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How dialogic are tag questions?
A contrastive study in British English and European Portuguese

Keywords: tag questions; genre; function; contrastive study

The present study contrasts the frequency of use, type and function of tag questions (TQs) across dialogic and monologic texts in British English (BE) and European Portuguese (EP).

Based on data extracted from ICE-GB and CORAL-ROM, the distinction will be considered between variable TQ (VTQ) - (1) -, when the question tag (in italics) is structurally and lexically dependent on the anchor (underlined) and invariable TQ (ITQ) - (2) - when the question tag is not dependent on the anchor (Hudson, 1975; Kimps, 2018; Goméz González & Silvano 2022). Additionally, following the model proposed in our previous work (Goméz González 2018; Goméz González & Dehé 2014; Goméz González & Silvano 2022; Silvano & Goméz González 2023), TQ will be classified in eight functional types: informational, hortatory, facilitative, affective, challenging, focusing, phatic and regulatory. Informational, hortatory and facilitative are addressee-centred, but while the first aims at eliciting additional or confirmatory information (1a), the other two are action-seeking, hortatory TQ being used as demands or invitations (2a) and facilitative TQ as polite strategies to give the floor to the addressee (1b). Affective (2b) and challenging (2c) TQ, on the other hand, are speaker-centred, the former focusing on his/her opinions, emotions, and feelings towards the content of the anchor, and the latter operating as confrontational strategies. Finally, focusing (1c), phatic (2d) and regulatory (2e) TQ are centred on the exchange, requesting the addressee's attentiveness to what is being said (focusing), controlling contact (phatic), or self-regulating the exchange (regulatory)

Grounded on statistical significance tests, our findings revealed that, even though both VTQ and ITQ are more frequent in dialogic texts in the two languages, EP shows a statistically significant higher incidence of the two formal types both in monologic and dialogic texts across the eight functionalities. Moreover, our results confirmed that genre has an influence on the choice of the formal and functional type of TQ, although in different ranking orders.

Examples

(1)

 a) <u>You've seen Martin's hall</u> *haven't you*? < ICE-GB:S1A-073 #4:1:B> Goméz González & Silvano 2022)

 b) A: You've seen you've seen Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles haven't you? B: I have. Yes. We can get that out if you want. <ICE-GB:S1A-006 #159:1:B>

 c) But everybody talks about them you see? don't they? as being so marvellous <,> < ICE-GB:S1A-016 #203:1:D > (Goméz González & Silvano 2022)

(2)

    a)   <u>I'll give you a ring next time I'm down and we'll try and meet</u> *OK*? <ICE-GB:S1A-038#011:1:A> (Goméz González & Silvano 2022)

    b)   Um colégio razoável, razoavelzinho, não é ? <CORALR ptelpv03>
        "A reasonable school, kind of reasonable, isn't it?" (Goméz González & Dehé 2014)

    c)   Desde que a vossa caravela da, hhh, dos quinhentos anos não navegou, não é? <CORALR pfamdl04>
        "Your caravel hasn't sailed since it turned five hundred years old, has it?" (Goméz González & Dehé 2014)

    d)   ORQ: fomos a um restaurante brasileiro // <<|está bem|>> ? <CORALRptelpv08> (Goméz González & Silvano 2022)

    e)   (GRA: Dava então muitas aulas / só / a pessoas / já formadas // normalmente médicos / e engenheiros // <não é> ? <CORALRpfamcv03>
        'GRA: At the time you taught many classes only to graduates normally doctors and engineers, right? Goméz González & Silvano 2022)

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