

〈論 文〉

Toward a Description of Tag Questions in Discourse

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Abstract

Tag questions in English are generally introduced as a pair of a question and an answer in EFL textbooks. The information-seeking function of a tag question is stressed. Yet, Tottie and Hoffman (2009) report that the information-seeking use of tag questions comprises 41% in their data. Out of 65 examples I have gathered from the Archers (2018), a BBC's radio drama, a coherent or direct response to a tag question is made in 37 cases. Among the 37 examples, responses with a literal "yes" add up to 10 instances and responses with a literal "no" come to seven instances. The combined numbers of literal responses, 17 instances, constitute 46% in the "coherent responses". The literal yes/no responses comprise only 26.2% in the total number of examples of tag questions collected from the Archers (2018). The non-information-seeking function of tag questions needs more attention in linguistic description as well as in an EFL context.

Keywords: answer, following utterance, intonation, non-information-seeking, question

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1. The linguistic description of tag questions in English

English has a grammatical structure called tag questions¹. The following examples² are quoted from a comprehensive reference grammar.

- ①_a[Your friends made a good job of it,]_a b[didn't they?]_b
(Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 892)
- ②_a[They haven't finished it,]_a b[have they?]_b
(Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 892)
- ③_a[So you have forgotten your homework again,]_a b[have you?]_b
(Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 895)
- ④_a[[%] So you haven't done your homework,]_a b[haven't you?]_b
(Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 895)

The previous studies on tag questions seem to have focused on one of the two aspects of their behavior: the polarity combination of an anchor clause and the question tag; the intonation of the question tag.

The polarity combination of the four examples above will be analyzed as follows: ①[positive + negative]; ②[negative + positive]; ③[positive + positive]; ④[negative + negative]. The type ① and ② are called reverse polarity tag questions whereas the type ③ and ④ are named constant polarity tag questions. Huddleston & Pullum (2002:

Table 1

	positive + negative	negative + positive	positive + positive	negative + negative
American	69%	27%	4%	0%
British	75%	17%	8%	2 instances

892) comment that the constant polarity tag questions in the form of [negative + negative] are rejected by many speakers of English. Many grammars of English³ refer to the [negative + negative] type. Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) conducted a corpus research which revealed the frequency of how often the four types of tag questions are used in America and in England, respectively. Watanabe (2014: 12) summarizes what Tottie and Hoffmann (pp.289-291) discuss about the possible combinations of an anchor and the question tag. His table is quoted above as table 1.

The statistics tells us that the four types of tag questions are distributed, in descending order, as follows: [positive + negative], [negative + positive], [positive + positive], and [negative + negative]. Obviously, the use of reverse polarity tag questions prevails in both accents of English: 96% in America, 92% in Britain. Tottie and Hoffman analyze their data from several viewpoints; the kinds of pronouns used in the question tags, the possibility of gender difference in the frequency of usage, and the generation difference in the frequency of usage. Unfortunately, their collection of examples lacks phonetic data⁴.

The phonetic behavior of tag questions is usually mentioned very briefly⁵ in reference grammars as follows:

⑤ He was here, wasn't he ↗ ? [rising tag]

(Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 894)

⑥ He was here, wasn't he ↘ ? [falling tag]

(Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 894)

⑦ He wasn't here, was he ↗ ? [rising tag]

(Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 894)

⑧ He wasn't here, was he ↘ ? [falling tag]

(Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 894)

Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 894) state that a question tag can take either a rising or a falling tone. They argue that a speaker expresses their doubt or asks for verification when they use a rising tag; in other words, they want the message in the anchor to be confirmed. They go on to assert that a speaker does not express their doubt when they use a falling tag; after all, they only seek acknowledgement that the message in the anchor is true.

In Watanabe (2017) I collected 120 spoken examples from BBC's radio drama, *the Archers*⁶. The 120 examples were analyzed in terms of both syntax and phonetics; syntactically, they were classified according to the polarity of an anchor clause and the question tag; phonetically, they were categorized based on the nuclear tone taken on by the anchor and the tag. The tag questions were divided into ten categories as follows: (1) positive rising anchor + negative falling tag, (2) negative rising anchor + positive falling tag, (3) positive rising anchor + negative rising tag, (4) negative rising anchor + positive rising tag, (5) positive falling anchor + negative falling tag, (6) negative falling anchor + positive falling tag, (7) positive falling anchor + negative rising tag, (8) negative falling anchor + positive rising tag, (9) positive rising anchor + positive rising tag, (10) positive falling anchor + positive rising tag

To offer the bird's eye view of the result of my survey three tables are quoted below from Watanabe (2017: 155-156). Four changes⁷ have been made to the statistics in tables 3 and 4.

To summarize, as in table 4, if we disregard the nuclear tone of the

Table 2 Tag Questions with Rising Anchors in the Archers in 2016

Polarity of Anchor and Tag	Falling Question Tag	Rising Question Tag
Positive + Negative	10	7
Negative + Positive	5	3
Positive + Positive	0	2
Total	15	12

Table 3 Tag Questions with Falling Anchors in the Archers in 2016

Polarity of Anchor and Tag	Falling Question Tag	Rising Question Tag
Positive + Negative	58	8
Negative + Positive	19	3
Positive + Positive	0	5
Total	77	16

Table 4 Tag Questions with Rising/Falling Anchors in the Archers in 2016

Polarity of Anchor and Tag	Falling Question Tag	Rising Question Tag
Positive + Negative	68	15
Negative + Positive	24	6
Positive + Positive	0	7
Total	92	28

anchors and only focus on the polarity combination and the tone of the question tag, the most frequent type of tag questions is [positive + negative; fall] (68 instances), followed, in descending order, by [negative + positive; fall] (24 instances), [positive + negative; rise] (15 instances), [positive + positive; rise] (7 instances)⁸, and [negative + positive; rise] (6 instances). The order of frequency may look different from that of Tottie and Hoffman (2006) introduced earlier in table 1. The apparent difference arises from the fact that Watanabe (2017) took the nuclear

tone of the question tag into the analysis. If we only look at the syntactic property of the tag questions, we will obtain the same order of frequency; the [positive + negative] type provides 83 (68 + 15) instances, the [negative + positive] type yields 30 (24 + 6) instances, and the [positive + positive] type confers 7 instances.

If we concentrate on the intonation aspect, the rising anchors comprise 22.5 % while the falling ones occupy 77.5 %. The occurrence of falling anchors prevails. The occurrence of falling question tags (76.7%) is much larger than that of rising ones (23.3%). We may need to find other studies of the intonation of tag questions based on phonetic corpus to evaluate the appropriateness of the statistics in Watanabe (2017) ; unfortunately, I have been unable to find such kind of studies. The closest I have been able to find is Geluykens⁹ (1988). He discusses the role of “inversion-questions” (yes-no questions) and “queclaratives” (questions in statement form)¹⁰. He (p.472) collected 119 examples of inversion-questions from the database of the recorded conversation stored in the Survey of English Usage based at University College London. Of the 119 examples, 68 instances take on a rising nuclear tone whereas 51 instances assume a falling nuclear tone. In other words, the rising tone occupies 57.1 % and the falling tone comprises 42.9 %¹¹. The percentage difference between the use of two tones is 14.2. The similar percentage difference in the case of Watanabe (2017) is 53.3; the use of falling tones is much larger. The forms of question tags and yes-no questions seem to be similar on surface. Yet, I would assume that there is an essential difference in function between the two syntactic phenomena¹².

2. The description of tag questions in EFL materials

2.1. Tag questions in EFL materials in England

First, let us check how tag questions are introduced in EFL grammar textbooks published in England. The sentences ⑨ and ⑩ are the examples from an EFL grammar to illustrate it.

⑨ A: You closed the window, didn't you? (Murphy 2002: 84)

B: Yes, I did.

⑩ A: Lucia doesn't have a car, does she? (Murphy 2002: 84)

B: No, she doesn't.

Both in examples ⑨ and ⑩ the tag questions are presented as a question and answer pair; the first speaker asks a question and then the second speaker replies to it with an utterance starting with a “yes” or a “no”.

Murphy (2002) is intended for pre-intermediate EFL learners.

Tag questions are introduced in the same way in an intermediate grammar textbook, Murphy (2004).

⑪ A: It's a nice day, isn't it? (Murphy 2004: 104)

B: Yes, beautiful.

⑫ A: Tim doesn't look well today, does he? (Murphy 2004: 104)

B: No, he looks very tired.

But an advanced EFL grammar book¹³, Hewings (2013), refers to the topic only briefly as in example ⑬:

⑬ We don't have to leave just yet, do we? (Hewings 2013: 227)

This will be because Hewings (2005, 2013) are designed to help advanced EFL learners who want to improve their proficiency in written English. Sinclair (1990: 433) comments¹⁴ that tag questions are most often used in spoken English.

How are the tag questions presented in the EFL textbooks teaching pronunciation? They are described in the same way in all levels of textbooks¹⁵; Marks (2007) is intended for elementary learners; Hancock (2003) is written for intermediate learners; Hewings (2007) is designed for advanced learners.

- ⑭ A: You're June Smith, aren't you? (Marks 2007: 103)
B: No, I'm Jane Smith.
- ⑮ A: Football's so boring, isn't it? (Hancock 2003: 126)
B: Yeah, I know. I hate it.
- ⑯ A: Mr. Simpson can be very charming, can't he? (Hewings 2007: 45)
B: Yes, he certainly knows how to turn it on.

The EFL textbooks for grammar and pronunciation do not necessarily provide both positive and negative responses for the preceding tag questions. The responses do not always take such conventional forms¹⁶ as “Yes, I did” and “No, she doesn't” as illustrated in examples ⑨ and ⑩ from Murphy 2002.

2.2. Tag questions in English teaching materials in Japan

In the communication-oriented English education in junior and senior high schools in Japan we tend to assume that tag questions are introduced as a question and answer pair to illustrate how to seek agreement or how to express doubt between the interlocutors in pre-intermediate teaching materials in Japan. Let us take a look at some introductory teaching materials.

- ⑰ A: This is a book, isn't it? (Ogawa and Yasuda 1961: 17)
B: Yes, it is.
- ⑱ A: This isn't a book, is it? (Ogawa and Yasuda 1961: 17)
B: No, it is not.
- ⑲ A: This is a new camera, isn't it? (Yasuda 1970: 134)
B: Yes, it is. I just bought it a couple of days ago.
- ⑳ A: But you had another camera, didn't you? (Yasuda 1970: 134)
B: Yes, I did. But I gave it to my brother.

The four pairs of examples above are an illustration of exercises using the method of pattern practice. The purpose of using examples like ⑰

and ⑱ will be to teach how to form a tag question and how to answer it, though this approach can be criticized that the practice required is just mechanical¹⁷. Examples ⑲ and ⑳ seem to be a result of improvement on the application of pattern practice. The second speaker in both examples not only gives an answer “yes” but also more information to develop the conversation.

Ogawa and Yasuda (1961) and Yasuda (1970) are good resource books to consult how a particular grammatical item was introduced to the pre-intermediate students when the method of pattern practice¹⁸ was widely employed in Japan.

The two books offer us an example of how the grammatical structure of English was taught in the 1960's and 1970's in Japan. We need to know what modern students are learning about tag questions. I consulted the Course of Study announced by MEXT¹⁹ in 2007 and 2017. Nevertheless, I have been unable to find a description on how the tag question is to be taught in junior high schools.

I explored two independent learning materials of English designed for junior high school students. The two books treat the topic as an item to be taught to third-year students.

Ogata and Kamiho (2012: 154-155) discuss tag questions with nine examples. I will quote two examples below.

㉑ You want a new computer, don't you?

(Ogata and Kamiho 2012 : 155)

㉒ You don't play baseball, do you? (Ogata and Kamiho 2012 : 155)

They are good examples of reverse polarity tag questions. The two questions can be answered with a “yes” or a “no”. Among the nine examples four cases illustrate the use of a form of *be* in question tags and five cases show the use of other auxiliary verbs in question tags. Yet, unfortunately, no example is given of how we can respond to them.

Kanatani (2016: 90-91) provides ten examples of reverse polarity tag

questions. He also discusses the use of a form of *be* and other auxiliary verbs in question tags. Then he goes on to give an example of positive and negative responses as follows:

- ㉓ You are busy, aren't you? (↘) (Kanatani 2016: 91)
- ㉔ You are busy, aren't you? (↗)
- ㉕ Yes, I am.
- ㉖ No, I am not.

It is to be noted that he indicates the nuclear tones of question tags, explaining that a falling tag is used when the speaker wants a confirmation and that a rising tag is used when one wants to get a yes/no answer.

Let us go over some textbooks currently used in Japanese junior high schools. I will take up three government-authorized English textbooks currently in use for third-year junior high school students.

- ㉑ The woman looked at Rudolf calmly, and smiled. "I fainted, didn't I?" she said. "I haven't eaten for three days." "Oh, no!" cried Rudolf. "Wait! I'll be right back." (New Horizon: p.102)

- ㉒ A: As a long jumper, you have taken part in the Paralympic Games three times, right? (Sunshine: p.34)
B: Yes, I have.

- ㉓ A: That's the temple built by Ashikaga Yoshimitsu in 1397.
B: You call it Kinkakuji, right? (Sunshine: p.112)

No example has been found in *New Crown English Series 3*. The sentence "I fainted, didn't I?" in ㉑ is an example of tag questions in reverse polarity. But its usage does not seem to be canonical because it does not demand a yes/ no response from the other party. The expres-

sion “right” in sentences in ㉒ and ㉓ is an example of what Tottie and Hoffman (2006: 306) call “invariant tags”.

There will be at least two reasons why the canonical tag questions are rarely used in junior high school textbooks.

The first reason is linguistic. Tottie and Hoffman (2006: 306) report that tag questions are used nine times as often in British English as in American English. They (p.307) further point out the necessity of investigating if American English use such invariant tags as *right*, *okay*, *huh*, more often. We could assume that the three textbooks have employed American English as a basis of their description.

The second reason is educational. The editors of the textbooks might have considered that tag questions were too difficult²⁰ to teach to junior high school students in Japan.

I would consider that the coverage of tag questions is not comprehensive enough from an educational viewpoint either in the independent learning materials or in the authorized textbooks.

There can arise two problems. The first problem relates to the descriptions of tag questions in Ogata and Kamiho (2012) and Kanatani (2016). Their account might give the learners an impression that they can make tag questions simply by placing a form of *be* or an auxiliary and a pronoun after an anchor clause and they might also assume that they can always reply with such short answers, “Yes, I am” and “No, I am not,” as indicated in Kanatani (2016: 91). Watanabe (2012: 79) call our attention to Fuchs and Bonner’s (2001: 124) description of questions and short answers. He quotes the following examples:

㉔ Will you mail this for me? (Fuchs and Bonner 2001: 124)

㉕ Can you mail this for me?

㉖ Would you mail this for me?

㉗ Could you mail this for me?

㉘ Sure (I will).

㉙ Certainly (I can).

③⑩ I'm sorry, but I can't.

The sentences in ②④, ②⑤, ②⑥, and ②⑦ are questions; the sentences in ②⑧, ②⑨, and ③⑩ are possible examples of a response to the preceding question. Watanabe (2012) points out that the questions employ one of the four auxiliaries *will*, *can*, *would*, and *could*; yet, the answers do not include *would* and *could*. He, therefore, concludes that the kinds of auxiliary verbs available in short answers cannot be automatically deduced from those employed by a preceding question. Watanabe (2012: 78) observes that there is a case where an expression that may seem syntactically possible is not actually used. He quotes Fuchs and Bonner (2001: 158) as follows:

③① Could he work there? (Fuchs and Bonner 2001: 158)

③② He [must (not), may (not), might (not), could (n't), can't, has (got) to].

He declares that the positive form “can” is missing although the negative form “can't” is given in the options. He suspects that the lack of “can” is not an accidental but a systematic gap in English.

The EFL learners should be warned against such a systematic gap.

I would consider that a pattern practice approach in the form of ③③ below could help the learners in Japan to acquire communicative ability to make a realistic response if two conditions are met when they participate in the practice: a target expression is grammatically well-formed; the language is used in an appropriate context which will ensure its grammaticality.

③③ [= ①⑨] A: This is a new camera, isn't it? (Yasuda 1970: 134)

B: Yes, it is. I just bought it a couple of days ago.

The second problem relates to the rare coverage of tag questions in

the textbooks. As I have pointed out in endnote (19), the use of tag questions seems to be unique in English. Comparing Ogata and Kamiho (2012) and Kanatani (2016), I have suggested that pre-intermediate learning materials need to show how we can answer tag questions. Watanabe (2012: 78) demonstrates that making a short answer to yes/no questions is not a mechanical process. Watanabe (2012: 81) stresses that the answer to a tag question is not necessarily a simple short answer. He takes up the discussion of tag questions in Murphy (2009: 100) with the following examples:

- ③④ A: You wouldn't have a pen, would you? (Murphy 2009: 100)
 B: Yes, here you are.
- ③⑤ A: You couldn't lend me some money, could you? (Murphy 2009: 100)
 B: It depends how much.
 A: You don't know where Lauren is, do you? (Murphy 2009: 100)
 B: Sorry, I have no idea.

He emphasizes that the answers to tag questions can be varied.

Watanabe (2012: 83, 85) further argues that tag questions, together with “reply questions”²¹ and “follow-up questions”²² play an important role in developing a conversation. He asserts that a Japanese student's utterance can end abruptly as in ③⑦ A but that it can be followed by another utterance as in ③⑦ B.

- ③⑦ A: I went to Tokyo Disneyland last Saturday.
 B: Oh, did you? Was it fun?

The second speaker in ③⑦ helps to keep the conversation going by throwing such a reply question as “Oh, did you?” The speaker facilitates the communication by using a follow-up question “Was it fun?” The first speaker can automatically continue the conversation by answering it.

The Course of Studies (2007: 30; 2017: 72) take up the function of language to enhance a person-to-person communication. The practice of tag questions will help learners to develop their interactive skills to accomplish a two-way communication.

3. Investigating tag questions in the actual examples

3.1. Watanabe (2017)

In chapter two I assumed that a prototypical use of tag questions was to respond to them with a yes/no answer as illustrated in ㉞ below.

㉞ [= ㉠] A: You closed the window, didn't you? (Murphy 2002: 84)
B: Yes, I did.

I also assumed that a question and answer pair would be used to teach tag questions in textbooks. I consulted six books published in England and five of them were found to use that approach. I probed four independent learning materials and three current government-authorized textbooks published in Japan. The two learning materials were found to take that approach. Just one example of tag questions was found in one Japanese textbook. Besides, that example was not an illustration of canonical use of tag questions.

In Watanabe (2017) I collected 120 examples of tag questions from a radio drama. The purpose of investigation was to uncover the syntactic and phonetic behavior of tag questions. The focus of research was to describe the possible polarity combinations of an anchor and the question tag and to reveal the nuclear tones of the anchor and the question tag. Much effort was placed to collect the examples of tag questions. Yet, a supplementary effort was made to record “the preceding utterance” and “the following utterance” while a part of the drama was being transcribed.

Out of 120 examples of tag questions 74 instances are followed by a

linguistic response. Among 74 instances 30 cases employ “yes” or “no” as part of linguistic expressions. Among 30 instances 18 cases employ “yes” and 12 cases use “no”. To sum up, tag questions with a yes/no answer constitute 25% of all the examples; this type of tag questions may not be a prototype exemplar.

3.2. The pragmatic use of tag questions in discourse

Tottie and Hoffman (2006: 301; 2009: 141) classify their data of tag questions into six categories based on the pragmatic functions they fulfill in the context of verbal interaction: (a) informational function which is used to make a genuine request for information; (b) confirmatory function by which the speaker tries to get confirmation because they are not sure of what they say; (c) attitudinal function by which the speaker emphasizes what they say and do not expect an involvement or a reply from the other party; (d) peremptory function by which the speaker makes a statement of generally acknowledged truth and they intend to close off the debate; (e) aggressive function which acts as an insult or a provocation; (f) facilitative function in which the speaker is sure that what they say is true but want to involve the other party.

I will quote examples from Tottie and Hoffman (2009: 141).

The bracketed numbers following the notation of the functions indicate the percentage that each use of functions occupies in their data. The italic notations are theirs.

(a) informational (4%)

③⁹ You're getting paid for this, *are you?*

(Tottie and Hoffman 2009: 141)

(b) confirmatory (37%)

④⁰ I don't need a jacket, *do I?* (Tottie and Hoffman 2009: 141)

(c) attitudinal (18%)

④① ...she'll be in trouble, *won't she*, she often gets her own drinks any-way... (Tottie and Hoffman 2009: 141)

(d) peremptory (1%)

④② I wasn't born yesterday, *was I?* (Tottie and Hoffman 2009: 141)

(e) aggressive (1%)

④③ Ernest: ...I put six eggs on.

Peggy: you put what?

Ernest: put six eggs on *didn't I?* (Tottie and Hoffman 2009: 141)

(f) facilitative (36%)²³

④④ Teacher: Right, it's two, *isn't it?* (Tottie and Hoffman 2009: 141)

Pupil: *Mm.*

The functions “informational” and “confirmatory” can be encapsulated as “information-seeking”. The information-seeking use comprises 41% in their data. In Watanabe (2017) the replies to a tag question with “yes” or “no” occupy 25%. It seems obvious that we need to investigate more about the non-information-seeking functions of tag questions.

I would consider that a context where tag questions are used would be schematized as follows:

Schema 1

A: the preceding utterance

B: a tag question

C: the following utterance

At the end of 3.1 I noted that the research focus of Watanabe (2017) was on the phonetic and syntactic behavior of tag questions. In this section I will report the result of my investigation. I will put focus on

“the following utterance” as in schema one.

Geluykens (1988) offers two interesting observations on yes/no questions. He (p.496) states that there will be three kinds of responses to polar questions or yes/no questions: (1) confirmation (e.g. yes), (2) rejection (e.g. no), (3) statement to the effect that confirmation / rejection cannot be provided (e.g. perhaps; I don't know). The first and the second case will correspond to the information-seeking function of tag questions. My research will reveal the variety of responses in the third case.

Geluykens (1988: 470) points out that the answer to a yes/no question may not immediately follow the question. He provides two kinds of examples²⁴ as I quote below:

④⑤ A: do you want to go to the movies (Q1)

B: you mean right now (Q2)

A: yes (A2)

B: no sorry I can't leave just now (A1)

④⑥ A: do you like this painting? I hate it.

B: I think it's great actually.

Example ④⑤ illustrates a case where the second speaker asks a confirmation question before he answers the first speaker's question. The second speaker makes an appropriate response after that. Example ④⑥ illustrates a case where the first speaker puts a question and makes his own comment immediately. The speaker replies after that. Geluykens (1988: 470) argues, referring to Levinson (1983: 304), that the adjacency requirement for questions and answers is not absolute. When I collect the examples of “the following utterance” after a tag question, I will have to take into account that the relevant response may not come just after the question.

3.3. The Archers (2018)

3.3.1 The procedure of collecting data

I have obtained 15 sessions of *the Archers* available from the BBC's website and have managed to collect 65 examples from the radio drama, of which 58 examples are those of reverse polarity tag questions while the remaining seven are those of constant polarity tag questions. All the data are presented in the appendix of this article. For the purpose of acknowledging the data source, each example is accompanied by the broadcast date, and the minute and second of when a particular dialogue is uttered. The speaker's gender is indicated by F or M at the beginning of each line.

Wells (2006) is assumed for the rhythmic notations. The indicated rhythms are as follows: (a) a rhythmic beat as in 'great, 'having, 'Hana, and 'back in example (1), which is represented by a short vertical line placed as a superscript on the left of the word in question; (b) the location of a nuclear accent as in Ambridge and isn't in example (1), which is shown by the underline; (c) a falling nuclear tone as in \didn't in example (2), which is indicated by a slash going down from left to right; (d) a rising nuclear tone as in /can't in example (6), which is indicated by a slash going up from left to right; (e) a fall-rise nuclear tone as in √name in example (3), which is shown by the combination of the falling and rising slashes. The rhythmic notations are given only for the examples of tag questions.

3.3.2 The statistical summary of the collected data

The collected 65 examples will be classified and presented in the table format below. The classification is based on the ten types of tag questions proposed in Watanabe (2017: 150).

The size of corpus in this study is about half the size of the corpus used in Watanabe (2017): 65 examples versus 120 examples. How will

Table 5 Tag Questions with Rising Anchors in the Archers in 2018

Polarity of Anchor and Tag	Falling Question Tag	Rising Question Tag
Positive + Negative	2	2
Negative + Positive	2	2
Positive + Positive	0	0
Total	4	4

Table 6 Tag Questions with Falling Anchors in the Archers in 2018

Polarity of Anchor and Tag	Falling Question Tag	Rising Question Tag
Positive + Negative	24	9
Negative + Positive	10	7
Positive + Positive	1	5
Negative + Negative	1	0
Total	36	21

Table 7 Tag Questions with Rising/Falling Anchors in the Archers in 2018

Polarity of Anchor and Tag	Falling Question Tag	Rising Question Tag
Positive + Negative	26	11
Negative + Positive	12	9
Positive + Positive	1	5
Negative + Negative	1	0
Total	40	25

the corpus size affect the distribution of phonetic and syntactic properties of tag questions?

I would like to describe the phonetic properties first. Watanabe (2017: 156) reports that the rising anchors comprise 22.5% (27 instances) while the falling ones occupy 77.5% (93 instances). I have found in this study that rising anchors comprise 12.3 % (8 instances) while fall-

ing ones occupy 87.3% (57 instances). The occurrence of falling anchors prevails in both studies. Watanabe (2017: 156) reports that falling tags comprise 76.7 % (92 instances) while rising ones occupy 23.3% (28 instances). I have found in this study that falling tags comprise 61.5% (40 instances) while rising ones occupy 38.5% (25 instances). Both study reveal that the occurrence of falling tags is larger than that of rising ones.

Next let me discuss the syntactic properties. Watanabe (2017: 158) reports that the most frequent type of tag questions is (1) [positive + negative; fall] (68 instances), followed, in descending order, by (2) [negative + positive; fall] (24 instances), (3) [positive + negative; rise] (15 instances), (4) [positive + positive; rise] (7 instances), and (5) [negative + positive; rise] (6 instances). The present survey provides a slightly different order of frequency from that in Watanabe (2017) ; the most frequent type of tag questions is (1) [positive + negative; fall] (26 instances), followed, in descending order, by (2) [negative + positive; fall] (12 instances), (3) [positive + negative; rise] (11 instances), (4) [negative + positive; rise] (9 instances), and (5) [positive + positive; rise] (5 instances). The order of the more frequent combinations remains the same. Yet, the ranking of less frequent combinations have changed.

We could argue that a corpus with 65 examples is large enough to see the phonetic properties of anchors and question tags but it may be small to describe the syntactic properties of less frequent constructions.

A smaller corpus has provided us with two apparently rare examples as follows:

(65) M: Kenton's put a suggestion box on the bar.

F: Honestly, what those boys (are) like? 'Toby can 'do 'anything
 \normally, | \can he?

M: Favorite (names) so far: Luis and Emily.

F: Great. Right. Here we are.

M: Thanks for the lift.

(64) F: It's very kind of you. I'm grateful.

M: No more 'human be\havior, | \isn't it? When someone's under the weather.

F: Oh, I probably don't deserve this. Not after everything I've put you through.

M: Probably not. (The Archers 1st June 2018; 6: 20)

Example (65) is a case of constant polarity tag questions where both the anchor and the tag come in positive. The intonation of a question tag in such a case is usually described to be rising as is summarized in endnote (7). Yet the tag “\can he?” in example (65) assumes a falling tone. Example (64) is a case of constant polarity tag questions where both the anchor and the tag come in negative. Such a combination of an anchor and a tag is not widely accepted as is summarized in endnote (3).

If we combine the number of instances obtained from the Archers (2016) and the Archers (2018), the total number of instances will be 183. The examples (64) and (65) discussed above are excluded from the count as apparent exceptional cases. We will get the frequency distribution of five types of tag questions as follows: the most frequent type of tag questions is (1) [positive + negative; fall] (51.4%; 94 instances), (2) [negative + positive; fall] (19.7%; 36 instances), (3) [positive + negative; rise] (14.2%; 26 instances), (4) [negative + positive; rise] (8.2%; 15 instances), and (5) [positive + positive; rise] (6.6%; 12 instances). The lowest frequency of the type [positive + positive; rise] seems to be predicted. We will need to enlarge the phonetic corpus to know if the ranking above is stable.

3.3.3 A linguistic response following tag questions

This section will describe how a tag question is responded by a follow-

ing utterance. Out of 65 examples I have gathered from the Archers (2018) a coherent or direct response to a tag question is made in 37 cases. The coherent responses are observed in the following cases. The example number of the sentences in the appendix of this paper is quoted below: (2), (3), (6), (7), (8), (10), (11), (12), (13), (14), (17), (18), (19), (21), (22), (23), (25), (27), (28), (29), (30), (32), (33), (38), (39), (40), (42), (44), (47), (48), (52), (53), (54), (56), (58), (60), (62), (63).

In the remaining 28 cases the utterances made in response to a preceding tag question do not seem to constitute a direct answer to it. As a tentative naming I will call a case where a direct answer is not provided to a tag question “incoherent responses”. The “incoherent responses” are observed in the following cases. The example number of the sentences in the appendix of this paper is quoted below: (1), (4), (5), (9), (12), (15), (16), (20), (24), (26), (31), (34), (35), (36), (37), (41), (43), (45), (46), (49), (50), (51), (55), (57), (59), (61), (64), (65).

First I would like to describe the characteristics of incoherent responses and then go on to discuss “coherent responses”.

The incoherent responses can be grouped into five types. I will describe each case with a relevant example from the appendix.

The first type is a case where the first speaker poses a question and goes on to make his own comment before the second speaker gets a chance to make a response. This type includes examples (1), (9), (16), (20), (31), (37), (43), and (61). Example (31) is quoted below for an illustration.

(31) M₁: So what did Anisha say?

M₂: Nothing.

M₁: Didn't you tell her?

M₂: Well, there's 'nothing to tell, | is there? You just may use Pip. Sue was being a bit friendly.

(The Archers 19 June 2018; 2: 44)

M₁: Friendly. I wish I had more friends like that.

In example (31) the first speaker (M₂) submits a question “Well, there’s ‘nothing to \tell, | \is there?” and immediately adds a comment “You just may use Pip. Sue was being a bit friendly.” The second speaker (M₁) responds to an expression “friendly”. The first speaker’s question is apparently disregarded.

The second type is a case where the scene changes in a drama or the drama itself is concluded by a speaker’s tag question. This type includes examples (12), (20), (26), and (57). Example (26) is quoted below for an illustration.

- (26) F: Because obviously I love her whatever decisions she makes. Or however she lives her life. ‘That’s ‘what ‘moms \do, | \isn’t it?
 (The Archers 14 June 2018; 8: 25)

In example (26) a female speaker expresses how she feels about her daughter and the drama goes on to the next scene. I would think that the question is posed not only to the characters in the drama but also to the audience.

The third type is a case where the second speaker tries to change a topic addressed by the first speaker or to develop a conversation initiated by him. This type includes examples (4), (5), (34), (35), (36), (41), (45), (46), (49), (50), (64), and (65). Example (34) is quoted below for an illustration.

- (34) M: Strawberry cheese cake helps my brain.
 F: ‘Not the \cheese cake, | \is it, buddy?
 M: I think all relationships are equal. Don’t you, mom?
 F: Yes, of course, really. (The Archers 7 June 2018; 7: 23)

In example (34) the second speaker (M) does not obviously answer the first speaker’s (F) question.

The fourth type is a case where the second speaker reveals his ig-

norance to the first speaker's question. This type includes examples (15), (51), (55), and (59). Example (55) is quoted below for an illustration.

- (55) F: I just don't wish. Oh, it doesn't matter. Forget I said anything.
M: You are. You are 'not 'having 'second \thoughts, | /are you?
F: I don't know.

Example (55) just illustrates what Gelyukens (1988: 496) states about three kinds of responses to yes/no questions. It falls into the third case: statement to the effect that confirmation / rejection cannot be provided.

The fifth type is a case where a tag question is answered by another tag question. Example (24) is the only case I have encountered in this study. It is quoted below.

- (24) M: It's a business deal, pure and simple. Working out how to divide things up. So it's fair.
F: It's 'not at 'all about \finance, | \is it, Alistair? |
(The Archers 12 June 2018; 5: 36)
M: Well, we 'just want to 'get it \over with, | \don't we? W h e r e can we park? (The Archers 12 June 2018; 5: 39)
F: On the street.

In example (24) the second speaker (M) responds to the first speaker's (F) question by another tag question and then changes a topic addressed by her.

Now I would like to discuss coherent responses to tag questions. Coherent responses can be divided into two kinds: a "yes-response" or a syntactically positive response and a "no-response" or a syntactically negative response. Among the 37 examples yes-responses comprise 24 instances and no-responses constitute 13 instances.

The 24 yes-responses are divided into two types: those with a liter-

al “yes” and those without. The responses with a literal “yes” comprise 10 instances. The remaining 14 instances are considered to be the cases without a literal “yes”. The examples of substitutive expressions are as follows²⁵: (11) It certainly did; (14) Of course, she can; (21) Ok; (22) Right; (32) Oh, of course; (48) That’s right. These examples will be readily interpreted as “yes”.

There are cases where a correct interpretation of an utterance can be obtained through the flow of conversation. I will take up two cases for an illustration.

(8) M: We 'won't 'need chande\liers, | /will we?

(The Archers 13 June 2018; 3: 32)

F: They are extremely tasteful and made especially from our key scores.

(62) M₁: 'Freddie's \picking again this year, /is he?

M₂: Maybe after his exam. (The Archers 8 June 2018; 1: 43)

In example (8) the second speaker (F) is trying to convince the first speaker (M) that they need chandeliers by describing the merit of particular items. Therefore, the second speaker’s statement conveys the implication “Yes, we will”, which contradicts the first speaker’s assertion.

In example (62) the second speaker expresses agreement to the first speaker’s assertion by offering the period when Freddie can help the first speaker’s work.

Now let us look at 13 “no-responses”. Among them seven instances come with a literal “no”. The remaining six instances without a literal “no” contain the following substitutive expressions: (19) Not right; (23) I suppose not; (40) Well, possibly not. The three examples will be readily interpreted as “no”.

As in the case of “yes-responses”, the “no-responses” also include the cases where a correct interpretation of an utterance will depend on the context. I will take up two cases for an illustration.

(39) (TV in the pub breaks down during a football match.)

M₁: It's not making any difference.

M₂: It's 'not looking 'too \good, | \is it? (The Archers 18 June 2018; 12: 06)

M₃: Maybe we should go home and watch it there.

(53) F: I mean you've seen them together.

M: Ha, ha, ha.

F: This is no laughing matter, Freddie. I mean (it) makes sense, actually. Lily's never had a proper boyfriend. She 'never 'brought \anyone home, | /has she?

M: Ah.

Example (39) is part of a scene in the pub in England. While the customers are enjoying a football match on a TV screen in the pub, the set suddenly breaks down. The pub keeper tries to make the TV work but fails. The first speaker (M₁) describes the situation and the second speaker (M₂) requests an approval from other customers in the place. The third speaker (M₃) expresses agreement by giving an alternative to staying in the pub. Therefore, his utterance conveys the implication “No, it isn't”.

In example (53) the expression “ah” itself can denote various emotions: disappointment, pain, pleasure, surprise, sympathy²⁶. In the present case the best interpretation will be to understand the second speaker's (M) utterance as expressing his disappointment to the fact that “Lily has never had a proper boyfriend”. Therefore, his utterance conveys the implication “No, she hasn't”.

4. Concluding Remarks

In chapter one we have discussed the limit of the previous studies

on tag questions. The main focus of research has been in the polarity combination of an anchor clause and the question tag. The subsidiary focus of research has been the intonation of the question tag. The representative linguistic functions of question tags are described as follows: (a) a rising tag shows a speaker's doubt or request for verification of the message expressed in the anchor; (b) a falling tag indicates a speaker's request for the acknowledgement of the message in the anchor.

In Watanabe (2017) I collected 120 examples of tag questions from a radio drama. Both a syntactic and phonological features of tag questions are investigated. It is to be noted that the intonation of an anchor and a question tag are described independently. I have acknowledged in chapter one that I made a mistake when I was classifying one example. I have corrected the classification and have revised four figures in the three tables where the result of a syntactic and a phonological analyses of the research is encapsulated.

The essence of the syntactic and phonological data has been kept intact.

The syntactic form of a question tag appears to be parallel to that of a polar question as we can see from the following examples.

④7 [= ⑨] You closed the window, didn't you? (Murphy 2002: 84)

[a question tag]

④8 [= ④5] Do you want to go to the movies? (Geluykens 1988: 470)

[a polar question]

Is there any parallelism observed in terms of intonation between tag questions and polar questions? The frequency of falling question tags in the data obtained is 77.5% in *the Archers* (2016) and 61.5% in *the Archers* (2018). The occurrence of falling tags has been found to be larger than that of rising ones. By contrast, we have used the data given in Geluykens and have found that the rising tones comprise 57.1% for polar questions. We will need to collect more phonetic data of both tag and polar questions to unravel the mystery.

In chapter two we have investigated how tag questions are taught in EFL materials published in England and in Japan. The EFL materials teaching pronunciation, Hancock (2003), Hewings (2007), and Marks (2007) all introduce tag questions as a pair of a question and an answer as illustrated below:

④9 [= ①4] A: You're June Smith, aren't you? (Marks 2007: 103)

B: No, I'm Jane Smith.

We are led to assume that the use of a question and answer pair is prototypical in the usage of tag questions. When we look into EFL grammar books, we notice that a different approach is employed. Murphy (2002) and Murphy (2004) introduce tag questions as a pair of a question and an answer. Yet, Hewings (2013) doesn't.

When we examine teaching materials published and used in Japan, we get a different picture. I have checked two independent learning materials. Ogata and Kamiho (2012) take up nine examples of tag questions but they do not provide an answer to them. Kanatani (2016) offers positive and negative responses.

I have probed three government-authorized English textbooks currently in use for third-year junior high school students. To our surprise, I have been able to find only one example as follows:

⑤0 [= ②1] The woman looked at Rudolf calmly, and smiled. "I fainted, didn't I?" she said. (New Horizon: p.102)

The sentence "I fainted, didn't I?" in ⑤0 is an example of tag questions in reverse polarity. But it is not an example of information-seeking use of tag questions which is generally considered standard usage as we have seen in chapter one.

We need to find out the reason why the coverage of tag questions is limited in the textbooks used in Japan. We would like to know if the reason is educational or linguistic.

In chapter three I have investigated 65 examples of tag questions collected from *the Archers* (2018). The analysis of the data has revealed that the use of tag questions is not limited to an information-seeking function. It has also become clear that an answer to a tag question does not always begin with a “yes” or a “no”. Rather, other ways of responses prevail. I have proposed to call a direct answer to a tag question a “coherent response” and to name a non-direct answer to it an “incoherent response”.

Among 65 examples “coherent responses” comprise 37 instances and “incoherent responses” make up 28 instances. The number of “coherent responses” is larger than that of “incoherent responses”. However, among 37 examples, responses with a literal “yes” add up to 10 instances and responses with a literal “no” come to seven instances. The combined numbers of literal responses, 17 instances, constitute 46% in the “coherent responses”. Yet, the literal yes/no responses comprise only 26.2% in the total number of examples of tag questions collected from *the Archers* (2018). The percentage corroborates the statistics we obtained from the data in *the Archers* (2016). The occurrence of yes/no responses in the data was 25.0%. We could conclude that the information-seeking function of tag questions occupies a smaller part of their usage as Tottie and Hoffman (2009: 141) observe.

As we have seen in chapter two, the coverage of tag questions is insufficient in the EFL teaching materials used in Japan. The instruction of tag questions can begin from a pair of a question and an answer as EFL materials published in England do. But the editors of a textbook will need to bear in mind that the use of tag questions, which seems to be generally considered standard, constitute less than 30 % of the overall usage. The information-seeking function of tag questions can be taught in the pre-intermediate level. But that does not cover the overall usage of tag questions. The EFL learners will benefit in the intermediate and advanced level if they are introduced to how tag questions are used in an actual discourse. They will also benefit from knowing Wata-

nabe's (2012) two observations on the questions in English: (1) polar questions can be answered with responses other than “yes” and “no”; (2) the answer to a tag question is not necessarily a simple short answer.

As we have noted in endnote (19), Hudson (1975) and Tottie and Hoffman (2009) declare that the canonical structure of tag questions cannot be observed in other European languages. The unique structure of English will be one of the difficulties EFL learners may come across. I would consider that the real difficulty of mastering the use of tag questions arises after they have learned answering them with a simple “yes” and “no”; when they face the various responses to tag questions.

Acknowledgements

This research was partially supported by a grant-in-aid (言語文化研究所研究助成 2017) from Takushoku University. I would like to express my heart-felt gratitude to all the people concerned.

Notes

- 1 The term “tag questions” can be ambiguous; for instance, in the case of example ①, it may refer to the whole sentence “Your friends made a good job of it, didn't they?” or the last part “didn't they?” For the purpose of avoiding ambiguity, as I did in Watanabe (2017), I will follow Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 891) and designate ${}_a[\dots]_a$ part an “anchor”; I will employ the traditional usage of Thompson and Martinet (1986: 113) and call ${}_b[\dots?]_b$ part a “question tag”. The term “tag question” is reserved to describe the whole structure, ${}_a[\dots]_a+{}_b[\dots?]_b$. Broughton (1990: 262) states: “A question-tag is a kind of yes/no question which is added to a statement. The tag statement may be positive or negative. The two parts, statement and tag, form one sentence, a tag question.” Sinclair (1990: 433) likewise states: “A tag is a short structure that is added to the end of a statement to turn it into a question.... The whole sentence, consisting of the statement and the tag, is called a tag question.”
- 2 The examples quoted from the other documents are preceded by such a circled number as ① whereas the examples originally collected from radio dramas are preceded by such a bracketed number as (1).
- 3 We find some reference grammars referring to the [negative + negative] type other than Huddleston & Pullum. Broughton (1990: 263) states: “But the corresponding negative + negative question is both rare and menacing:

So I'm not to be 'trusted, 'aren't I?" Somehow, Broughton describes the nuclear tone of both the anchor and the question tag as taking a falling tone, whereas, by contrast, he describes the nuclear tone of the question tag in the [positive + positive] type taking a rising tone as illustrated in "This is 'your car, 'is it?" Quirk et.al (1972: 392) describe the [negative + negative] type as "less usual" and they present the example as follows: "So he doesn't like his job, DÓESn't he?" Quirk et.al (1985: 813) repeating the same example and comment: "This type, however, has not been clearly attested in actual use." As Egawa (1991: 453) suggests, a fairly widespread reference to the [negative + negative] type can be attributed to Michael Swan's description on 'same-way' question tags. Swan (1980: § 515.5) claim: "It is quite common to use affirmative question-tags after affirmative sentences, and negative tags after negative sentences" and provides a sentence: "So you don't like my cooking, don't you?". Swan (2005: § 488.7) still asserts: "Negative 'same-way' tags are occasionally heard; they usually sound aggressive." and offers a sentence: "I see. You don't like my cooking, don't you?"

- 4 Tottie and Hoffman (2006: 302) and Tottie and Hoffman (2009: 134) admit that their data lack the notation of intonation.
- 5 It seems to be usually the case that the intonation of the anchor is rarely discussed. Leech & Svartvik (2002: 132) is an exception. They discuss the intonation of both the anchor and the question tag as follows:
 - (a) He likes his job, dóesn't he?
(I assume he likes his job. Am I right?)

The notations in the example indicate that the anchor assumes a falling tone while the question tag takes on a rising tone.
- 6 The Archers' home page on BBC website informs us that the drama began in 1951 and broadcast on BBC 4 six days a week, Sunday to Friday, since then. It was first intended for the British farmers. The drama is set in a rural setting, a fictional village called Ambridge. The website states that the number of episodes ever broadcast has exceeded 18740. It also comments that "Listeners are occasionally intrigued to hear topical events reflected in that evening's broadcast." I would assume that the drama represents the current English of England both in terms of pronunciation and usage.
- 7 The occurrence of a [positive + negative] type with a rising question tag in table 3 has been corrected to 8 instances, which was indicated as 9 instances in Watanabe (2017: 156). The occurrence of a [negative + positive] type with a rising tag in table 3 has been corrected to 3 instances, which was indicated as 2 instances in Watanabe (2017: 156). The occurrence of a [positive + negative] type with a rising question tag in table 4 has been corrected to 15 instances, which was indicated as 16 instances in Watanabe (2017: 156). The occurrence of a [negative + positive] type with a rising tag in

table 4 has been corrected to 6 instances, which was indicated as 5 instances in Watanabe (2017: 156). The changes have had to be made because one example in Watanabe (2017: 154) was mistakenly placed in the wrong category. Example (104) “But happily for you, I’ve had a word with him. It hasn’t gone on your website yet, | /has it?” should not have been placed in the category [positive falling anchor + negative rising tag]. It must be placed in the category [negative falling anchor + positive rising tag].

- 8 The seven instances reported in Watanabe (2017: 156) all assume a rising tone. My data seem to square with the usual descriptions in many technical books on grammar and pronunciation. They describe the [positive + positive] type as taking a rising tone: Alexander (1988: 258), Broughton (1990: 263), Cruttenden (2014: 296), Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 895), Leech & Svartvik (2002: 133), Quirk et.al (1972: 392), Quirk et.al (1985: 812), and Wells (2006: 49).
- 9 Bartels (1999: 5), which was published eleven years after Geluykens (1988), states: “...I am leaving the systematic analysis of tag questions to future effort, widespread as this utterance is in English.” Moreover, the examples in her study do not seem to be drawn from the actually collected data.
- 10 Corresponding examples are taken from Leech and Svartvik (2002: 130, 132) below:
 - (a) A: Is the dinner ready? [yes-no questions]
B: Yes, it’s already cooked. (positive answer)
B: No, it’s not cooked yet. (negative answer)
 - (b) You got home safely then? [questions in statement form]
- 11 I have done the percentage calculation myself. Geluykens (1988: 476) asserts that: “Rises, though relatively frequent, occur in less than 37% of the data.” This percentage seems to be misleading. In the beginning of his article (p. 467) he calls “rises, fall-rises, and fall + rises” as “rising intonation”. I would assume that the process of how this percentage was calculated as follows: (a) if we take 13 instances of fall-rise tones and 11 instances of fall + rise tones away from 68 instances of overall rising tones, we will be left with 44 instances; (b) if we divide 44 by 119, which is the total number of inversion-interrogatives in his study, we will get the percentage of 36.97. Geluykens seems to have wanted to know the percentage that the low rising nuclear tones would occupy in 119 tokens because in Geluykens (1988: 467) he quotes O’Connor and Arnold (1961: 55) and criticize them for regarding “low bounce” (low rise) as “unmarked tones” for yes/no questions. But it seems to me that the percentage of 42.5 that non-rising (probably falling) nuclear tones occupy in 119 instances is large enough to claim that the rising tones cannot be regarded as unmarked tones for yes/no questions. In Watanabe (2017) I included a fall-rise nuclear tone as part of rising nuclear

- tones.
- 12 The major claim by Geluykens (1988: 478, 482) is that the question status of an utterance is not necessarily signaled by rising intonation. He (p. 478) asserts that “pragmatic cues are much more important for determining the statement / question status of an utterance.”
 - 13 Hewings (2005: 207) uses the same illustrative sentence.
 - 14 I looked into several reference grammars, but they do not discuss how tag questions are replied; the following reference grammars do not deal with the possible replies to tag questions: Alexander (1988: 257-260) ; Broughton (1990: 262-264) ; Greenbaum (1991: 102-103, 129) ; Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 891-895) ; Quirk et.al (1972: 390-392) ; Quirk et.al (1985: 810-813) ; Leech & Svartvik (1994: 127, 366). Only Sinclair (1990: 434) refers to “replying to tags” with the following examples:
 - (a) A: It became stronger, didn't it?
B: Yes, it did.
 - (b) A: You didn't know that, did you?
B: No.
 - 15 Hancock (2003: 126-127) provides a separate section for tag questions. The examples quoted from Marks (2007: 103) and Hewings (2007: 45) appear as part of the exercises on other topics.
 - 16 In Murphy (2011: 84) the answer “Yes, I did.” to the preceding tag question “You closed the window, didn't you?” has been changed into “Yes, I think so,” which seems to sound more communicative because it expresses the second speaker's attitude as well as a positive response.
 - 17 Watanabe (2012: 74) argues that the proper understanding of how to use “short answers” is indispensable in communicative activities. He defines short answers as a minimum response, which is not redundant nor impolite to the person who asked a question.
 - 18 Eguchi and Hayase (2018: 30) express doubt on how effective the communicative approach is, which has been implemented in Japanese high schools for nearly 30 years, to improve speaking proficiency of the students. They carried out an experiment of introducing their own revised approach of using pattern practice to their first-year students at college whose major is not English. They (p. 40) report that the result of the oral test and the questionnaire, which were conducted on their students after 30 weeks of teaching, shows that their teaching method of incorporating the pattern practice is effective in improving their student's communicative ability.
 - 19 MEXT stands for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.
 - 20 Hudson (1975: 23) states: “The syntax of tags is unpredictable: I know of no other language which has them--- the clause that produces the simple 'auxil-

- inary-pronoun' structures of reduced interrogatives in general and of tags in particular...". Tottie and Hoffman (2009: 159) refer to the origin of tag questions in English and state: "No evidence has been found for influence from Celtic languages; the canonical tag questions appear to be uniquely English."
- 21 Watanabe (2012: 83) mentions that the term "reply question" is employed in Murphy (2011: 311). The examples are given in Murphy (2011: 84).
 - 22 Watanabe (2012: 84) mentions that the term "follow-up questions" is employed in Carter and McCarthy (2006: 199-200).
 - 23 Tottie and Hoffman (2009: 141) indicate that there are 4% of instances which are not included in any of the six categories. If the percentage of all the six categories are added, it will somehow come to 101%. Tottie and Hoffman (2006: 302) use the same statistics.
 - 24 The capitalization and the punctuation follow Geluykens' style.
 - 25 The numbers preceding the examples are those of the examples in the appendix.
 - 26 The definition of *ah* has been taken from Collins English Dictionary on the web. (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english> accessed on 12 November 2018)

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Appendix

- ① **Reverse polarity: positive rising anchor + negative falling tag**
(2 instances)
- (1) F: It's 'great 'having 'Hana 'back in \∕Ambridge, | \isn't it? And Jazzer's Well Smitten are here. (The Archers 5 June 2018; 1: 40)
M: Oh, who's that in the lane?
- (2) M: Oh, they were pretty hung over yesterday.
F: I 'missed 'quite a \∕party, | \didn't I? Emma was cold, though. I did pay to see David on a bouncy castle. (The Archers 19 June 2018; 1: 42)
M: Yeah, I know.
- ② **Reverse polarity: negative rising anchor + positive falling tag**
(2 instances)
- (3) M₁: Any names for the little one yet?
M₂: I wish.
M₁: Not long \∕name, | \is it? (The Archers 18 June 2018; 8: 10)
M₂: No. We still can't make a decision.
- (4) F1: Anyway, 'murdering 'someone 'hardly means she's em\∕powered, | /does it? (The Archers 19 June 2018; 4: 07)
F2: Well, it is a rather strong statement of how far she's prepared to go.
- ③ **Reverse polarity: positive rising anchor + negative rising tag**
(2 instances)
- (5) F₁: I was sorry to hear about Helen. 'Food and \∕farming water, | /doesn't it? (The Archers 14 June 2018; 10: 23)
F₂: I could tell she was disappointed.
- (6) F: They can 'get the T'V re\∕paired, | /can't they?
(The Archers 19 2018; 0: 40)
M: No. But last night was the big night: England's opening game.
F: Oh, poor Kenton.
- ④ **Reverse polarity: negative rising anchor + positive rising tag**
(2 instances)

- (7) F₁: We are 'not 'using it on \Friday, | /are we?
F₂: No, that's fine. (The Archers 12 June 2018; 3: 51)
- (8) M: We 'won't 'need chande\liers, | /will we?
(The Archers 13 June 2018; 3: 32)
F: They are extremely tasteful and made especially from our key scores.
- ⑤ **Reverse polarity: positive falling anchor + negative falling tag**
(24 instances)
- (9) M₁: She's never been any trouble.
M₂: But she \shut it, | \isn't she? 'cause her poppy.
M₁: Poppy? (The Archers 3rd June 2018; 6: 18)
M₂: Sneaking into her bed all the time.
- (10) F: Well, you've 'spoken to her about all of this \already, | \haven't you, Brian?
(The Archers 3rd June 2018; 7: 44)
M: Oh, yes, she knows what options are.
- (11) M: Only it 'got a bit 'frantic in the \tearoom last week, | \didn't it?
F: It certainly did. (The Archers 4 June 2018; 8: 00)
- (12) F₁: What are you gonna tell Well?
F₂: I 'look \failed, | \haven't I? Honestly, none the wiser.
(The Archers 5 June 2018; 4: 45)
(The drama goes on to the next scene.)
- (13) M₁: You've got to sign for it, Rex.
M₂: Eh, 'Pip's \got it, | \haven't you? (The Archers 5 June 2018; 4: 59)
F: Oh, it's in his folder somewhere.
- (14) F₁: I'm afraid I haven't got my sunglasses.
F₂: You can be super\cool without them, | \can't you, mom?
F₃: Of course, she can.
- (15) F₁: You were at the 'art exhi'bition in \Felpersham last week, | \weren't you?
(The Archers 7 June 2018; 2: 46)
F₂: Sorry?
F₁: Jim dragged me along. Postmodernist romance or something. Really not my thing. I'm rather impressed. Weren't you?
F₃: You never mentioned that, really.

F₂: No, I wasn't there.

(16) F₁: Shut up, Freddie.

F₂: Yes, be quiet. 'Friends are im\portant there, | \aren't they? And, I mean, so often things start as friendship. And then people enjoy being together. And it develops from there, perfectly natural.

F₁: Oh, I don't think that will happen with Jim and me.

F₂: Sorry, I didn't mean "you". (The Archers 7 June 2018; 3: 43)

(17) M: 'You and 'dad knew 'lots of 'different \people back then, | \didn't you?

F: Oh, yes. (The Archers 7 June 2018; 6: 27)

(18) F: Yes, LGBTQ community. Although there more letters now. I should really learn them. It's about being inclusive.

M: 'cause we are 'all \people, | \aren't we?

F: Yes. Shall we get the bill? (The Archers 7 June 2018; 7: 13)

(19) F: If I showed "willing" once, then you'd start to depend on me.

M: I'm not sure about that,

F: And I've got lots of other priorities which is the same for everyone in fact. So you have 'certainly got your 'work cast 'out in the \future, | \haven't you? (The Archers 8 June 2018; 7: 21)

M: Not right.

(20) M: What's Kate gonna do with it?

F: 'She knows \everything as well, | \doesn't she? And if she chose to, she could do some real damage. (The Archers 10 June 2018; 12: 34)

(The drama ends here.)

(21) F₁: Old flower jewelry.

F₂: The very best. It's \compromise, | \isn't it?

F₁: Ok. (The Archers 11 June 2018; 6: 33)

F₂: I've had enough of compromising, Lillian. That's not what I am looking for.

(22) F: But that's what these appointments were for. To mediate everything.

M₁: The first one will be more of an introduction, Alistair.

M₂: But we can get 'cracking 'straight a \way now, | \can't we?

M₁: Right. I'll see you there. (The Archers 12 June 2018; 3: 29)

(23) M: That wasn't too bad.

F: Really? I thought it was pretty intense.

M: We are 'not 'there to have a 'nice \chat, | \are we?

F: I suppose not. (The Archers 12 June 2018)

(24) (= 37)

M: It's a business deal, pure and simple. Working out how to divide things up. So it's fair.

F: It's 'not at 'all about \finance, | \is it, Alistair? |

(The Archers 12 June 2018; 5: 36)

M: Well, we 'just want to 'get it \over with, | \don't we? Where can we park?

(The Archers 12 June 2018; 5: 39)

F: On the street.

(25) F: There. Isn't the lighting beautiful?

M: Yeah. But chandeliers.

F: We 'want it to look ex'quisite when Ruth walks \in, | \don't we?

I mean, we want her to be wowed by the sheer sparkle of the evening.

(The Archers 13 June 2018; 8: 24)

M: Yeah. Okay.

(26) F: Because obviously I love her whatever decisions she makes. Or however she lives her life. 'That's 'what 'moms \do, | \isn't it?

(The Archers 14 June 2018; 8: 25)

(The drama goes on to the next scene.)

(27) M: Can you give me a hand, then?

F: Yes, \busy, | \innit? (The Archers 15 2018; 0: 35)

M: You got it.

F: Yeah.

(28) F₁: Good for Jill.

F₂: Oh, she's a \mazing, | \isn't she? Really amazing.

F₁: Yeah. Of course. (The Archers 15 June 2018; 4: 14)

(29) F₁: Pip just wants us to have a bit of an adventure. Like a guider flight.

F₂: Oh, yes. You 'will be \careful though, | \won't you?

(The Archers 17 June 2018; 1: 14)

F₁: Honestly, Jill, they are incredibly safety conscious these days.

M: We'll be fine, Mom. Don't worry.

- (30) M₁: We got 'married in 'Vegas on a \road trip, | \didn't we?
 M₂: Oh, yeah. Of course. (The Archers 18 June 2018; 9: 42)
- (31) M₁: So what did Anisha say?
 M₂: Nothing.
 M₁: Didn't you tell her?
 M₂: Well, there's 'nothing to \tell, | \is there? You just may use Pip. Sue was being a bit friendly. (The Archers 19 June 2018; 2: 44)
 M₁: Friendly. I wish I had more friends like that.
- (32) F₁: But you 'will be 'careful with \Monty, | \won't you? Next time Mango comes around. (The Archers 19 June 2018; 8: 49)
 F₂: Oh, of course. I wouldn't dream of leaving him unsupervised with little Mango.

Reverse polarity: negative falling anchor + positive falling tag

(10 instances)

- (33) F₁: I'm not sure. I 'mean it 'wasn't 'something you \talked about in those days, | \was it? I'm sure I had in a way. Because it is an issue, especially for teenagers. (The Archers 6 June 2018; 5: 20)
 F₂: Yes.
 F₁: Then he didn't know that he didn't have to go through it on his own.
- (34) M: Strawberry cheese cake helps my brain.
 F: 'Not the \cheese cake, | \is it, buddy?
 M: I think all relationships are equal. Don't you, mom?
 F: Yes, of course, really. (The Archers 7 June 2018; 7: 23)
- (35) F₁: But you are feeling all right.
 F₂: Ah, feeling quite tired. 'Not all that sur\prising at our age, | \is it?
 F₁: I don't feel too bad. (The Archers 7 June 2018; 9: 15)
- (36) M: I'm busy, Kate.
 F: I wish I was. I've got 'nothing to \do now, | \have I? Not one single thing. (The Archers 8 June 2018; 3: 34)
 M: Maybe you could help your mother. She's been rushing around all afternoon.
 F: Lucky her.
- (37) (= 24)

M: It's a business deal, pure and simple. Working out how to divide things up. So it's fair.

F: It's 'not at 'all about \underline{finance}, | \underline{is} it, Alistair?

(The Archers 12 June 2018; 5: 36)

M: Well, we 'just want to 'get it \underline{over} with, | \underline{don't} we? Where can we park?

(The Archers 12 June 2018; 5: 39)

F: On the street.

(38) F₁: Excuse me, madam, you are about to achieve the biggest thing any of us can.

F₂: Having a baby? It 'doesn't 'take a 'lot of 'skill to 'get \underline{pregnant}, | \underline{does} it?

(The Archers 12 June 2018; 9: 29)

F₁: Bringing up a child, which, believe me, is very different and highly skillful. Why you've been so hard on yourself lately?

(39) (TV in the pub breaks down during a football match.)

M₁: It's not making any difference.

M₂: It's 'not looking 'too \underline{good}, | \underline{is} it? (The Archers 18 June 2018; 12: 06)

M₃: Maybe we should go home and watch it there.

(40) F₁: Hardy's art merely reflects the world in which he lives.

F₂: You 'can't e'xactly i'magine his 'novels 'passing 'Vectors \underline{test} though, | \underline{can} you? (The Archers 19 June 2018; 4: 34)

F₁: Well, possibly not.

(41) M: You are 'not 'taking me \underline{seriously}, | \underline{are} you?

(The Archers 19 June 2018; 11: 47)

F: Do you want me to?

M: Well, no, not necessarily.

F: I can if you want.

(42) F: 'Nothing 'actually \underline{happened}, | \underline{did} it?

(The Archers 19 June 2018; 11: 59)

M: No, of course not. And according to Pip, she's definitely got the message.

F: Well, that's all right, then.

⑥ Reverse polarity: positive falling anchor + negative rising tag

(9 instances)

- (43) F: And Debbie's agreed.
 M: That she's all for it.
 F: But, you 'did 'say 'three 'hundred \acres, | /didn't you? Well, where's the rest? (The Archers 3rd June 2018; 11: 58)
 M: That's the trouble.
- (44) M: If people do the same subject, then they are lucky. 'cause they can re'vise to\gether, | /can't they? (The Archers 4 June 2018; 2: 11)
 F: Yeah. But not all the time. I don't want her burning out.
- (45) M: In fact, if she wants to spend every single minute of every single day, hold up over there, |then 'that's her \choice, | /isn't it?
 F: That's what they say. Then hang on. What do you mean by that? Why would she want to?
 M: Thanks for the love. (The Archers 4 June 2018; 2: 54)
- (46) F: I know if kids are best together.
 M: But what (th) en?
 F: I don't know.
 M: Of course they're best together. I know them. I \brought them up, | /didn't I?
 F: Andrew's involved.
- (47) M₁: (Are you) \Tom, | /isn't it? (The Archers 8 June 2018; 5: 00)
 M₂: Yeah. Philip.
 M₁: (I) don't think we've been properly introduced.
- (48) M₁: It's, um, your 'land is on the 'housing de\velopment and so on, | /isn't it?
 M₂: That's right. Is that a problem?
 M₁: Not to me. (The Archers 8 June 2018; 5: 24)
- (49) M₁: You guys still want some strangers picking your child's name.
 It's im\portant, | /isn't it? (It) sets him up for life.
 (The Archers 18 June; 8: 42)
 M₂: Through character and everything. It's a huge deal.
- (50) F₁: When the bill came, Gavin insisted on paying.
 F₂: That's \nice, | /isn't it? (The Archers 10 June 2018; 7: 33)
 F₁: Except that you can leave a tip.
 F₂: Oh.

- (51) F: And 'time is ex'tremely im\portant, | \isn't it, Brian?
M: Don't ask me. (The Archers 10 June 2018; 9: 10)
F: It is.
- ⑦ **Reverse polarity: negative falling anchor + positive rising tag** (7 instances)
- (52) F₁: Good afternoon.
F₂: Oh, Ruth, you've made it.
F₁: 'Not \late, | /am I? (The Archers 3rd June 2018; 2: 44)
F₂: No, No. I'm waiting for Adam to come back from feed in the hinds.
- (53) F: I mean you've seen them together.
M: Ha, ha, ha.
F: This is no laughing matter, Freddie. I mean (it) makes sense, actually.
Lily's never had a proper boyfriend. She 'never 'brought \anyone home, |
/has she?
M: Ah.
- (54) F₁: 'Luckily, it's not that 'hard to \work out, | /is it?
F₂: If it's obvious to you, me, Jake, Clarrie, Eddie, my mom, and pretty much
everybody knows her. (The Archers 5 June 2018; 12: 13)
- (55) F: I just don't wish. Oh, it doesn't matter. Forget I said anything.
M: You are. You are 'not 'having 'second \thoughts, | /are you?
F: I don't know.
M: Because, a few weeks ago you said, you didn't love me. And that was
the most hurtful thing anyone's ever said to me.
F: I'm sorry.
M: So, are you?
- (56) F: Was that how he spoke to Kate last week?
M: Ha, ha. He was worse with Kate.
F: 'You haven't \heard from her, | /have you, darling?
(The Archers 13 June 2018)
M: Nope. No, I said I'd ring you if I did.
- (57) M: We're gonna have the best summer ever. How about it Fred? Not gonna
'let me \down, | /are you? (The Archers 13 June 2018; 12: 44)
(The drama ends here.)

- (58) F: I 'haven't 'missed \anything, | /have I? Birthday, anniversary....
 M: No. Nothing like that.
- ⑧ **Constant polarity: positive rising anchor + positive rising tag** (0 instances)
- ⑨ **Constant polarity: positive falling anchor + positive rising tag** (5 instances)
- (59) F: What school is she at?
 M: Ask Lily.
 F: But she's \local, | /is she? Farming family?
 M: How would I know? (The Archers 4 June 2018; 1: 40)
- (60) M: So you're 'showing your 'Herefords jut to 'please all the \kiddies, | /are you?
 F: Um, mainly.
 M: Rubbish. You want to sell them in your meat boxes. No offence.
- (61) M₁: 'That's Jinn's, | /is it? Josh's show trial is complete. I'll attach the signs on Sunday morning. (The Archers 8 June 2018; 0: 28)
 M₂: It's impressive, Tom. Bridge farm is like a really dynamic place.
 M₁: It is.
- (62) M₁: 'Freddie's \picking again this year, | /is he?
 M₂: Maybe after his exam. (The Archers 8 June 2018; 1: 43)
- (63) M₁: (I've) just found out much is gonna cost to place it.
 M₂: Bad \news, | /is it? (The Archers 18 2018; 7: 48)
 M₁: Just a bit.
- ⑩ **negative falling anchor + negative falling tag** (1 instance)
- (64) F: It's very kind of you. I'm grateful.
 M: No more 'human be\havior, | \isn't it? When someone's under the weather.
 F: Oh, I probably don't deserve this. Not after everything I've put you through.
 M: Probably not. (The Archers 1st June 2018; 6: 20)
- ⑪ **positive falling anchor + positive falling tag** (1 instance)

(65) M: Kenton's put a suggestion box on the bar.

F: Honestly, what those boys (are) like? 'Toby can 'do 'anything \u0304normally,
| \u0304can he?

M: Favorite (names) so far: Luis and Emily.

F: Great. Right. Here we are.

M: Thanks for the lift.

(原稿受付 2018年11月22日)