

The background features a large, faded watermark of the University of Basrah logo. The logo is circular and contains a palm tree in the center, an open book at the base, and the year '1975' on both sides. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF BASRAH' and 'COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR HUMAN SCIENCES' is written around the bottom edge, while Arabic text is at the top.

English Grammar

Fourth Year

2021-2022

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Week 5: The Simple Sentence

Lecture No. 15:

- **Alternative Questions**
- **Exclamatory Questions**
- **Rhetorical Questions**

Alternative Question

A question where the speaker offers the hearer a closed choice between two or more alternative possibilities:

- *Is the kitten male or female?*
- *Would you like orange juice, grapefruit juice or tomato juice?*

The word **or** signals the relation between the alternatives. Unlike yes-no questions, alternative questions normally end with a falling intonation contour. There are also reported alternative questions: these are subordinate nominal clauses (or complement clauses) where the alternatives are expressed by whether . . . or . . . (If can replace whether here.)

- *They asked her whether/if the kitten was male or female.*
- *Maria wondered whether/if he was waving or drowning.*

Exclamatory Question 1

A kind of yes-no question having the force of an exclamation. Exclamatory questions are often negative in form and are spoken with falling intonation rather than with the rising intonation associated with ordinary yes-no questions:

- *Isn't this fun! (This is fun)*
- *Haven't they grown! (They have grown)*

The meaning, contrary to the appearance of the literal wording, is vigorously positive.

Exclamatory Question 2

A positive yes-no question, also with a falling tone, is another (but less common) way of expressing a strong positive conviction:

- *Am I upset!*
- *Is this fun!*

Rhetorical Question 1

A question which does not seek information, but rather implies that the answer is self evident. A positive rhetorical yes-no question is like a strong negative assertion, while a negative question is like a strong positive one.

- *Can anyone say what will happen? has the effect of a forceful negative statement: 'No one can say what will happen.'*
- *Haven't you got anything better to do? has the effect of a forceful positive statement: 'Surely you have something better to do'*

Rhetorical Question 2

There are also rhetorical wh-questions. The positive question is equivalent to a statement in which the wh-element is replaced by a negative element:

- *Who cares? [Nobody cares]*
- *How should I know? [There is no reason why should I know]*
- *What should I say? [There is nothing that I should say]*

Rhetorical Question 3

The less common negative question is equivalent to a statement in which the wh-element is replaced by a positive element:

- *How couldn't you remember? [You certainly should have remembered]*
- *Who doesn't know? [Everybody knows]*