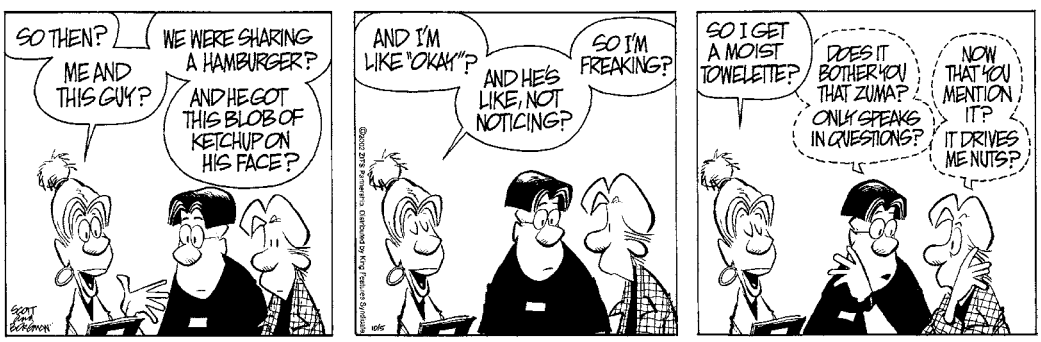
CHAPTER 4

Questions

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we learn about the different ways to form questions in English, including spoken English. The cartoon below shows something basic about English questions – they have unique *intonation* patterns. *Intonation* is simply the rising and falling of pitch over a spoken sentence.



The girl in the cartoon, Zuma, is describing an event using statements, which normally end in a falling pitch. But she applies rising pitch to the end of her statements, which is typical of English *yes*/*no questions* (questions that can be answered by *yes* or *no*). This is what two boys notice and are whispering about in the last panel while poking fun at Zuma by mimicking her.[1]

Because intonation is so important in forming questions in English, some example questions in this chapter are accompanied by diagrams that show their intonation patterns. The diagram is a line that traces the pitch movement throughout the question. Speakers differ in the amount of up or down change they apply, thus the direction of the line is more important than the amount of change that occurs from one pitch level to another. The predominant intonation patterns for the questions in this chapter are also described using the terms *rise* and *fall* to indicate the pitch direction.[2] For example, the *yes*/*no* question intonation that Zuma uses is called *rising*. The pitch moves *up* on the last word and then continues to rise beyond the stressed syllable. The *rising intonation* pattern applied to what Zuma says in the first panel of the cartoon is shown in (1).

(**1**) So then?

Me and this guy?

We were sharing a hamburger?

And he got this blob of ketchup on his face?

It is important that students produce the different kinds of questions in this chapter with the appropriate intonation. Just learning the grammar rules for questions is not sufficient. The intonation pattern of every question type has to be covered in class.

Questions in English can be classified in terms of four basic types: *yes*/*no* questions, tag questions, *wh*- questions, and miscellaneous question forms that have features in common with the first three types.

YES/NO QUESTIONS

Yes/*no* questions may be answered with a simple *yes* or *no*. If a declarative sentence contains an auxiliary verb like *have* or *be*, a modal auxiliary such as *may* or *could*, or the copular[3] form of *be*, a *yes*/*no* question is created from the sentence by applying the rule of *subject–auxiliary* (or *subject–aux*) *inversion*. *Subject–aux inversion*[4] switches the position of the subject and the verbal element that follows it.

The sentences labeled (b) in (2) through (7) are *yes*/*no* questions that result from the application of subject–aux inversion to the declarative sentences labeled (a). Notice that in each case, the position of the subject and the position of the verbal element that follows it have been reversed to create a question. The labels on the right describe the verb in italics in each sentence.

(**2**) a. He *is* a policeman. b. *Is* he a policeman?	*copular* be
(**3**) a. She *could do* it. b. *Could* she *do* it?	*modal* could + *verb*
(**4**) a. She *is sleeping* right now. b. *Is* she *sleeping* right now?	*aux* is + *verb (present participle)*
(**5**) a. The boss *has read* the report. b. *Has* the boss *read* the report?	*aux* has + *verb (past participle)*
(**6**) a. He *should have read* the report. b. *Should* he *have read* the report?	*modal* should + *aux* have + *verb (past participle)*
(**7**) a. She *could have been working* then. b. *Could* she *have been working* then?	*modal* could + *aux* have + *aux* been + *verb (present participle)*

For declarative sentences that do not have an auxiliary verb, a modal, or copular *be*, the rule of subject–aux inversion is not applied to form a *yes*/*no* question. Instead, an appropriate form of the auxiliary verb *do* is placed at the beginning of the sentence. 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, as (8a) and (8b) illustrate.

	Statement	Yes/No *Question*	
(**8**) a.	He runs every day.	*Does* he run every day?	*simple present tense*
b.	He ran every day.	*Did* he run every day?	*simple past tense*

In British English, sentences with the main verb *have* (not the auxiliary verb *have*) also undergo subject–aux inversion to form *yes*/*no* questions, as shown in (9b). But in American English, *do* insertion is used instead, as shown in (9c). This is an important difference that teachers of English should know.

(**9**) a.	You have a pencil.		
b.	Have you a pencil?	*subject–aux inversion*	*British English*
c.	Do you have a pencil?	do *insertion*	*American English*

Yes/*no* questions carry rising intonation.[5] The diagram in (10) shows that the pitch moves up on the last word of the question, which is stressed on the first syllable, and it continues to rise at the end, a pattern called *up-rise intonation*.[6]

(**10**) Would you like to go swimming? *up-rise intonation pattern*

Positive and Negative *Yes*/*No* Questions

Yes/*no* questions are either *positive*, as in (11a), or *negative* (i.e., they contain *not*), as in (11b).

(**11**) a. Are you coming?
b. Aren't you coming?

Negative *yes*/*no* questions are formed by contracting the verbal element at the beginning of the question (auxiliary verb, modal verb, or copular *be*) with *not*. This is illustrated in (12).

	Positive	*Negative*
(**12**) a.	*Have* you been here before?	*Haven't* you been here before?
b.	*Will* you agree to those terms?	*Won't* you agree to those terms?
c.	*Were* they feeling better?	*Weren't* they feeling better?

Positive *yes*/*no* questions usually do not imply any expectation about what the answer will be.[7] The person who asks (11a), for instance, does not necessarily have any idea whether the answer will be *yes* (*I am coming*) or *no* (*I am not coming*). Negative questions, on the other hand, are generally asked to confirm a specific expectation or assumption on the part of the asker, as in (13).

(**13**) Susan to Alice: Didn't John tell you that I was coming?

Susan may ask Alice the negative question in (13) because she assumes, initially, that John would have told Alice that she was coming, and she wants to confirm that John did, in fact, tell her.

If Susan notices that Alice seems surprised when she shows up, her initial assumption may change to something like *It looks like John didn't tell Alice that I was coming, after all*. She may still, however, ask the same negative question to find out if her new assumption is correct.

(**14**) Susan: Didn't John tell you that I was coming?
Alice: No. He didn't.
Susan: Well, if he forgot, I'm sorry. I was sure that you would be expecting me.

Thus, regardless of what Susan's expectations/assumptions are as she meets Alice, she asks a negative question in order to confirm those expectations/assumptions.

Negative *yes*/*no* questions can often express annoyance, as in (15a), or disappointment, as in (15b), when it seems that the asker's previous expectations or hopes have not been met.

(**15**) a. Can't you ever give me a simple answer?
(Implication: I want a simple answer, but apparently you can't give me one.)
b. Haven't you called him?
(Implication: I really hoped that you had, but it appears that you haven't.)

Negative questions that contain *positive polarity items*, like *someone*, *somebody*, and *already*, are posed when the asker expects a positive answer. (See Chapter 5 for more on *negative* and *positive polarity items*.)

(**16**) a. Didn't *somebody* call me this afternoon?
(Implication: I'll bet somebody did.)
b. Hasn't he *already* done that?
(Implication: I think he has OR I was sure that he had.)

A negative answer (*no*) to either a positive or a negative *yes*/*no* question in English has the same meaning. This is illustrated in (17).

(**17**) a. Joel: Can you come to the ceremony?
Rich: No. (= I can't come.)

b. Joel: Can't you come to the ceremony?
Rich: No. (= I can't come.)

Notice that an answer of *no* to both the question in (17a) and the question in (17b) serves to indicate that the person responding will not be able to attend the ceremony. This is an important point for many English language learners because in some languages (e.g., Japanese, Korean, Hausa), a *no* answer to a negative question such as (17b) means *No*, *that is not correct*. *In fact*, *I can come*, and a *yes* answer means *Yes*, *that is correct – I can't come*. This issue is discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter in Problems ESL/EFL Students Have with Questions.

Reduced *Yes*/*No* Questions

Yes/*no* questions are often reduced (shortened) in informal conversation. Two ways in which this is done are by the formation of *elliptical yes*/*no questions* and by the formation of *declarative* (or *statement*) *yes*/*no questions*.

Elliptical *Yes*/*No* Questions

Native speakers sometimes reduce *yes*/*no* questions by omitting auxiliary verbs and copular *be* to form elliptical statements with up-rise intonation.

	Yes/No *Question*	*Elliptical* Yes/No *Question*
(**18**) a.	Has he been talking to you?	He been talking to you?
b.	Are you coming?	You coming?
c.	Do you want to talk to me about it?	You want to talk to me about it?
d.	Is she taking her pills regularly?	She taking her pills regularly?
e.	Are you hungry?	You hungry?

Declarative *Yes/No* Questions

Declarative, or *statement*, *yes/no questions* have the form of a statement but also contain question intonation. They are often difficult to distinguish from elliptical *yes/no* questions; notice that (19a) is identical to the corresponding elliptical *yes/no* question formed by omitting *do*, whereas (19b) is slightly different, the corresponding elliptical question being *You already talked to him?* The intonation in declarative questions will not always follow the up-rise pattern shown in (19a) exactly, rather it may rise slightly and be maintained over the rest of the utterance, as shown in (19b).[8]

	Yes/No *Question*	*Declarative Question*
(**19**) a.	Do you play hockey?	You play hockey?
b.	Have you already talked to him?	You've already talked to him?

Declarative questions have at least three functions:[9]

1. to check some piece of information.

   (**20**) Robert: He said he'd be here at 8:00.

   Jay: *You've already talked to him?*

2. to repeat all or part of something that has already been said for the purpose of questioning or confirming information (see also *echo questions* later in this chapter in Other Types of *Yes/No* and *Wh-* Questions).

   (**21**) Alan: Hey, Bev! Where have you been? We were supposed to meet in front of the grocery store, remember?
   Beverly: I was at the police station giving the cops some information about what happened to me. I was robbed out in the parking lot when I was getting out of my car.

   Alan: *You were robbed?*
   Beverly: Yeah. It happened so fast, I couldn't believe it. A guy just grabbed my purse and ran off with it.

3. to show surprise, amazement, or annoyance at what was just said (see also *exclamatory questions* later in this chapter in Other Types of *Yes/No* and *Wh-* Questions).

   (**22**) Fred: You know, I'm really sorry that I scratched the fender on your car the other day.

   Al: *You scratched the fender on my car?!* You never said anything about it last night at dinner!

Quite often declarative *yes/no* questions perform two and three functions simultaneously.

SUMMARY

YES/*NO* QUESTIONS

***Yes*/*no* questions** can be answered with a *yes* or *no*, and they normally carry up-rise intonation.

Would you like to go swimming?

For sentences with auxiliaries, modal verbs, or copular *be*, *yes*/*no* questions are formed by applying the **subject–auxiliary inversion**.

Would you do the same thing?
Is he a hard worker?

For sentences without auxiliaries, modal verbs, or copular *be*, apply ***do* insertion** to form a *yes*/*no* question.

Does he run every day?

Did you remember your passport?

Positive *yes*/*no* questions do not imply any expectation regarding whether the answer will be *yes* or *no*.

Do you like winter sports?
Will you be joining us?

Negative *yes*/*no* questions are generally asked to confirm an assumption or expectation.

Didn't he tell you about it?
(Implication: I thought he had OR I'm sure he did.)

They can also express annoyance or disappointment because a previous expectation has not been met.

Haven't you called him yet?
(Implication: You were supposed to call him.)

Reduced *yes*/*no* questions are shortened question forms sometimes used in informal conversation. There are two types:

a. Elliptical *yes*/*no* questions omit auxiliary verbs and copular *be*.

He been talking to you?

They here yet?

b. Declarative questions have the form of a statement. They are used to:

- check information
  A: The food there is great.
  B: You've eaten there before?
- repeat something someone has said in order to question or confirm it
  A: I lost my job yesterday.
  B: You lost your job?
- express surprise or amazement
  A: I can't believe we lost after being up by 10 points.
  B: You lost the game?!

EXERCISE 4.1

Indicate whether each question implies any expectation or assumption on the part of the asker. If the question implies an expectation or an assumption, state what that expectation or assumption might be.

Example: Do you watch much TV?

Answer: no expectation

1. Hasn't he already told her?
2. Is she a student?
3. Isn't Ann coming too?
4. Did anyone call while I was out?
5. Did someone call while I was out?

EXERCISE 4.2

Identify the function of each declarative question shown in italics.

Example: Steve: Well, we can expect John to pitch for our team in next Sunday's game.
Alex: *You know that for sure?*
Steve: Yeah. I talked to him yesterday.

Answer: to confirm information

1. Lisa: Where is everybody?
   Bonnie: Down at the drugstore watching the fire.
   Lisa: *The drugstore is on fire? Oh my gosh!*
2. Alan: Hey, Bill! You know that book you lent me? I'm really sorry, but it seems I've lost it.
   Bill: *You lost that book?* Man! That was a present from my brother!
3. Nancy: Well, I guess we can count on Alice to join us for dinner on Saturday.
   Bob: *You've talked to her recently?*
   Nancy: Yes. I called her last night, and she said she was 90 percent sure that she could come.

TAG QUESTIONS

Tag questions consist of a *tag*, which is a short question form, attached to a *stem*, which is a statement. They are of two main types: *opposite polarity* and *same polarity tag questions.*

Opposite Polarity Tag Questions

Opposite polarity tag questions are shown in (23). Notice that the subject in the tag corresponds to the subject in the stem. The tag has the *opposite value* from the stem: if the stem is positive, then the tag is negative, as in (23a), (23b), and (23c); if the stem is negative, the tag is positive, as in (23d).

	Stem	*Tag Question*
(**23**)	a. You are going.	You are going, *aren't you*?
	b. They have done it.	They have done it, *haven't they*?
	c. Betty can come.	Betty can come, *can't she*?
	d. He isn't a vegetarian.	He isn't a vegetarian, *is he*?

The stems in (23a) and (23b) contain the auxiliary verbs *are* and *have*, respectively. In the corresponding tag questions, these same auxiliary verbs are located in the tags but

in their negative forms (*aren't, haven't*). The stem in (23c) has a modal (*can*), which also appears in the tag but in its negative form (*can't*). In (23d), the stem is a negative form of the copular *be* (*isn't*), while the corresponding positive form *is* appears in the tag.

If the stem in a tag question does not contain an auxiliary verb, a modal, or copular *be*, then *do* appears in the tag.

	Stem	*Tag Question*
(**24**)	He likes her.	He likes her, *doesn't he*?

Four types of opposite polarity tag questions occur, depending upon whether the stem is positive or negative and whether the intonation on the tag is falling or rising. These four types are shown in (25).

(**25**) a. He likes to do that, doesn't he? *positive stem, negative tag*

b. He doesn't like to do that, does he? *negative stem, positive tag*

c. He likes to do that, doesn't he? *positive stem, negative tag*

d. He doesn't like to do that, does he? *negative stem, positive tag*

Tag questions such as (25a) and (25b), in which the tag starts out in the high pitch range and rises at the end, signal that the asker is not completely sure of the answer and is seeking information. In contrast, tag questions such as (25c) and (25d), in which the pitch on the tag starts high and then falls, assume that the person being asked will assess the situation the same way that the speaker would; that is, the asker expects the interlocutor to agree with the proposition in the stem. These tag questions often carry the force of a statement, as in (26), and speakers use them in contexts such as (27), in which they have no reason to expect an answer that disagrees with the proposition expressed in the stem.

(**26**) Al: You know, I was sure that Manchester United was going to beat Real Madrid last night.

Fred (looking downcast): Well, they didn't, did they? I watched the whole game.

(**27**) Amy: My caterpillar is waving its legs at you.

Sally (looking at caterpillar): Yes, it is, isn't it?

Questions with negative tags and *falling intonation* can be formed from sentences with complement clauses if the main verb of the stem indicates that there is good evidence that the complement is true. The complement clause in (28) is in brackets.

(**28**) Kim: It appears [that we are going to win,] doesn't it?

Su Jung: Yes. I can hardly believe it. We were behind 2 to 1.

Examples of verbs that the speaker uses to indicate the truth of the complements in sentences such as (28) are: *appear*, *believe*, *expect*, *guess*, *imagine*, *look like*, *see*, *seem*, and *suppose*.[10] Since the asker believes that what is asserted in the complement is probably true, and the person being asked is capable of judging this (and agreeing with the asker), the tag has high pitch that falls.

Same Polarity Tag Questions

Both the stem and the tag are positive in *same polarity tag questions*. One common type of same polarity tag question is shown in (29). It typically has a low pitch that jumps up on the tag. It is often preceded by *oh* or *so* and indicates that the speaker has inferred or reached a conclusion that is expressed in the stem. Same polarity tag questions are often perceived as sarcastic statements.

(**29**) So, that's your little game, is it? Well, you won't get away with it.

It is also possible to use a tag to form an emphatic imperative statement that conveys urgency, as in (30a). This same structure can serve as a polite request, as in (30b) and (30c), or a suggestion, as in (30d).

(**30**) a. Hurry up, *will you*! *emphatic imperative denoting urgency*

b. Get me a glass of water, *would you*? *polite request*

c. Turn out the light, *will you*? *polite request*

d. Let's talk about that later, *shall we*? *suggestion*

All of the examples in (30) have the form of regular tag questions. The first element of each tag question, a modal, has a lower pitch that rises to the second element, the pronoun *you* or *we*.

Same polarity tag questions may have a verb in the tag that is different from the verb in the stem, as in (31a), (31b), and (31c). Typically, a verb like *know*, *remember*, *see*, or *understand* appears in the tag.[11]

(**31**) a. We were supposed to meet outside of the theater, *remember*? *reminder*

b. You're supposed to be here at 8 o'clock, *you know*? *admonition/reminder*

c. You hold it like this, *see*? *instruction/request for feedback*

d. You know what I'm talking about, *right*? *request for feedback*

Notice that in (31a), (31b), and (31c), the tags themselves seem to be shortened forms of the tag questions *You remember that, don't you? You know that, don't you?* and *You see that, don't you?* respectively. Similarly, in (31d), in which the tag does not have a verb, *right* can be considered a shortened form of *That's right, isn't it?* Depending upon the tone the speaker uses and the context in which it is uttered, this kind of same polarity tag question functions as an *admonition*, a *reminder*, an *instruction*, or a *request for feedback* to ensure that the listener understands the speaker.

Tag Questions as Exclamations

Tag questions are sometimes used as exclamations. Here the tag seems almost unnecessary, but is added in hopes of eliciting agreement from the person(s) addressed. The intonation moves from high to low at the end, as shown in (32).

(**32**) Oh! That's a fantastic car, isn't it! (= What a fantastic car that is!)

A British English equivalent of the American exclamatory tag shown in (32) is *innit*. The speaker who says, *Bit old, this program, innit!* is making a statement that in his or her opinion *this program is a bit old*, and he or she assumes this should be obvious to the person addressed, so we have a pitch fall on *it*.[12]

A fairly recent variation on the tag question as exclamation in American English is the *or what* tag placed after a *yes*/*no* question, as shown in (33).[13] Sentences with *or what* tags do not ask for information, but instead demand agreement from the person to whom they are addressed. Thus the speaker who utters (33a) believes that *of course this is a great idea*. Here the pitch jumps up on *what* with little or no fall.

(**33**) a. Is this a great idea, or what!
b. Do you love it, or what!
c. Was that the best performance ever, or what!

SUMMARY

TAG QUESTIONS

Tag questions are made up of a stem (statement) and a tag (short question form).

In **opposite polarity tag questions**, the verb in the tag and the verb in the stem have opposite values.

Rising intonation on the tag indicates that the speaker is asking for information.

Rich will pay me back, won't he?

You weren't lying, were you?

Falling intonation on the tag indicates that the speaker expects the listener will agree with the information in the stem.

Sarah owns a car, doesn't she?

In **same polarity tag questions**, both the stem and the tag are positive. A low pitch that jumps up on the tag and then falls indicates the speaker has reached a conclusion, which is stated in the stem.

So, that's the reason you told him, is it?

Same polarity tag questions can also function as:

- an **urgent imperative**
  Turn down the TV, will you!
- a **polite request**
  Lend me your pen, would you?
- a **suggestion**
  Let's stop for lunch, shall we?

continued

- a **reminder/admonition**

  You were supposed to pick me up at 5:00, remember?

- a **request for feedback**

  You understand what I'm talking about, right?

EXERCISE 4.3

Indicate whether each tag question (in italics) should carry rising or falling intonation. State why.

Example: Bill: You know, it might be more fun to go on this trip with another couple. Some people who like winter sports. Any idea who we might ask to join us?
Sally: *Well, Steve and Joan like to ski, don't they?*
Bill: I'm not sure.
Sally: I think I remember Steve mentioning that they do.

Answer: rising intonation (speaker is asking for information)

1. Alan: Darn. I was hoping that Paris would be chosen as the site of the 2012 Olympics!
   Alice: *Well, it wasn't, was it?* Too bad.
2. Alan: I am going shopping now to get all the stuff we need for Andrea and Christine's party.
   Nick: OK. As I remember, we decided on chicken for the main course.
   Alan: Right. Hey, I just thought of something. *They aren't vegetarians by any chance, are they?*
3. Teresa: I hear your wife is sick.
   Ron: Yeah. I'm spending most of my time looking after her.
   Teresa: *So I guess you won't be coming to our meeting this week, will you?*
   Ron: No. I don't see how I can.
4. *Oh, you're going to tell him all about it, are you?* Well, think again.
5. Hal: Too bad Arsenal lost to Leeds United last night.
   Nick: Well, it's not all that surprising. *After all, they didn't have their star goalie, did they?*

EXERCISE 4.4

Identify the function of each tag question.

Example: Was that a great catch, or what!

Answer: exclamation

1. Susan: Bill will be joining us for dinner.
   Alice: That's great. Joan's coming too, isn't she?
   Susan: No, she has to work late.
2. Turn on the TV, will you?
3. Nobody can speak French on that trip, not even the teachers! That's so stupid, innit!
4. Let's talk about that over dinner, shall we?
5. So, you think you're some kind of genius, do you?
6. Is that a fantastic dress, or what!

(**38**) a. You went to the concert with someone. *declarative sentence*
b. Who did you go to the concert with?
c. With whom did you go to the concert?

In (38a), *someone* is the object of the preposition *with*. In (38b), we see that *someone* has been converted to the *wh*- question word *who*, which has been moved to the front of the sentence. However, in (38c) the preposition *with* has been moved to the front of the sentence along with the *wh*- word. The *wh*- word has been changed from *who* to *whom*. Both of these question forms are grammatically acceptable, but (38c) is considered by some to be more appropriate for formal or academic writing.

Wh- Questions About a Subject

When the subject of a declarative sentence is questioned, no fronting or inversion rules apply. The subject is simply converted into the appropriate *wh*- word. This is illustrated in (39).

(**39**) a. Who needs a lift?
b. Someone needs a lift. *declarative sentence*
c. Who needs a lift? *subject,* someone*, becomes* who

Wh- Questions with *How* + Adjective/Adverb

How combines with adjectives and adverbs to form questions beginning with *how many*, *how long*, *how often*, and so on, as shown in (40).

(**40**) a. How long did the press conference last?
b. How many stamps did she take?

Embedded *Wh*- Questions

Wh- questions can be embedded inside a longer sentence, as in (41).

(**41**) I have no idea *how much this sandwich costs.*

Note that when a *wh*- question about an object is embedded in this way, it does not undergo subject–aux inversion or *do* insertion. Instead, only *wh*- movement is applied. Notice the difference between the regular *wh*- questions and their embedded versions in (42).

	Regular Wh- *Question*	*Embedded* Wh- *Question*
(**42**) a.	What was she doing?	I want to know *what she was doing.*
b.	Where is she going?	I want to know *where she is going.*
c.	How could he do it?	I want to know *how he could do it.*
d.	How much does it cost?	I want to know *how much it costs.*

Types of *Wh*- Questions

Wh- questions can be categorized according to the purpose they serve for an asker. Three types exist: *information* questions, *repeat please* questions, and *elaborate please* questions.

Wh- Information Questions

Information *wh*- questions are the basic type. They are used to request information that has not been previously mentioned, and they take the different forms considered thus far.

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Wh- questions can be categorized according to the purpose they serve for an asker. Three types exist: *information* questions, *repeat please* questions, and *elaborate please* questions.

Wh- Information Questions

Information *wh*- questions are the basic type. They are used to request information that has not been previously mentioned, and they take the different forms considered thus far.

Unlike *yes*/*no* questions, *wh*- information questions always contain a presupposition. For instance, when we ask the question *What did John do?* we presume that John did in fact do something.

	Question	*Presumed Information*
(**43**) a.	*How* did they do it?	They did it *somehow.*
b.	*Where* did John go?	John went *somewhere.*
c.	*Whose* book was stolen?	*Someone's* book was stolen.
d.	*What* has he done?	He has done *something.*
e.	*Who* is doing it?	*Someone* is doing it.

Information *wh*- questions have *up-fall intonation*, as shown in (44a), (44b), and (44c) or *down-rise intonation*, as shown in (44d) and (44e).

(**44**) a. *How* can they do it?

b. What did she want?

c. How long did the meeting last?

d. Where did John go?

e. What has Julia done now?

Repeat Please Questions

Repeat please questions are often uttered when the asker either did not hear or understand the information she or he was given or is having difficulty accepting it. This type of *wh*- question frequently functions as a request for verification. *Repeat please* questions can have two word orders: question word order with the *wh*- word fronted, as in (45a), or normal declarative statement word order, shown in (45b). Both have rising intonation. A greater degree of stress on the *wh*- word and a higher rise in the intonation patterns signal a greater degree of surprise on the part of the asker.

(**45**) Fred: When did Susan come home this morning?
Alice: At five o'clock.
Fred: a. When did she get in?

b. She got in when?

Elaborate Please Questions

Elaborate please questions are used when the asker has already been told something but needs more information regarding what was said. A question is then posed about someone, something, or somewhere mentioned by the speaker. In (46), Al is trying to sell his car, and Fred has found a prospective buyer. He tells Al that this person will come and look at the car tomorrow. Al wants more information about the time that has been arranged for the inspection. In (47), the police officer needs more precise information about the person before he or she can act.

(**46**) Fred: He'll come by tomorrow and have a look at the car.

Al: When will he come by?

(**47**) Susan: Officer, that guy over there just stole my purse.

Police Officer: Which guy?

Elaborate please questions can either consist of a longer sentence such as (48a) or a shorter answer such as (48b). The *wh-* word is always stressed, and questions consisting of two or more words carry up-fall intonation.

(**48**) Sandra: We lived for over a year in France.

Joan: a. Where in France?

b. Where?

SUMMARY

WH- QUESTIONS

***Wh-* questions** normally begin with an interrogative word (e.g., *who*, *whom*, *which*, *what*, *whose*, *where*, *how*).

How can they do that?

When did Roger leave?

Embedded *wh-* questions are embedded inside a larger sentence and do not undergo subject–auxiliary inversion or *do* insertion.

He wants to know how far it is to Boston.
I'm not sure what the professor's name is.

***Wh-* information questions** are used to request information that has not been previously mentioned.

What time is it?
Excuse me, where is the Golden Gate Bridge?

***Repeat please* questions** are usually uttered when the speaker wants someone to repeat part of something he or she said. They may have the normal *wh-* question structure, or they may have the structure of a declarative sentence.

A: She got in at five o'clock.

B: When did she get in? OR *She got in when?*

***Elaborate please* questions** are asked to get someone to elaborate on an answer that has been given.

A: He'll come by tomorrow and look at it.
B: When?

A: Hey! That guy just picked my pocket!
B: Which guy?

EXERCISE 4.5

Identify each question as a *wh-* information question, *repeat please* question, or *elaborate please* question, and draw an appropriate intonation pattern for the question.

Example: A: John took your car.
B: Who took my car?

Answer: *repeat please* question (Who took my car?)

1. How do you get to New Orleans from here?
2. A: We saw him in California.
   B: Where in California?
3. How much does this cost?
4. A: She left this afternoon.
   B: When?
5. A: Alice told me about it.
   B: Who told you about it?

OTHER TYPES OF *YES/NO* AND *WH-* QUESTIONS

All of the questions described in this section are types of either *yes/no* questions or *wh-* questions. Most of them have virtually the same intonation patterns as the *yes/no* and *wh-* questions presented earlier in this chapter. These question types are presented separately, however, because they serve specific functions that are different from the question types covered thus far. You will notice that the names given to these questions reflect their functions.

Alternative Questions

Alternative questions offer a choice between at least two alternative answers. Each of the alternatives in the question is stressed, as in (49).

(**49**) a. Would you like eggs, pancakes, or waffles?

b. Are you coming or going?

Notice that the intonation pattern of an alternative question is the same as the pattern used when listing a series of options following a standard *wh-* question, as in (50).

(**50**) a. Which flavor would you like? Chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry?

b. Which color do you like best? Yellow or orange?

Any positive *yes/no* question can be turned into an alternative question by adding *or* and a negative tag using an auxiliary or the appropriately tensed form of *do* as in (51a) and (51b). Shortened tags consisting of *not*, as in (51c) are common. These alternative questions with tags can carry a petulant or annoyed tone.

(**51**) a. Are you coming or aren't you?

b. Do you like it or don't you?

c. Are you coming or not?

Echo Questions

Echo questions repeat all or part of what has just been said. The *repeat please* questions discussed earlier are, in fact, one type of echo question. As was mentioned earlier, these questions can have the function of confirming a previous utterance, as in (52a), or requesting clarification of a previous utterance, as in (52b).

(**52**) a. John: I'll fax it to Elizabeth right now.

Bill: You'll fax it to her?

b. Sue: Take a look at this.

Ann: (Take a look) at what?

Echo questions are also used to request that a previously posed question, or some part of a question, be repeated. In (53), Bill presumably did not hear what Al said or he is surprised that Al would ask the question.

(**53**) Al: Did you borrow my car keys?

Bill: Did I borrow your car keys?

If the intonation pattern of an echo question rises and remains level throughout as in (54), this lends a pensive quality to the question. It is as if the speaker were pausing, seeking time to come up with an answer. The intonation in this case signals that the speaker does not expect a response. He or she is echoing the question aloud while thinking about how to answer it.

(**54**) Susan: And what do you think of this slogan?

Alan: What do I think about it? Well, my initial reaction is . . .

Exclamatory Questions

Exclamatory questions, as shown in (55), are really exclamations that assert the belief of the speaker. They have the form of *yes*/*no* questions and normally carry falling intonation.

(**55**) a. Isn't he big!

b. Am I ever starved!

Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical yes/*no questions* express the asker's opinion. They are not intended to solicit a reply, as indicated by the second speaker in (56) and (57). Their intonation patterns often vary from one speaker to another.

(**56**) Diane: Have you heard the news about Alan?

Bill: Who hasn't?

(Implication: Everyone has heard.)

(**57**) A: Guess what? Andrew and Fergie split up.

B: Who cares?

(Implication: I don't care.)

Display Questions

Teachers often use question forms that do not begin with a *wh-* word. In (58a) and (58b), for instance, the *wh-* word comes at the end of the question. In (58c), the *wh-* word precedes a noun phrase at the end of the question. These questions are often referred to as *display questions* because the teacher is asking the student to display his or her knowledge about something. Display questions have *wh-* information intonation and stress on the *wh-* word.

(**58**) a. So this play is about what?

b. And these isotopes are formed how?

c. So this book deals with what important issue?

SUMMARY

OTHER TYPES OF *YES/NO* AND *WH-* QUESTIONS

Alternative questions offer at least two alternative answers.

Is your birthday in June or July?

Would you prefer coffee, tea, or milk?
Are you leaving or not?

Echo questions repeat all or part of what has been said.

A: Sarah will be leaving for China in May.
B: She'll be leaving for where?

A: Are you cold?

B: Am I cold?

Exclamatory questions are exclamations asserting the belief of the speaker.

Don't you look great!

Rhetorical questions are not intended to be answered, but instead, serve to state the opinion of the asker.

A: Have you heard the news about Alan?

B: Who hasn't?

Of course I enjoyed the dinner. Who wouldn't?

Display questions do not begin with a *wh-* word and are often used by teachers to request that students display their knowledge about something.

So this story is about what?

EXERCISE 4.6

Classify each question in italics as an alternative, echo, exclamatory, rhetorical, or display question, and draw the appropriate intonation pattern for each one.

Example: A: I certainly wouldn't want to be sued.
B: *Who would?*

Answer: rhetorical question. Who would?

1. A: She always has lunch at Timponi's.
   B: *She always has lunch where?*
2. A: *Do you like the blue one or the red one?*
   B: I've gotta go with the blue.
3. A: Have you seen my glasses anywhere?
   B: *Have I seen your glasses?*
4. A: *So his essay discusses what?*
   B: Relationships between men and women.
5. A: *Isn't she a beauty!*
   B: Yeah. She must be a movie star.
6. A: Have you heard about the latest scandal?
   B: *Who hasn't?*

PROBLEMS THAT ESL/EFL STUDENTS HAVE WITH QUESTIONS

The problems that ESL/EFL students have formulating English questions appear in part to reflect the developmental stages hypothesis described in Chapter 3. However, some errors in question formation also appear to be due to the influence of L1 transfer (Chapter 3).

Positive *Yes/No* Questions (Portuguese and Arabic)

As we have seen, English forms *yes/no* questions in most cases through the processes of subject–aux inversion or *do* insertion. Many languages, French and German, for example, have rules similar to these. However, more often languages express questions by using only intonation or by using intonation plus a special question particle placed at the beginning of the sentence.

Portuguese is a good example of a language in which *yes/no* questions can be formed by intonation alone. Both (59a) and (59b) display a declarative sentence word order with rising intonation to indicate that the sentence is a *yes/no* question. Without the rising intonation, each sentence would be a declarative statement.

(**59**) a. *Você mora perto daqui?*
you live near here
"Do you live near here?"

b. *Sally é uma estudante boa?*
Sally is a student good
"Is Sally a good student?"

Arabic is an example of a language in which a question marker is added to the beginning of a declarative sentence along with a change in intonation to form a *yes/no* question. This is shown in the comparison of the declarative sentence in (60a) with the *yes/no* question in (60b), where the question marker *hal* appears initially.[14]

(**60**) a. *juri:du* *an* *jaku:na* *ta:dziran*
he wants to be a merchant
"He wants to be a merchant."
b. *hal* *juri:du* *an* *jaku:na* *ta:dziran*
(question marker) he wants to be a merchant
"Does he want to be a merchant?"

Speakers of these languages sometimes follow the pattern of their L1 when forming English *yes/no* questions. Speakers of Portuguese, for instance, will often form English *yes/no* questions by applying intonation only, instead of applying subject–aux inversion or *do* insertion. This results in questions such as those in (61), which may carry the intonation pattern of an L1 question but have the form of a declarative sentence.

(**61**) a. It is your birthday?
b. The plane is arriving soon?
c. She likes coffee?

This is not a particularly serious problem, since (61a), (61b), and (61c) would most likely be understood as questions by a native speaker. They look and sound, however, like echo questions, which is not the speaker's intention.

Speakers of languages such as Arabic, on the other hand, tend to start *yes*/*no* questions with a form of *do* that agrees with the tense of the main verb. The word order remains the same and the verb maintains its tense inflection instead of taking on its bare infinitive form. This results in ungrammatical questions such as those in (62).

(**62**) a. *****Does he wants to be a merchant?
b. *****Did she had a large serving tray?
c. *****Did he wanted to go?

The errors in (62) look very much like stage 3 in the developmental sequence that English language learners pass through when learning English *yes*/*no* questions. This sequence is discussed in Chapter 3.

We get a more precise picture of stage 3 development from a study by Mukattash (1980). He asked 600 first-year students at the University of Jordan, all of whom were speakers of either Modern Standard Arabic or Jordanian Arabic, to form *yes*/*no* questions from simple declarative statements. The error type exemplified in (63a), (63b), and (63c) constituted the highest percentage of the 1,237 erroneous questions that were produced.

(**63**) a. *****Does the teacher has been looking at the notebooks?
b. *****Did the girl knew many languages?
c. *****Does her mother could have made a mistake?
d. *****Is the weather was terrible?

In (63a), (63b), and (63c), students formed questions by simply inserting a form of *do* that agrees with the tensed form of the verb in the sentence. In (63d), a similar type of error is shown. Here a student formed a *yes*/*no* question by inserting a form of copular *be* (*is*) at the beginning of the sentence.

Mukattash hypothesized that these beginning college students had adopted a question formation strategy based on the native language pattern; that is, place a question marker at the beginning of the sentence (*be* for sentences which contain some form of copular *be*, and *do* for all other sentences). Today we would probably consider this data as evidence for the developmental acquisition of English questions. What seems to be going on here is that the students have reached a plateau at stage 3 and are not able to make the last step to stage 4.

Negative *Yes*/*No* Questions (Korean, Japanese, and Hausa)

Speakers of Korean, Japanese, and African languages like Hausa will often supply an answer to a negative *yes*/*no* question in English that is the opposite of what they intend. This is because in these languages the answers would have exactly the opposite meaning in English. The Korean example in (64) demonstrates this.

(**64**) A: *Ne ol swu-eps-ni?*
You come can- neg-ques?
"Can't you come?"
B: *A-ni, na ka-l- swu iss-e*
No, I come-can be- dec.
"No, I can come."

While Speaker B's response is literally translated in English as *no*, it in fact carries the opposite meaning. By responding to A's negative question with a negative answer, Speaker B is contradicting the underlying proposition of the question and basically saying, *No, that is incorrect. In fact, I CAN come*. Speakers of Korean, Japanese, or Hausa will, therefore, often answer *no* to a negative question such as (64) when they mean, *Yes, I can* and respond *yes* when they mean, *No, I can't*. To supply a correct answer, students with these native languages must reconceptualize the question in terms of the underlying proposition (the statement version of the question), and it will take some time before the student does not instinctively provide an answer that carries the opposite of his or her intended meaning.

Tag Questions (Farsi, Arabic, and Turkish)

The problem previously described can also occur with tag questions that have a negative stem. Some languages like Farsi and Arabic attach a negative expression to a positive declarative sentence to form what is the closest equivalent to a tag question in English. For example, Farsi adds *intor nist* (*it isn't so*) with rising intonation to a declarative sentence, as shown in (65).

(**65**) *goftid mirid širaz, intor nist?*
you said you're going Shiraz so it isn't
"You said you're going to Shiraz, didn't you?"

Students who speak Farsi (or Arabic or Turkish) often follow the pattern of their native language by attaching *isn't it* to a declarative stem. This results in ungrammatical utterances like those shown in (66).

(**66**) a. *****You said you are going to Shiraz, isn't it?
b. *****They live in New York, isn't it?

Wh- Information Questions (Romance Languages, Farsi)

Many languages, including the Romance languages and Farsi, form *wh*- information questions by placing a *wh*- word at the beginning of a declarative sentence (*wh*- movement) and inverting the subject and verb. In many of these languages, however, *do* insertion is not applied. An example of this from Portuguese is shown in (67) below.

(**67**) a. *O que falou a Nicole Kidman?*
what said Nicole Kidman
"What did Nicole Kidman say?"

Speakers of these languages are often heard making the errors shown in (68).

(**68**) a. *****Why you said that?
b. *****What Nicole Kidman said?
c. *****Who he gave a book to?

The developmental sequence for the acquisition of English questions by L2 learners that we saw in Chapter 3 also includes *wh*- questions. At the third stage of this sequence, learners can apply *wh*- movement, but they are not yet able to apply *do* insertion. So, although it is possible that the errors in (68) are due to L1 transfer, there is also a possible developmental explanation for them. Although we would expect errors such as those shown in (68) to disappear with more input and use of English, surprisingly, we still find errors such as (69), which comes from a Spanish-speaking student, in the speech and writing of advanced-level students.

(**69**) *****Why that happened so many times in a short period?

Embedded *Wh*- Questions

As just shown, *wh*- questions in Romance languages have the word order *wh*- word + verb + subject NP. This order is exemplified in the Portuguese example in (70a). The same order is used in an embedded question, as (70b) shows.

(**70**) a. *Quanto custa o almoço?*
how much costs the lunch
"How much does the lunch cost?"
b. *Você pode me dizer quanto custa o almoço?*
You can (to) me say how much costs the lunch
"Can you tell me how much the lunch costs?"

The word order in the embedded question in (70b) shows the *wh*- word (*quanto*) and the verb (*custa*) before the subject (*almoço*). Transferring this word order pattern to English embedded questions results in errors like the one in (71), which comes from a composition by a Spanish-speaking undergraduate student at an American university.

(**71**) ***** . . . the question is *how can be imposed guidelines* to restrict this . . .

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING QUESTIONS

Most English language teaching courses and textbooks begin dealing with the topic of questions by teaching *yes*/*no* questions and *wh*- questions before moving on to tag questions. This makes good sense, since these two types will be used with great frequency in the conversations in which elementary students participate. Many textbooks

do a good job of teaching the grammar and use of the different question types. However, many textbooks do not include any references to the intonation patterns for questions other than to direct students to "listen carefully to your teacher."

You will have to include some instruction on the intonation patterns for the basic question types – *yes*/*no*, both types of tag questions, the three types of *wh*- questions, and at least alternative questions. This is necessary because a great many ESL students with L1s that have intonation patterns that differ from English (especially speakers of South East Asian and African languages) will master the form but not the correct intonation patterns of English questions. This is a persistent problem that has been verified on a yearly basis by production tests administered to graduate students admitted to the University of Illinois. When teaching the basic question types, it may be helpful to draw a simple diagram of a particular pattern like those shown in this book. Many workbooks on English pronunciation use diagrams, but sometimes students and teachers find these confusing. You may find it easier and more effective just to show the critical points where the pitch jumps up or moves down and to use simple labels like "rising" and "falling." Research shows that, whereas overall improvement in students' pronunciation of words and stress placement is fairly minimal, some progress in improving sentence intonation appears to be achievable.[15]

Addressing the kinds of mistakes that arise when a student has reached stage 3 in the learning of English questions (e.g., **Does he has a pencil?* **Who he gave a book to?* **What he gave to her?*) and moving the student on is worth some effort. Here the use of recasting techniques discussed in Chapter 3 may be helpful. Students whose native languages contain the conflicting meaning associated with answers to negative *yes*/*no* questions (e.g., Japanese and Korean), could benefit from activities designed to check whether they are aware of the potential for giving the inappropriate response. Arabic- and Farsi-speaking ESL students may also benefit from recasting activities designed to correct their incorrect negative tags. Some type of editing activity may be used for addressing the grammatical errors involving embedded *wh*- questions discussed earlier.

Most of the types of questions discussed in this chapter under Other Types of Yes/No and *Wh*- Questions will, it is hoped, be acquired as a result of exposure to dialogs and texts and television over time, and hence probably do not require any special focus. Still, you should know enough about these other types to be able to supply knowledgeable answers to anyone – a colleague or a student – who might ask you about them.

Yes/*No* Questions

The simplest and most effective way of practicing positive *yes*/*no* questions is through guessing games. Two of the most popular and widely used are described below. The games can be played as a class or in small groups.

Activity 1: Twenty Questions (High Beginning Through Low Intermediate)

One student says, "I'm thinking of something." The other students ask "Is it an animal? Is it a vegetable? Is it a mineral?" to establish the category. Once the category has been established, the students can ask up to 20 *yes/no* questions to discover the answer. The student who guesses the answer takes the place of the person who was answering *yes* or *no*. If no one guesses the answer, the student answering the questions wins.

A variation on this game involves bringing a number of objects to class and then concealing them behind a large piece of cardboard or in a box. The students try to identify the object by asking questions like "Is it round, soft, hard, square? Do you use it for washing? Do you wear it?"

Activity 2: What's My Line? (Intermediate Through Advanced)

This game has its origin in a popular TV show. The class suggests famous people well-known by all students. A student chooses one of them and pretends to be him or her without divulging the person's name. You may want to find out the student's identity and introduce him or her as today's guest in a way that will limit the guessing, such as "Our guest is living today" or "Our guest lived in the previous century." The class then asks the "guest" questions such as, "Are you a man or a woman?" "Are you in the movies?" Set a time limit for this. Again, if no one guesses the identity of the guest, he or she is the winner. This activity can be played as a competition between teams.

Activity 3: Making Excuses – Answering Negative *Yes*/*No* Questions (Intermediate)

This activity provides a natural context for students to practice responding to negative *yes*/*no* questions. On the board, list activities that are popular with students (e.g., *go to the movies*, *go to a party*, *study together*). Be sure that the activities are appropriate for all students to do socially together; in some countries not all of the above examples would be appropriate. Tell students that they must give full answers to the questions they answer. Point to an activity and say, "Su Jung, some of us are going to the movies tonight. Can't you come with us?" The student responds, "No, sorry, but I really can't come. I have to study" (or provides some other excuse). Another student then takes over the teacher's part and addresses another student in the class with a negative question.

Activity 4: Addressing Stage 3 Problems (High Beginning Through Intermediate)

This activity is designed for students who seem to be stuck at stage 3. It is a variation of VanPatten's processing instruction (PI) described in Chapter 3, which draws students' attention to the input – the question itself. Using either a picture of a famous person or someone in the class, say, "This is (person's name). I'm going to tell you about him." Describe the person in short, simple sentences (e.g., *He has two brothers. His father works for the government. He lives in Bordeaux*). Write the sentences on the board as you say them. Afterward say, "Now I'm going to ask some questions about him. If you think I asked the question correctly, say, 'Yes, it's okay.' If you think I asked the question incorrectly, say, 'No, it's not okay.'" Give two examples to make it clear that you are not interested in the answer to the question, but only in whether the question is formed correctly. Then point to a sentence and ask a question about it. Make some of your questions grammatically correct (e.g., *Does he have two brothers?*) and others with errors that reflect the kinds students make (e.g., ***Does he lives in Bordeaux?*). Direct each question to a student. If the student says the sentence is okay when it is not, say, "Are you sure?" and repeat the question. Have the student correctly restate each incorrect question.

Activity 5: Role-Playing Using Alternative Questions (High Intermediate)

Role-playing in pairs is a good way to practice the intonation for alternative questions. Review the pattern with students first. Then hand out slips of paper describing situations that involve alternative choices, such as buying an airplane ticket through a travel

agent, shopping in a department store for an item that comes in different colors, buying ice-cream cones at a fast-food restaurant that offers only three or four flavors, and ordering tickets for the opera, theater, or concerts. Write out a short dialog that fits the situation, as in (72).

(**72**) Student A (customer): I want to fly to Washington next week.
Student B (travel agent): When do you want to leave?
Student A: Friday or Saturday.
Student B: Good. We have cheap fares then. Would you like to fly on Friday or Saturday?
Student A: Friday.
Student B: Fine. Would you like to return on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday?

Have the students in pairs read the roles and practice acting them out. Monitor the exchanges. If a student is having trouble with the intonation pattern, demonstrate it for him or her again.

Wh- Questions

Activity 6: Forming *Wh-* Information Questions (Low Intermediate Through Intermediate)

Write various *wh-* words on the board (*what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, *what time*, *how many*, *how long*). Choose a context (e.g., leaving on a trip, going shopping, visiting a friend). Say, "I'm going on a trip. I want you to ask me some questions about my trip using these question words." Point to *where* and call on a student. Continue around the class, prompting students to form questions such as "*Where are you going? Why are you going there? How long will you stay in _____ ?*"

Activity 7: Quiz Show (Low Intermediate Through Advanced)

The popular quiz show *Jeopardy!* offers another way of practicing *wh-* information questions. Briefly explain the rules and have the students watch a taped segment of the show, if possible. In your adaptation, the quizmaster will read the answer to a question, and four contestants (students) will have 30 seconds to supply the appropriate question for that answer. A possible question/answer pair for the category Geography is shown in (73).

(**73**) Quiz Master: Mount Everest.
Contestant: What is the tallest mountain in the world?

Contestants receive points for each correct response. (Omit the rule of losing points for incorrect responses.) Set a time limit. The student who has the highest score at the end of each round goes on to play against three new contestants.

This can be a modified TBLT activity. Select questions for each category from among those created by the students. These are the questions which will be asked. A group of four contestants then competes against each other as one of the students plays the role of the quiz master and reads the answers. One student in the class who is not competing should keep time with a stopwatch. Another student should keep score, while two others judge whether or not the contestants' responses are close enough to be correct. The contestants' responses must always be framed in the form of a *wh-* question (e.g., "Who is . . . ?" "What is . . . ?" "Where is . . . ?"). There is a board game version of *Jeopardy!*, which you may want to purchase for use with your class.

Activity 8: Embedded *Wh*- Information Questions (High Intermediate Through Low Advanced)

As we saw in the previous section, the formation of grammatical embedded *wh*- information questions is a problem for many advanced students. This fact has been recognized in some of the better textbooks for teaching advanced writing, for example, Swales and Feak (2004). The authors draw attention to the fact that subject–aux inversion does not occur in English embedded questions, and they point out that these kinds of questions are used in academic writing for explaining the purpose of research and are likely to occur in problem-solution text format.

In the *Problems* section earlier in this chapter, we learned that a common error in the production of these questions can be due to English learners transferring the word order from their L1. A number of approaches can be combined to attack this problem. First, explain the difference between regular *wh*- information questions and the embedded version. (You may even show the embedded question pattern of the L1 if you know this well enough.) Next, try a PI activity in which you ask students to discriminate between grammatical and ungrammatical embedded questions. Then try small group or pair work. Have students decide on a context, for example, buying a car, and list the different kinds of *wh*- questions that they would need to ask, such as, "How much does it cost?" "How many people can it carry comfortably?" "What kind of gas mileage does it get?" "How expensive are the services that have to be done?" "How often does it have to be serviced?" "How large is the trunk (boot)?" "How much luggage will it hold?" After a brief explanation, give the students the task of making up questions about any object that they might purchase and then posing the questions in a role play. They are to frame them as embedded questions (e.g., "I would like to know how much this car costs?" "Could you tell me what the average gas mileage is?" "Could you give me an idea of how often it has to be serviced?") Follow this up later with an editing task in which students have to identify erroneous embedded questions in a short passage. The activities, particularly the last task, can be repeated later for further review.

ENDNOTES

[1] Zuma's tendency to apply rising intonation to statements appears to be quite common (currently) among young people. No one knows why some people talk like Zuma. It may be because they believe that applying question intonation to statements holds the listener's attention, or invokes empathy with what they are saying.

[2] Simple line diagrams similar to those in Dickerson (1989) and Hahn and Dickerson (1999) are used to describe the intonation patterns of questions treated in this chapter. These diagrams are easy to understand and are therefore useful for describing the intonation patterns of English questions to ESL/EFL teachers and students. Not everyone will agree with these patterns or be able to hear all of them. However, as Kelly (2000) notes, "the same thing can be said in different ways. There is also more flexibility when it comes to *yes*/*no* questions. However, . . . the teacher who applies these rules to their treatment of intonation in the classroom is unlikely to lead students astray; that is to say that in using these patterns, students will not go drastically wrong" (page 90).

[3] The "copular" form of *be* occurs in sentences which have predicate nominals, like *He is a doctor*, or predicate adjectives, like *She is tall*.

[4] Subject–auxiliary inversion is sometimes referred to as *subject–verb inversion*.

[5] This has apparently been disputed by Roach (2001), according to a personal communication cited in Jenkins (2004). However, the up-rise pattern is shown in pitch meter tracings in Levis (1996).

[6] In addition to the up-rise intonation pattern shown in (10), three other intonation patterns may occur with *yes*/*no* questions, and are shown as an up-fall pattern in (10a), a down-rise pattern in (10b), and a down-low-rise pattern in (10c). Not all native speakers hear the differences in all of these patterns, but they all hear and use the up-rise pattern in (10), so that is the one that should be taught to students.

(**10**) a. Would you like to go swimming? *up-fall intonation pattern*

b. Would you like to go swimming? *down-rise intonation pattern*

c. Would you like to go swimming? *down-low-rise intonation pattern*

[7] Positive *yes*/*no* questions can express bias when they contain words like *already*, *still*, and *definitely*. For example, the question *Has the train already left*? will be asked when the speaker is seeking to confirm the suspicion that the train has in fact already left. If the speaker is not seeking to confirm this suspicion, the question will take the neutral, unbiased form: *Has the train left yet?*

[8] The designation "declarative *yes*/*no* question" was proposed by Quirk et. al. (1972).

[9] The functions and examples (21) and (22) are from Larry Bouton, personal communication.

[10] Houk (1991), p. 33.

[11] These verbs may also be attached as tags to negative stems (e.g., *You're not supposed to do that, you know?*).

[12] See Biber et. al. (1999), p. 210.

[13] See Lightner (1998).

[14] Examples are Jordanian Arabic from Mukattash (1980).

[15] For a recent review of current trends in the teaching of pronunciation, see Jenkins (2004). For a more sobering appraisal of the limits of phonological learning, including the acquisition of intonation by L2 learners, see the research by Flege and his colleagues: Flege (1999), Flege, Yeni-Komshian, and Lui (1999).

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