



THE USE OF STABLY FORMED INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES AS SPEECH ACTS

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Metacommunication¹ is defined as the regulation of the process of verbal communication using lingual tools [9,32-33]. Such a definition of metacommunication, according to Matyukhina and Jacobson, is related to the fulfillment of the phatic function of language. Metacommunication (or phatic metacommunication) includes the aspects, such as a) the initial stage of the establishment of speech contact / speech contact; b) speech contact support / approach phase and c) speech contact disconnection / termination phase. [9, 32-33; 8,110-111; 5,15].

The boundary between metacommunication and original communication is not always easily defined. Contrasting informativity and metacommunication in real speech communication does not necessarily mean the autonomy of each of them, however, requires interrelation [7,146; 4,32].

Such a mixture (syncretic) and multifaceted nature of the speech movement performing the phatic function complicates their study. In the context of a metacommunicative speech act, there are two groups of active interrogative sentences which are used for the following purposes:

- 1) establishing contact (at the meeting, at the beginning of the conversation) and drawing the attention of the addressee to the reception of the message;
- 2) the use of communicators in the process of message transmission (contact). We try to

describe the conditions for success in the context of a metacommunicative speech act:

1. Prerequisite: The addressant and the addressee are able to establish and maintain a verbal relationship.
2. The condition of sincerity: the addressee and the his/her desire to establish and apply a verbal relationship.
3. An important condition: it is clear from the opinion of the addressee that there is a purpose to establish a verbal relationship.

Among the fixed-content interrogative sentences that perform the function of establishing a verbal relationship, typically, verbal etiquette formulas are listed in dictionaries:¹ How do you do? How are you? How are you getting on? How's it going? How's tricks? How are you doing? How are things? How are you keeping? How's yourself? How goes it? where such greetings are included.

As mentioned above, clichés are the sentences which are used as ready-made speech structures and allow for some variation in the lexical structure. The purpose of this communication, as well as “creating an environment of trust in the message and its source”, is to ensure the success of this communicative act. [6,122-123; 13,125].

The choice of this or that form of greeting depends on many factors, such as gender, age, service or social status of the addressee, distance between communicators, communication situation and so on. It is not appropriate to apply to a close acquaintance, a person of a younger or equal age in a natural situation, to an older person who is less familiar and in a formal situation. [11,50; 12,155]

¹ The works by R.Jacobson, D.Vunerlich, A.Vejbitskaya, V.D. Devkin, A.A.Knyazeva, Y.V. Matyukhina, Y.L.Baydikova are dedicated to the problem of phatic communication. Y. Matyukhina and R. Jacobson associate the phatic function of language with the process of communication, the focus on contact, the ability to establish, continue or pause a relationship, check that the communication channel is working, attract the speaker's attention or make sure he/she is listening attentively. [Matyukhina 1999:pages 147-148; R.Jacobson 1975-page 201].

¹ Dictionary of American Idioms and phrasal verbs. R.A. Spears . New-York, McGraw-Hill, 2005. – pages 312-314



The following example proves the social basis for the choice of the desired form, taking into account the above signs of greeting:

- Hello, George. How's everything?
- Good evening, Mrs. Kalvin [26, 25].

As we can see, different forms of greeting are chosen for the same situation to the addressees who are different according to their age and social status.

How do you do? is a common form of greeting, can be characteristic of formal situation communication and is used at a meeting of strangers. Compare lexical comments: How do you do? → a standard inquiry and response on greeting or meeting someone. [20,312]. For example:

"Gavin, this is Sheila Beckwith, our number one editor". "How do you do", said Wilson. "I understand you've had to interrupt your holiday on my account" [22, 21].

How are you getting on? How are you doing? How are things? How are you keeping? How are you? which is freer, hence, is a cliché which does not differ from the most polite forms of communication and greeting. They are used in the communication of well-known people in a free natural state depending on age and social status. Compare lexical comments: How are you? — a conventional greeting, often also a definite inquiry about someone's health and welfare. Alec: How are you doing? How are / or how's / things? How are you keeping? [19,78].

Also compare lexical comments: How are you keeping? / Coll. Rather old-fashioned / How are you? / used when one meets a friend whom one has not seen or met for some time / This can be varied, for example to refer to another person, as in: How is your mother keeping? Or in such phrases as: Are you keeping well? [16, 181].

How goes it? How's tricks? is an even freer cliché, it is usually used among close friends. In this context, let's look at the lexical commentary: How goes it? / coll / -Hello, how are you? What is happening? - / used to seek news, especially when two friends meet. [16, 132]. Other examples:

- "How goes it?" he asked pleasantly.
- Oh, fine. How are you?
- Busy as hell [25,231];
- It isn't Janice, Harry. It's me, Peggy.
- Oh. Hi. How's tricks? How's Ollie? [24, 222].

How's yourself?, the cliché is included in the list of slangs and is usually used by the younger generation and probably somewhat educated people. Thus, the greeting consists of a minimal dialogic unit, two different speech acts are repeated alternately by the two communicators.

For example: "Elizabeth! How lovely to see you. How are you?" Elizabeth's smile was polite and blank. "We met at the Gholmondeleys" said Morgan hurriedly.

"Yes, of course! How are you?" [27,15].

The greeting is also different from the original form:

Mrs Burnett: How are you keeping, love?

Steven: Hello, Mrs. Burnett... Well enough... [21, 15].

In some cases, the answer can be in the form of "I'm fine; fine; Couldn't be better; so so". For example:

- "How are you?" he asked, following her into the living room.

- "Fine, absolutely wonderful. Can I get you a drink?" [27, 358];

- "How's it going?"

- "So-so," he said. [23, 52].

As a result of their regular use in verbal communication, greeting forms become semantically narrowed and become "outdated ideas within the framework of speech etiquette", [1, 26] and the speaker does not intend to obtain information about the real state of affairs of the interlocutor. So, How are you? How's it going? How do you do? phraseological interrogative sentences serve as a greeting, usually not demanding information, but as high-level ritual speech acts, help to make social contact. Even if these verbal acts require some information, they will continue to serve the addressee to communicate with the interlocutor. Interrogative sentences with such phraseological content are only activated as a metacommunicative speech act of interaction.

Usually, after the greeting, the metacommunicative function is followed by interrogative pronouns with other phraseological content which eventually form a complete set of metacommunicative features and create the conditions for the transition to direct communication. So, How are you? How are things? The ideas expressed in this form can be expressed and specified in the context of the family environment and service, for example: How is your wife / family, mother? /; How are the children? How's your mother keeping?; How are things at home / in your department? How are you getting on with your thesis? and so on.

This type of persistent questionnaire is a unique preparation for future conversations of communicators on "non-informational" topics and an invitation to this conversation. [2,146]. In such cases, it is important to have a conversation in general, not what to talk about [3,5].

For example:

"Mr. Kosak," I said, "how are you anyway?"

"I'm fine, Johnny," said Mr. Kosak. "How are you?"



“Couldn’t be better, Mr. Kosak” I said.
“How are the children?”

“Fine!” said Mr. Kosak. “Stephan is beginning to walk now.”

“That’s great,” I said. “How is Angela?”

“Angela is beginning to sing,” said Mr. Kosak.

“How is your grandmother?”

“She’s feeling fine,” I said. “She’s beginning to sing too.” [26, 76].

What is important for small talks is not the transmission of information (communicators exchange information in any case during communication), but the implementation of social communication as part of social activities [15,29].

In communication with the interlocutor, in addition to greetings, phraseological interrogative sentences are also used to attract the attention of the addressee. This metacommunicative task is very important in the initial phase of communication and requires the addressee to break the barrier of negligence in receiving the communicatively important information because “sudden speech (without the addressee’s attention) may not be accepted at all or partially distorted” [10,52].

In conclusion, it should be noted that in the text of the metacommunicative speech act, there are interrogative sentences with a fixed content, which help to establish a communicative contact. Stable interrogative sentences which serve as a contact include greetings, as well as other phraseological phrases helping attract the addressee’s attention. Phraseological interrogative sentences supporting speech communication are divided into groups of sentences used by the speaker and the addressee. Thus, the speaker can use so-called reflective interrogative sentences to support speech contact, and this case their function is to activate the addressee’s attention to the information conveyed, to enhance his receptive and thinking activity.

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