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تحليل مقارن: بناء جمل الاستفهام باللغتين الإنجليزية والكردية

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المستخلص :

البشر مخلوقات اجتماعية ويستخدمون اللغات كوسيلة للتواصل. هناك الآلاف من اللغات التي يتحدث بها البشر في جميع أنحاء العالم. تشترك هذه اللغات في بعض أوجه التشابه والاختلاف. تتيح أوجه التشابه للمتعلمين تعلم لغة ثانية / أجنبية بسهولة. ومع ذلك ، فإن الاختلافات في اللغات قد تجعل المتعلمين يواجهون بعض الصعوبات لإتقان لغات أخرى. هذا البحث هي محاولة للمقارنة والتباين بين جملة الاستفهام الإنجليزية والكردية وخاصة لمعرفة كيف يختلف هيكل السؤال الإنجليزي عن اللغة الكردية. للقيام بذلك ، يستخدم الباحثون المنهج الوصفي النوعي ، والذي لم يتم تصميمه لاستخدام الإجراءات الإحصائية ولكن لاستكشاف نتائج البحث. علاوة على ذلك ، تم التركيز على تشكيل أربعة أنواع مماثلة من جملة الاستفهام. هذه الأنواع هي نعم - لا سؤال ، سؤال المعلومات ، سؤال الذلي وسؤال البديل. وقد خلص إلى أن هناك بعض أوجه الشبه والاختلاف في بنية الاستفهام بين اللغة الإنجليزية واللغة الكردية. يظهر تحليل النتائج أن اللغتين مختلفتان تماما في بناء جملة الاستفهام. على سبيل المثال ، يعد تغيير ترتيب الكلمات ميزة أساسية عند تكوين الأسئلة باللغة الإنجليزية. ومع ذلك ، فإن هذا التغيير في ترتيب الكلمات لا يحدث باللغة الكردية. علاوة على ذلك ، تظهر أدوات الاستفهام الإنجليزية دائما في البداية ، ولكن في اللغة الكردية قد يختلف موضع



ادوات الاستفهام وفقاً لوظيفتها النحوية. لذلك ، قد تكون اداة الاستفهام في بداية جملة الاستفهام أو في الموضع الذي تكون فيه إجابة السؤال .
الكلمات المفتاحية: جملة الاستفهام ، التحليل المقارن ، التشابه .

A contrastive Analysis: The Construction of Interrogative Sentences in English and Kurdish

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Abstract :

Human beings are social creatures and they use languages as means of communication. There are thousands of languages that are spoken by human beings all over the world. These languages share some similarities and differences. The similarities enable learners to learn a second/ foreign language easily. However, the differences of languages may cause learners face some difficulties to master other languages. This paper is an attempt to compare and contrast the English and Kurdish interrogative sentence and particularly to know how the structure of English question differs from that of Kurdish. To do so, the researchers use descriptive-qualitative method, which is not designed to use statistical procedures but to explore the finding of the research. Furthermore, the formation of four similar types of interrogative sentence has been concentrated on. These types are yes-no question, information question, tag question and alternative question. It has been concluded that there are some similarities and differences in the structure of interrogatives between English and Kurdish language. The analysis of findings shows that the two languages are completely different in the construction of interrogative sentence. For example, the change of word order is an essential feature when forming questions in English. However,



this change of word order does not occur in Kurdish. Furthermore, English question words always occur initially, however in Kurdish the position of the question words may vary according to its grammatical function. So, the question word may be at the beginning of the interrogative sentence or in the position where the answer of the question is.

Keywords: interrogative sentence, contrastive analysis, similarities.

1. Introduction

Kurdish is a member of the Indo-Iranian branch of Indo-European family of language, which is the largest language family in terms of geographical area and number of speakers (Wafi, 2009: 197). The geographical boundaries of its speakers are located in Asia, and an unknown number of speakers live as refugees in other continents, such as Europe, the United States, Australia, etc. Kurds have been displaced from many countries such as Azerbaijan, Armenia, Jordan, Australia, Britain, Belgium, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Georgia, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, France and Palestine. Canada, Lebanon, the Netherlands, etc. (Mohammed, 2014: 31). In terms of the number of speakers in the world and ahead of languages such as Swedish, Danish, Dutch and Finnish in this regard (Poor, 2015: 143). Kurdish has four main dialects: Lower Kurdish, Middle Kurdish, Lower Kurdish with Goran and their descendants (Ali and Hama-Ameen 2007: 10).

In linguistics, the term contrastive analysis (CA) refers to “a theoretically grounded systematic and synchronic comparison of usually two languages, or at most no more than a small number of languages” (Mair, 2020: 1). Such comparisons frequently reveal similarities and dissimilarities between or among those languages (Ibid). CA has often been done for practical/pedagogical purposes. Thus, the aim has been to provide better descriptions and better teaching materials for language learners (Johansson, 2008: 9). Moreover, being aware of these differences is essential to learn the correct and idiomatic use of the foreign language. Without such awareness, we tend to see and hear things in familiar ways, according to the categories which we are familiar with from our native language (Ibid).

When Kurdish people start to learn and use English as a foreign language, they usually make mistakes in all levels of language especially in grammar. This could be because of the influence from our mother tongue which is often referred to as interference (Johansson, 2008:9). Furthermore, according to the contrastive analysis hypothesis formulated by Lado (1957:23),



difficulties in acquiring a new (second) language are derived from the differences between the new language and the native (first) language of a language user. This is why books in grammar and phonetics for foreign students with a particular mother tongue usually focus a lot on differences between the mother tongue and the target language (Johansson, 2008:9).

With an understanding that the structure of interrogative sentences in English and Kurdish languages have rarely been investigated, the main aim of this study is to acquaint English- Kurdish language learners with the structure of interrogative sentences of English and Kurdish language and explore the similarities and differences between the structure of interrogative sentences in standard English and Kurdish. This study also aims at showing that the same structure used to form interrogative sentences in English does not suit Kurdish language despite the fact that both languages have the same types of interrogative sentences which are general question, special question, tag question and alternative question.

This paper will be presented in four sections. The first section will be the introduction. The second section is a literature review, which includes the definition of a sentence, types of sentence in English and Kurdish, the interrogative sentence, the characteristics of interrogative sentence in both languages, types of interrogative sentences in English and Kurdish and the uses of interrogative sentence. Finally, how interrogative sentences are formed in both languages will be presented. The third section concerns the methodology applied in this study which consists of research questions, data collection and procedures. The fourth section is about the results and discussion of the data analysis.

2.1. Definition of a sentence

A sentence has been defined by a large number of linguists from different languages. Boanerges (2017: ?) defines sentence as the largest grammatical units, by definition it refers to a group of words that begins with a capital letter and ends with any of these three punctuation marks: the period or full stop, the exclamation mark and the question mark. A more formal definition of a sentence is a set of words that is complete in itself, typically containing a subject and a predictor, conveying a statement, question, exclamation, or command and consisting of main clause and sometimes one or more subordinate clauses (Oxford dictionary). Furthermore, Alexander (1988: 12) states that a sentence is a complete unit of meaning. When we speak, our sentences may be extremely involved or even unfinished, yet we can still convey our meaning through intonation,



gesture, facial expression, etc. However, when we write these devices are not available, so sentences have to be carefully structured and punctuated. A written sentence must begin with a capital letter and ends with full stop (.), a question mark (?) or an exclamation mark (!)

Kurdish linguists and specialists also defined sentence. For example Hawrami (1981:303) states that: “A sentence is a speech that contains action and gives complete meaning”. Likewise, Fakhri (2002: 12) indicates that a sentence is a group of words organized for a purpose according to the law of language. Also, Amin (2014:47) defines a sentence as a set of words that gives a complete meaning and is accompanied by a verb.

2.2 Sentence types in English and Kurdish

2.2.1 Types of sentences in English

On the Basis of function, there are four types of sentences, and all of them are accomplish different things. They are assertive, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences (vitto, 2008: 305).

1. Assertive or declarative sentence

An assertive sentence is the most fundamental kind of a sentence. It is used to make a statement, express an idea or provide information. It starts with a capital letter and ends with a period (.) (Cummings, 2018:258). For examples:

- The boy walked home.
- He wants to eat cookies, but he does not know how to make them.

2. Interrogative sentence

An interrogative sentence is basically another word for question. It is a sentence that asks a direct question to seek information. Most times, the responses or replies are declarative sentences that supply answers to those questions. An interrogative sentence ends with a question mark (?) (vitto, 2008: 305). For examples:

- Did George’s mother buy him a car for graduation?
- When will George’s mother buy him a car?

3. Imperative sentence

Imperative sentences do not simply state a fact but rather tell someone to do something. These can be in the form of friendly advice, basic instructions or more forceful commands. Most imperative sentences end in periods. (Cummings, 2018: 273). For examples:

- Please, shut the door.
- Turn left at the bridge.
- Stop bothering me.



4. Exclamatory sentence

Exclamatory sentences are like declarative sentences in that they make a statement instead of asking a question, but their main purpose is to express strong emotion. They are easily recognized because they end in an exclamation point instead of period (Cummings, 2018:278). For examples:

- What a wonderful event this is!
- How lovely she looks!
- He is such a good player!

2.2.2 Types of sentences in Kurdish language

In terms of meaning or content, a sentence consists of the meaning of words and grammatical effects. So sentences give two meanings which are lexical and grammatical and they fulfill the functions of language. The functions of Kurdish sentences, in general are:

1. Declarative sentence

In this type of sentence, the speaker talks about his surroundings and phenomena, which can be true or false news and information, the power is distributed throughout the sentence and eventually decreases. In declarative sentence, there is the ability to replace words and elements without distorting the meaning of the sentence and according to speaker's intention. For Example

- Water freezes at zero degrees and boils at 100 degrees. ئاو له سفر پلهی سیلیزی دەبەستیت و له سەد پله دەکولیت.

2. Interrogative sentence

This type of sentence is generally used to obtain information. The speaker seeks information through questions. For example:

- When will the cinema be empty? سینهما کەمی چۆل دەبیت؟

3. Imperative sentence

In this type of sentence, the speaker asks the listener to do something, through a demand, or command. For example:

- Make me a cup of tea. چایهکم بۆ ناماده بکه.

4. Exclamatory sentence

In exclamatory sentences, the speaker expresses his feelings towards his surroundings, which contains a kind of surprise. (Fatah, 2011: 31-34). For example

- Creator, how beautiful! ئەهی خوايه چەند جوانه!

2.3 Interrogative sentences

Although there are different types of sentences in English and Kurdish, but the main focus of this paper is interrogative sentence as one of the basic



sentence functions. Therefore, only this type will be focused on. Moreover in this section the characteristics, types, uses, and structure of interrogative sentences in both English and Kurdish will be presented so as to show the similarities and differences between the two languages.

2.3.1 The characteristics of interrogative sentence in English and Kurdish

2.3.1.1 The characteristics of interrogative sentence in English

An interrogative sentence in English language has the following fundamental characteristics.

1. An interrogative sentence is used to ask question or request information about someone or something.
2. It must have question word which is either interrogative pronoun or auxiliary verb. For example: What's your name?
3. It must ends with a question mark (?).
4. It can be affirmative or negative. For examples: Is he your younger brother? (Affirmative interrogative), Why do you not meet your teacher? (Negative interrogative).
5. It can be in any tense: present, past and future. For examples when do you go to the office every day? (Present), when did you go to the office yesterday? (Past), when will you go to the office tomorrow? (Future).
6. Interrogative sentences are formed from their declarative counterpart. For example: He won the game. (Assertive), Did he win the game? (interrogative) (Khan, 2002: ?).

2.3.1.2 The characteristics of interrogative sentence in Kurdish

It seems that most of the characteristics mentioned above and what will be written below can be generalized to English and Kurdish languages. This could be because in both languages interrogative sentences have the same types and they are used for the same purposes. Therefore, some basic characteristics of interrogative sentences indicated by a Kurdish linguist Rasul (2014: 50) include:

1. A question mark (?) is placed at the end of the sentence.
2. The listener is the source of knowledge.
3. The speaker does not have information, he gets information through questions.
4. Interrogative sentence does not contain truth and error, that is, the question is any question. The speaker cannot ask a wrong question because he does not have information about the subject.



5. The condition of a question is that the speaker must wait for an answer, otherwise the purpose of the question is not to get information.

6. The act of speaking in a question sentence, the voice tone goes from low to high.

2.3.2 Types of interrogative sentences in English and Kurdish

2.3.2.1 Types of interrogative sentence in English

Celce- Murcia & Freeman (1999: 205) classified questions on the basis of their function into four major types. They are yes-no questions, wh-questions, tag questions and alternative questions.

1. General Questions (yes, no question)

Yes-no questions are common questions which are used to know whether the statement is true or false. Therefore, they require only two possible answers i.e. either Yes or No (Alexander, 1988:259). For example:

- Have you ever been to Egypt? Yes, I have. or No, I haven't.

2. Special Questions (Wh- question or information question)

Wh-questions are questions that begin with wh-words such as who, where, when, etc. This type of question elicits an open end response and is typically used when asking for additional information. Thus, the answer takes the form of a declarative sentence (Barnes, 2006: 38). For example:

- What is your name?
- Where does she live?

3. Tag questions.

Tag questions are short questions that take place at the end of a declarative sentence. We usually use tag questions to ask for confirmation (Celce-Murcia & Freeman, 1999: 259). For example:

- Ali is a soldier. Isn't he?
- Ari likes Kurdish songs, doesn't he?

4. Alternative questions (Multiple-choice question)

Alternative questions offer a choice between two alternative answers. Each of the alternatives in the question is stressed (Cowan, 2008:7). For example:

- Would you like eggs, pancakes or waffles?
- Are you coming or going?

2.3.2.2 Types of interrogative sentence in Kurdish

Like English language, Interrogatives in Kurdish can be divided into four major types, which can be defined in the same way, and they have the same names except the third one which is called tail question in Kurdish.

1. General questions



It is the sentence that the speaker or writer addresses to the listener or reader, to decide and - on the whole sentence and to express approval or disapproval by using one of the following words in the answer (بهاء / Yes) or (نهء / No) alone or restructuring the sentence and saying it without question melody (rising intonation). For example:

- نانہکمت خوارد؟ بهائى / نانہکمت خوارد

Did you have lunch? Yes. Or I had lunch

2. Special questions

The speaker wants to get information about a particular point in his sentence, not the whole sentence. This kind of question includes question words such as كى، كهى، كوئى، چہند، چوں، بۆچى...هتد. For example:

- كهى ديت بۆ قوتابخانہ؟ بهيائى / بهيائى ديم بۆ قوتابخانہ:

When do you come to school? Tomorrow. Or I will come to school tomorrow.

3. Tail questions

It is the question that the speaker asks the listener after a declarative sentence in an abbreviated form to make sure of the idea of the sentence or to achieve its intention. For example:

- ناھنگگهه نهمرويه، وانبييه؟

The party is today, isn't it?

4. Choice questions

The speaker announces two or more purposes to the listener, or reader, and intends to choose one. For example:

- چاي دمخويتوه يان قاوه؟ قاوه

Do you drink tea or coffee? Coffee _____ (Qadir, 1993:18-19)

2.3.3. The function and use of Interrogative sentences

Although the primary communicative function of an interrogative sentence is to request information. There is a lot more that interrogative sentences can do. Other uses or functions of interrogative sentences include:

To ask a direct question

- What are your plans for tomorrow?
- Where are you going?

To express interest

- What are you working on?
- Can you tell me more about this topic?

To gain clarification

- Could you give another explanation?
- How did you do that?

To gather information



- Can you tell me how to make cookies?
- What are the documents that we should submit?

To gain permission

- May I open the door?
- Am I able to get a ride home?

To express a critical thought/rhetorical question

- Why do people do these things to the planet?
- How can he live with himself?

To confirm something

- Could you please repeat it?
- Isn't he the one who has been elected as a president of the Youth Center? (Tomczyk and Janovsky, 2021: ?).

2.3.4 The formation of interrogative sentences

It is important to know how to form interrogative sentences because questions are considered as an essential part of communicating in all languages. This is because through questions one can gain necessary information. From classroom instruction to small talk, English and Kurdish language learners need to grasp the basics of questions formation early on in their studies.

2.3.4.1 The formation of interrogative sentences in English

1. General questions (Yes-No questions)

A yes-no question is a one which asks for Yes or No in answer (Alexander, 1988: 259, Cowan, 2008: 61).

a. Making Yes-no question with auxiliary /modal verbs

If a declarative sentence contains an auxiliary verb like (have or be) or a modal auxiliary such as (may, could, will, etc.), a yes-no question is created from the sentence by applying the subject-auxiliary (or subject-aux) inversion with rising intonation. Subject-aux inversion switches the position of the subject and the verbal element that follows it (Cowan, 2008: 61; Alexander, 1988: 260). See table one below

| Auxiliary/modal verbs | Statement form | Yes-no question form |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Aux. be | She is (not) sleeping right now. | Is she sleeping right now? |
| Aux. have | The boss has (not) read the report. | Has the boss read the report? |
| Modal could | She could (not) do it. | Could she do it? |

Table 1: Yes-no question with auxiliary and modal verbs

If the auxiliaries (be or have) and modal verbs (may, can, could, etc.) are not found in the sentence, the rule of subject- aux. inversion is not applied to form a yes-no question. Instead an appropriate form of the auxiliary do is inserted at the beginning of the sentence. (Barnes, 2006: 37; Alexander,



1988: 260). This process of adding do to a sentence is referred to as “do insertion” or “do support”. The auxiliary do allows the speaker to express tense differences (Cowan, 2008: 61). See table two below

| Aux. do | Statement form | Yes-no question form |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Do (simple present tense) | They live (don't live) in Cardiff. | Do they live in Cardiff? |
| Does (simple present tense) | He runs (does not run) every day | Does he run every day? |
| Did (simple past tense) | Tom went (didn't go) to New Zealand in 1962. | Did Tom go to New Zealand in 1962? |

Table 2: Yes-No question with auxiliary do

If there are a number of auxiliaries in the same sentence it is always the first one that goes in front of the subject statement (Alexander, 1988: 260). See table three below:

| Statement form | Yes-no question form |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| He could (not) have been delayed. | Could he have been delayed? |

Table 3: Yes-no question with a number of auxiliaries

b. Making Yes-no question without auxiliary verb

When the main verb of the sentence is a form of the verb be (am, is, are, was, were), the verb precedes the subject which is in turn followed by a complement (Al-Hamash and Abdullah, 1979: 415). See table four below:

| Verb be as main verb | Statement form | Yes- no form |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Present | He is (not) ready | Is he ready |
| Past | He was (not) a policeman. | Was he a policeman? |

Table 4: Yes-no question with main verb “be”.

In British English, sentences with main verb have (not the auxiliary verb have) also undergo subject-aux inversion to form yes-no question. But in American English, do insertion is used (Cowan, 2008:62). See table five below:

| Have as main verb | Statement form | Yes- no question form |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| British English | You have a pencil. | Have you a pencil? |
| American English | You have a pencil. | Do you have a pencil? |

Table 5: Yes-no question with main verb “have” in British and American English.

2. Special question (wh-questions).

Wh-questions are used to request information that has not been previously mentioned. Unlike yes-no question, wh-question always contains a presupposition. For instance when we ask the question what did John do? We assume that john did something (Cowan, 2008: 72-73).



Wh-question is formed with the following interrogative words: who, whom, whose, which, what, where, when, why, how (Barnes, 2006: 38). Moreover, these wh-words usually occur at the beginning of a sentence which can be considered as one of the main characteristics of wh-questions (Ibid).

Like yes-no questions, it is apparent that the rule of inversion applies to wh-questions. Thus, the presence of the wh-word at the front of the sentence and the application of inversion are intimately connected (Heerany, 2009: 28; Alexander, 1988: 272)

a. Making wh-questions with auxiliary/modal verbs

If a sentence contains an auxiliary verb (be and have) or a modal auxiliary (can, could, will, would, etc.), wh-question is created by inverting the place of the subject with the auxiliary verb (Cowan, 2008:71; Alexander, 1988: 272). See table six below:

| Auxiliary/modal verbs | Statement form | Interrogative form |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Be | He is working hard? | How is he working? |
| Have | He has gone to school. | Where has he gone? |
| Modal verb | I will be leaving soon. | When will you be leaving? |

Table 6: Wh-question with auxiliary/ modal verbs

If there is no auxiliary or modal verbs in a sentence, an appropriate form of verb do (do, does, did) is introduced in the question (Barnes, 2006: 38; Alexander, 1988: 272). See table seven below:

| Auxiliary verb (do) | Statement form | Interrogative form |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Do | We arrive at 8. | When do we arrive? |
| Does | He arrives at 8. | When does he arrive? |
| Did | He arrived at 8. | When did he arrive? |

Table 7: wh-question with auxiliary “do”

b. Making wh-questions without auxiliary/modal verbs

Interrogative sentences introduced by the initial wh-question words have a similar structure to that of a simple declarative clause (Wekker and Haegeman, 2000: 25-26). In other words when the subject of a declarative sentence is questioned, no fronting or inversion rules apply. The subject is simply inverted into an appropriate wh-word (Cowan, 2008: 72). See table eight below:

| Wh-word as a subject | Statement form | Interrogative form |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Who | Sally came to the lesson | Who came to the lesson? |
| What | Heavy rain causes floods | What causes floods? |
| Whose | John’s phone rang | Whose phone rang? |
| Which | The black horse won. | Which horse won? |

Table 8: Wh-question asking about the subject



When a sentence includes verb to be (am, is, are, was, were) as a main verb, the place of the subject is inverted with the verb to be (Barnes, 2006: 38). See table nine below:

| Verb be | Statement form | Interrogative form |
|---------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Am | I am a teacher | What are you? |
| Is | The party is tomorrow. | When is the party? |
| Are | They are innocent | What are they? |
| Was | She was a grandmother. | What was she? |
| Were | They were in the museum. | Where were they? |

Table 9: Wh-question with main verb “be”

Finally, prepositions can precede question words (Alexander, 1988: 273; Cowan, 2008: 72). This means that only in such case the wh-words do not occur initially in wh-question type. For example:

- To whom should I apply for more information?
- In which hall will the recital be given? (Alexander, 1988: 273)

3. Tag question

A tag question is a mini-question that is attached to the end of a sentence. It is used to ask for confirmation or agreement from the listener that the statement is true (Heerany, 2009: 28). One of the main features of tag question is that it generally contrasts in polarity with the statement (Celce-Murcia & Freeman, 1999: 259). That is the tag question consists of two parts: an affirmative statement followed by a negative question or a negative statement followed by an affirmative question (Alexander, 1988: 266).

Hence, the structure of the positive tag question consists of an auxiliary followed by a personal pronoun subject, while the negative consists of the particle not followed by a personal pronoun (Heerany, 2009: 29). See table ten below:

| Form of tag question | Tag question |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Affirmative-negative | John was annoyed, wasn't he? |
| Negative- affirmative | He wasn't annoyed, was he? |

Table 10: forms of tag question

The second main feature of tag question is the use of personal pronoun when forming the tag question. The pronoun always refers back to the subject of the declarative (Alexander, 1988, 266). As Celce-Murcia & Freeman, (1999: 260) stated that if the subject of the main clause is not a pronoun, then it must be pronominalized in the tag. For example:

- Megan is quite a basketball player, isn't she?



However, the only word that can be used as the subject in the tag question which is not a personal pronoun is referential “there”. (Celce-Murcia & Freeman 1999: 260). For example:

- There are a lot of social event at this time of year, aren't there?

a. Making tag questions with auxiliary verb

If the statement has an auxiliary verb (be, have) or a modal verb (can, could, will, etc.), the same auxiliary or modal verb is repeated in the tag question followed by the subject which is always a pronoun (Heerany, 2009: 29; Alexander, 1988: 266). See table eleven below:

| Auxiliary or model verbs | Tag question |
|--------------------------|--|
| Aux. be | Sally and Suzan are studying, aren't they? |
| Aux. have | She hasn't done her homework yet, has she? |
| Model can | They can't do that, can they? |

Table 11: tag question with auxiliary and model verbs

Similarly, when the sentence includes an auxiliary do but in negative statement (don't, doesn't, didn't), Then the same auxiliary is used to form the tag question. Therefore, the tag question form is auxiliary do (do, does, did) followed by personal pronoun subject (Alexander, 1988: 267). See table twelve below:

| Negative form of auxiliary do | Tag question |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Do not | You don't like fish; do you? |
| Does not | He doesn't like fish, does he? |
| Did not | She didn't eat it all, did, she? |

Table 12: tag question with negative form of auxiliary 'do'

Moreover when the declarative sentence has no auxiliary verb and the verb of the sentence is in present simple or past simple and is positive, the appropriate form of auxiliary do (do, does, did) must be introduced as an operator to carry the tense (Celce-Murcia and Freeman 1999: 260; Alexander, 1988: 267). See table thirteen below:

| Auxiliary do | Tag question |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Do (present simple) | You like fish, don't you? |
| Does (present simple) | He likes fish, doesn't he? |
| Did (past simple) | She ate it all, didn't she? |

Table 13: tag question with auxiliary 'do'

B. Making tag-questions without auxiliary verb

When a sentence contains the main verb be (is, are, was, were except am), the subject and the verb 'be' inversion is required to form the tag question (Cowan, 2008: 73). See table fourteen below:



| Main verb 'be' | tag question |
|----------------|---|
| Is | She is happy, isn't she? She is not happy, is she? |
| Are | I and my sister are in the library, aren't we? I and my sister are not in the library, are we? |
| Was | My mother was sick, wasn't she? My mother was not sick, was she? |
| Were | They were very tired, weren't they? They were not tired, were they? |

Table 14: tag question with main verb 'be'

Finally, two important points should be mentioned regarding the structure of tag questions in English. First, there are certain tags that are idiosyncratic. For example:

- Let's go, shall we?
- I am going, aren't I?
- We ought to go, shouldn't we?
- Open the door, won't you? (Celce-Murcia and Freeman 1999: 261)

Second, it is impossible to apply tag formation to a structure that initiates with either a wh-question or a yes-no question. Examples:

- *when did john get there, did he?
- *Are you leaving for New York, are you? (Heerany, 2009:29)

4. Alternative questions

An alternative question is a kind of question that offers two or more alternative answers from which one answer should be selected (Barnes, 2006 38-39; Cowan, 2008: 75). Alexander, (1988: 281) notes that alternative questions narrow a choice from open choices to a limited number of items, courses of action, etc. For example

- What would you like to drink? (Open-ended choices)
- What would you prefer, tea or coffee? (Two-item choices)
- What would you like to drink: tea, coffee or milk? (three- item choices)

Moreover, alternative questions which invite the addressee to choose one member of a distinction are formed by means of the explicit disjunction "or", and they have no specialty interrogative morphology (Carlson, 1994: 532).

There are two types of alternative questions in English: the first type resembles yes-no questions, and the second type resembles wh-questions (Barnes, 2006: 39). For examples:

- Would you like chocolate or strawberry milkshake?



- Which milkshake would you like? Chocolate or strawberry?
- a. Yes-no alternative questions

This type of alternative question is structurally similar to yes-no question in opening with the operator followed by the subject (Cowan, 2008:75). Hence, an alternative question is usually formed with an auxiliary verb (be, do, have) or a modal verb (will, can, should) followed by a subject then the main verb. For example:

- Are we eating in or out this evening?
- Does she work in the city or in the suburbs?
- Will they buy a horse or rent somewhere?

When the main verb (be) is used to form alternative questions, no auxiliary verb is used. The word order is 'be' followed by a subject. For example:

- Is this the front or the back of the dress?

In yes-no alternative question, not only near-identical alternatives can be conjoined, they may be conjoined with different subject (Celce-Murcia and Freeman, 1999: 205). For example:

- Did you buy it or, did someone give it to you?

Moreover, alternative questions can be constructed of clauses with different subjects and tenses that can appear as alternatives. For example:

- Did you buy it, or am I going to have to? (Ibid)

Besides, any positive yes-no question can be turned into alternative question by adding or and a negative tag using an auxiliary or the appropriately tensed form of do, or shortened tags consisting of not (Cowan, 2008: 75) such as:

- Are you coming or aren't you?
- Do you like it or don't you?
- Are you coming or not?

- b. Wh- alternative questions

According to Biber et al (1999: 208), alternative wh questions are related in function to wh-question. Both types of interrogatives ask for specification of an unknown element, in one case represented by a wh-word and in another by listed alternatives. Similarly, Celce- Murcia and Freeman (1999:264) stated that this kind of alternative question is a compound of two separated questions, a wh-question followed by an elliptical alternative question.

- What would you like- coffee, milk or tea?
- Where do you live- in Queens or Brooklyn?

2.3.4.2 The formation of interrogative sentences in Kurdish language:

In this section only Kurdish examples represent the explanation of each types of interrogative sentence in Kurdish and the English examples are



just the translation of the Kurdish ones for clarification. Therefore, some English examples may be grammatically incorrect.

1. General question:

In Kurdish, to make a statement into a formal general question, the question word [ئایا/ Is it, Do you] is inserted at the beginning of a sentence. ئایا is usually used in written language. However, in informal speech, rising the voice tone is enough to make the statement a question without any change to the sentence structure (Kim, 2010, p.26). See table fifteen below:

| | With aya (formal, written) | Without aya (informal, spoken) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Is this yours? | ئایا ئەمە هی تۆیه؟ | ئەمە هی تۆیه؟ |
| Are you an English teacher? | ئایا تۆ مامۆستای ئینگلیزیت؟ | تۆ مامۆستای ئینگلیزیت؟ |
| Are these flowers roses? | ئایا ئەم گولانە گولێ سورن؟ | ئەم گولانە گولێ سورن؟ |

Table 15: general question in Kurdish

Thus, such kind of question can be distinguished from a statement through intonation in speaking and question mark in writing (Othman, 2019, p. 92).

2. Special question

In Kurdish, information questions are introduced by question words like چی (what), کەمێ (when), لە کۆێ (where), کێ (who), بۆچی (why), کامیان (which), etc. (Heerany, 2009: 58). In addition, question words do not change the word order of the sentence, i.e. there is no subject- verb inversion and the general rule (subject-object/complement- verb) is applied in both questions and statements (Kim, 2010:26).

Besides, these question words do not always occur initially, but it depends on their syntactic function, i.e. their position relies on whether they function as subject, object, adverbial, or complement (Heerany, 2009: 58). See table sixteen below:

| | Special question in Kurdish | Function |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Who came? | کێ هات؟ | Subject |
| What is your name? | ناوت چیه؟ | Object |
| How much is this? | ئەو بە چەندە؟ | Adverbial |
| Why did you come? | بۆچی هاتی؟ | Compliment |

Table 16: special question in Kurdish

Similarly, Qadir (1993: 34) illustrates that the position of the question word is at the beginning, at the end or in the place where the answer of the question is. See table seventeen below:



| | Answer | Special question in Kurdish |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| What did you eat? | نامم خوارد. | چیت خوارد؟ |
| Whom did you give the money? | پارمکم دا به باوکم. | پارمکم دا به کئ؟ |
| Where are you? | نیمه له شارین. | نیه له کوین؟ |

Table 17: special question in Kurdish (Qadir,1993: 34)

3. Tail questions

In Kurdish, tail question can be positive or negative. The former is by adding the word (is it, وایه) whereas the latter is by adding the word (isn't it, وانیه) at the end of a sentence. Unlike English, the use of [وایه] or [وانیه] does not depend on the speaker's positive or negative previous statement (Qadir, 1993:75). In other words the asker can use either 'وایه' or 'وانیه'. See table eighteen below:

| | Tail question in Kurdish |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| *He is a good boy, is he? | کورێ باشه، وایه؟ |
| He is a good boy, isn't he? | کورێ باشه، وانیه؟ |
| He is not a good man, is he? | پیاوێکی باش نیه، وایه؟ |
| *He is not a good man, isn't he? | پیاوێکی باش نیه، وانیه؟ |

Table 18: tag question in Kurdish

However, most of the time, the positive and the negative of the statement and the question are the same, if the aim of the speech is certainty or agreement (Ibid). See table nineteen below:

| | Tail question in Kurdish | Aim |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------|
| *As I know you are Twana's brother, are you? | من بزنام تو برای توانای، وایه؟ | Certainty |
| *You have not seen such beautiful view, haven't you? | دیمهنی وا ژوانت نه دیوه، وانیه؟ | agreement |

Table 19: tag question in Kurdish when the aim is certainty or agreement

Moreover, both Heerany (2009:59) and Qadir (1993:78) state that it is possible to add tag question to the general question, while it is not possible to add it to special question. For example:

- Are you going home, aren't you? دهچیته مالموه، وایه؟ یان وانیه؟

- * Where does Sanar go, does she? * سهنار دهچیته کوئ، وایه؟

Moreover, the first part of this sentence (دهچیته مالموه، وایه؟ یان وانیه؟) should be pronounced with rising intonation at the end so as to make it general question

4. Alternative question



In Kurdish, an alternative question is also known as choice questions. At least two options are offered to the speakers in the conversation. These questions can be either general or special ones (Babayiğit and Karacan, 2020:391).

- a. Alternative question can be made up of combining two simple general questions which is linked by the linking word (يان) which means (or) (Qadir, 1993:70). See table twenty below:

| General question | Alternative question in Kurdish |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Do you pray? نوێز دمهكهی؟ | Do you pray or have lunch? نوێز دمهكهی یان نان داخۆی؟ |
| Do you have lunch? نان دمهخۆی؟ | |

Table 20: alternative question in Kurdish

When forming alternative question, the repeated words or elements will be omitted in the second part of the question. In other word, only the words that are questioned about in the second sentence are repeated. See table twenty one below:

| General question | Alternative question in Kurdish |
|--|--|
| Will Rebin come? ریبین دیت؟ Will Zrng come? زرننگ دیت؟ | Will Rebin come or zring? ریبین دیت یان زرننگ؟ |
| Do you buy books? کتیب دمهکری؟ Do you sell books? کتیب دهفرۆشی؟ | Do you buy or sell books? کتیب دمهکری یان دافرۆشی؟ |

Table 21: alternative question in Kurdish

Unlikely, if the words are not repeated, no words should be deleted (Ibid: 71-72). See table twenty two below:

| General question | Alternative question in Kurdish |
|--|--|
| Do you make tea? چای لی دهنی ی؟ Do you bring fizzy drinks ساردی دهنی؟ | Do you make tea or bring fizzy drinks? چای لی دهنی ی یان ساردی دهنی؟ |

: Table 22: alternative question in Kurdish

Furthermore, the question should be on the same element of the sentence (Qadir, 1993:70). See table twenty three below:

| Alternative question in Kurdish | Asking about: | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| ئازاد هات یان گولزار؟ | Subject | Did Azad come or Gulzar? |
| چایهکمهت خوارد یان قاوهکه؟ | Object | Did you drink the tea or the coffee? |
| دادهنیشی یان دهرۆی؟ | Verb | Do you sit or go? |



* ریزان خواردی یان دەرۆی؟

*Did Rezan ate it or you go?

Table 23: Alternative question asking about the same part of a sentence.

It can be noted that the last example is grammatically incorrect because not the same element of the sentence is questioned. Therefore, the question might become ambiguous and meaningless.

b. Alternative question can also be made up of special questions. (Babayiğit & Karacan, 2020:391). For example:

- بۆ کوێ دهمچیت، بۆ قاومخانه یان بۆ مۆل؟
Where would you go, to the café or the shopping mall?

1. Methodology

3.1 Research questions

The main aim of this study is to point out the similarities and differences of the structure of interrogative sentences in English and Kurdish languages. In particular, these two questions were examined:

1. What points of similarities do the English and Kurdish languages share in respect of the construction of interrogative sentences?
2. What points of differences do the two languages share in respect of the construction of interrogative sentences?

3.2 Data collection

The study can be regarded as a qualitative one because the data presented on section 2.3.4 are drawn from the available grammatical books. Some examples which focus on English are provided by the second researcher as she has been working in the field of teaching English as a foreign language since 1997

3.3 Procedures

The procedures followed in the analysis of the construction of interrogative sentences can be summed up in the following steps:

1. The study presents and examines the structure of four types of interrogative sentences and their variation in English language.
2. It presents and examines the structure of four types of interrogative sentences and their variation in Kurdish language.
3. Points of similarities and differences have been shown between the two languages to draw a conclusion.

4. Results and discussion:

According to the data presented, there are four types of interrogative sentence in English and the same types can be found in Kurdish. They are general question, special question, tag question and alternative question. Moreover, the definition of each type in English is the same as in Kurdish.



This could be because each kind of interrogatives is used for the same purpose in both languages.

1. What points of similarities do the English and Kurdish languages share in respect of the construction of interrogative sentences?

1. General question:

According to the data provided in section 2.3.4, no points of similarities can be found between the structure of general question in English and that in Kurdish.

2. Special question

- a. Similarities:

In both languages, question words are used to make special question. For example:

- لانه له كوئيه؟

Where is Lana?

In English and Kurdish language prepositions can precede question words especially when they come initially. This is optional in English but it is obligatory with some question words in Kurdish (Heerany, 2009:82). For example:

- دهر سه كهى له گهه كى روون بكهوه؟
To whom should I explain the lecture?
- له گهه كى قسه دهكات؟
With whom does he talk?

- a. Difference:

In English yes-no question is formed by the inversion of subject and verb, whereas this inversion does not occur in Kurdish. Instead the optional interrogative words 'ئايا' which means (Is it? or Do you....?) is inserted at the beginning of a sentence in formal writing and in informal speech rising intonation is enough to change a sentence into a general question. For example:

- ئايا دهچیت بۆ قوتابخانه؟ (formal writing)
Do you go to school?
- دهچیت بۆ قوتابخانه؟ (informal speech/ with rising intonation)
Do you go to school?

- b. Differences:

In English the question words always occur initially but in Kurdish the position of the question words vary according to the syntactic function of the word asked about or the position of the question word is in the same place where the answer of the question is. For example:

- ناوت چیه؟ ناوم سانایه
What is your name? My name is Sana.
- كهى دى؟ بهيانى دىم



When do you come? I come tomorrow

Another difference is that in Kurdish there is no change in word order when forming special question. However in English the inversion of subject and verb is an essential feature of changing a sentence into information question.

For example:

- كورمان چ دمخوینن؟ كورمان ئینگلیزی دمخوینن.
What are the boys studying? The boys are studying English
- 2. Tag question
 - a. Similarities:

In both languages, a tag question can be either positive or negative. For example:

He is a student, isn't he? ئەو قوتابیه، وانیه؟
He is not a student, is he? ئەو قوتابی نیه، وایه؟

Another similarity is that in both languages it is impossible to form a tag question to a statement that begins with a question word. For example:

*what do you eat, don't you? چ دمخوی، وایه/ وانیه؟

b. Differences:

In English it is impossible to apply tag formation to yes-no question, whereas in Kurdish tag question can be added to general question. For example:

*Is he playing football, isn't he?

تۆپانی دهكات، وانیه؟

The first part of the sentence 'تۆپانی دهكات، وانیه؟' should be uttered with rising intonation to make it general question.

In English, tag question is generally contrasts in polarity with the statement, i.e. if the statement is positive, the tag question is negative and if the tag question is negative, the statement should be positive. However, in Kurdish it does not matter if the statement is positive or negative, the speaker can use either 'وایه' or 'وانیه'. For example:

She was in the garden, wasn't she? ئەو له باخچهكهیه، وایه؟ یان وانیه؟
She was not in the garden, was she? ئەو له باخچهكه نیه، وایه؟ یان وانیه؟

To form positive tag question in English, auxiliary or model verbs such as (be, have, can, will) or main verb (be) is repeated at the end of the sentence followed by the subject (always pronoun). The negative tag question has the same structure, but with the particle (n't) to be put after the auxiliary. In cases where no auxiliary exists, the auxiliary do is introduced. In Kurdish on the other hand tag question is formed by adding the negative expression 'وانیه' or the positive expression 'وایه'. For example:

He has done the exam, hasn't he? تاقیکردنهوهکه ی ئەنجام داوه، وایه؟ یان وانیه؟
He has not done the exam, has he? تاقیکردنهوهکه ی ئەنجام نه داوه، وایه؟ یان وانیه؟



3. Alternative question:

a. Similarities:

In both English and Kurdish alternative question can be formed by offering the listener a choice of two or more alternatives and asks him/her to choose one option. These options are linked by the word 'or' in English and its equivalent in Kurdish 'يان'. For example:

ئەو پێشموهێ کر اسهکهیه یان دو اوهیه؟
Is this the front or the back of the dress?

In both languages alternative question can be constructed by combining two general questions (yes-no questions) or from a special question. For examples:

دەچیتە دەر موه یان له مالموه دەمیننیهوه؟
Do you go out or stay in?

ههز دهکهی چ بخوینموه، چا یان قاوه؟
What would you like to drink, tea or coffee?

b. Differences:

In English when alternative question is formed, the place of the subject is changed with the verb. However, in Kurdish the position of the subject and the verb remain the same as the sentence. This is because alternative question can be made up of either a general question or a special question and thus alternative question follow the same structure as general or special questions are made in both English and Kurdish. For example.

- ئەو دەتوانی به ئینگلیزی قسهی بکات یان به فرەنسی؟
Can he speak English or French?
- ناههنگهکه کهی دهست پێ داکات بهیانی؟
When will the party begin tomorrow or next week?

یان ههفتهی داهاوو؟

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the construction of interrogative sentences in English is quite different from that in Kurdish despite the fact that both languages share the similar types of interrogative sentences which are general question (yes-no question), special question (information question), tag question (tail question) and alternative question (choice question). The main similarities can be the following. First, question word should be used when special question is formed in English and Kurdish. Second, in both languages it is grammatically incorrect to form a tag question to a statement that begins with a question word. Third, in both languages, alternative question is made up by offering two or more choices which are joined by the word 'or'. This paper also concluded that the main differences between the formations of interrogatives in English and that in Kurdish can be the following. First, in English the question words need to be put at the beginning of wh-questions but in Kurdish the position of the question word varies according to the grammatical function of the word asked about or it is



in the same place of the word questioned about. Second, the place of the subject should be changed with the place of the verb for all types of questions in English but this change does not occur in Kurdish question types. Instead for general question the same order of the sentence is repeated but with rising intonation in speech or by putting the word 'نایا' and question mark (?) in writing. Third, when forming tail question in Kurdish the asker has the choice to use 'وايه / is it?' or 'وانيه / isn't it?' without concerning the positivity or the negativity of the sentence. But in English if the sentence is positive, the tag should be negative and if the sentence is negative, the tag is positive. Therefore, it is recommended that English teachers in Kurdistan should put these variations into consideration when teaching English as a foreign language so that these differences may not cause learners difficulties. It is also recommended that further research needs to be conducted regarding the formation of interrogative sentences especially in Kurdish language because little has been mentioned about this topic.

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