are special types of communicative acts. They can have a social character [2, 3, 6] and are mainly used in dialogue and can be considered as an independent communicative interaction, express mutual influence on the thoughts and positions of speakers entering into communication, and also use in different speech situations.

A specific situation can be determined by the nature of the relationship between its speakers. Communication between speakers who are completely strangers to each other reflects the zero degree of manifestation of signs, between acquaintances - the superficial first degree; communication between close friends, relatives and lovers - the second degree, communication between members of the same family

- the third degree revealed signs. In subjectively undefined situations, there is a zero degree of familiarity between the speakers, in subjectively defined situations, communication is built on the basis of any interlocutor. [13, 14]

In the dialogue:

"Maggie looked at Tom in mute distress — their father's mind was so far off the present, which would by-and-by thrust itself on his wandering consciousness! Tom was almost ready to rush away, with that impatience of painful emotion, which makes one of the differences between youth and maiden, man and woman.

"Father", said Maggie, laying her hand on his, "don't you remember that Mr. Riley is dead?"

"*Dead?*" said Mr. Tulliver sharply, looking in her face with a strange, examining glance.

"Yes, he died of aproximately nearly a year ago. I remember hearing you say you had to play money for him; and he left his daughters badly off — one of them is under-teacher at Miss Firmss's, where I've been to school, you know …" [Eliot: 311].

Echo-question *Dead?* is used with the purpose to express surprise and the communication between speakers is of the second degree.

In the next dialogue:

"Mr. Isaacs has been very good to us, and we owe him money".

"*Money, mother?*" She cried, "What does money matter? Love is more than money" [Wild: 62].

The speaker uses *Money, mother?* as an echo-question to show the anger of the speaker and it is the communication of the second degree too.

In the next dialogue:

Nurse (softly). No. A miracle.

Doctor. What's that?

Nurse. A miracle... the baby is a miracle.

Doctor. *A miracle?* This is Cleveland. It'll be a miracle if the mother's insured [Seebring: 193].

The echo-question *A miracle?* expresses indignation and it the third degree of communication.

In the next dialogue:

Julie: Why don't you sell your television?

Celia: Sell my television? I don't know. I never thought of that. It costs four thousand dollars, you know.

Julie: *Four thousand dollars?* Where would you get four thousand dollars!? [Shepp: 36]

The echo-question *Four thousand dollars?* expresses request and it the communication of the first degree.

4. Conclusions

Echo-questions are considered as a special type of interrogative sentences which are not only a grammatical and semantic unit, but also a communicative one. In addition to the value of predicativeness and semantic structure, the echo-question has the functional value, which is connected with the distribution of the communicative load between speakers.

It is admitted that echo-questions can be used in

communication of different degree.

They can help speakers communicate deeper and understand each other better which is very important at present time. We can acknowledge that it is important to research this linguistic phenomenon in future because modern communication needs modern communicative technology.

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