

KUIDAS NII, KALAPULKI?! ‘HOW SO, FISHFINGERS?!’: A SURPRISE-QUESTION IN ESTONIAN

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Abstract. This article presents a study of the use of Estonian elliptical interrogatives formed with *kuidas nii* ‘how so’ in literary texts of the Estonian–French parallel corpus, focusing on their discourse functions. *Kuidas nii* interrogatives are analysed as surprise questions, expressing the speaker’s surprise with regard to an unexpected situation verbalised in the prior turn and the speaker’s request for an explanation. In combination with the particle *nii* ‘so’, the wh-word *kuidas* ‘how’ has always a why-like use. These interrogatives are analysed as mixed speech acts featuring both exclamative and interrogative properties that appear to different degrees depending on the context. The two main discourse functions identified in the corpus foreground one of these components: clarification request with a high asking force, and denial/disagreement with a more prominent exclamative component related to the speaker’s attitude. The study of translations reveals a great affinity between French *comment ça* and *kuidas nii*.

Keywords: surprise questions, how-interrogatives, elliptical questions, discourse functions, Estonian, French, mirativity

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12697/jeful.2023.14.2.10>

1. Introduction

The interrogative in the title *Kuidas nii, kalapulki?!* ‘How so, fishfingers?!’ could be used as a response to somebody’s suggestion to eat fishfingers for dinner. The speaker seems to be surprised, as if she had something else in mind. She uses the interrogative to display her attitude but also to get an explanation on the part of the hearer for coping with the situation. These kinds of multifunctional interrogatives have been regarded as surprise questions, interpreted as responsive speech acts expressing the emotion of the speaker with respect to an

unexpected situation and her need for further information (see e.g. Celle & Pélissier 2022).

The surprise question examined in this article is an elliptical interrogative formulated with *kuidas nii* ‘how so’ (hereafter, KNQ). In combination with the particle *nii* ‘so’, the wh-word *kuidas* is not used in its typical domain of manner or means but inquires rather about the reasons or the circumstances of a situation. It has thus a “reason reading”, observed in other languages for manner wh-words in full verbal interrogatives (see e.g. Fleury & Tovena 2018), and it has a meaning close to *why*. How-interrogatives with a reason reading generally contain an evaluation of the incongruity of a situation by the speaker and have a surprise-related expressive nature (see Tovena 2022; Brunetti, Tovena & Yoo 2022).

The aim of the present article is to examine the context and discourse functions of KNQs in their different forms depending on their speech act properties as surprise questions. This paper presents an empirical qualitative analysis of the use of KNQs, mainly based on pragmatic speech act theories (Searle 1969, 1979). The material of this study comes from the Estonian–French parallel corpus (CoPEF).¹ It enables the comparison of the use of KNQs with its French equivalents and to draw some parallels with a similar interrogative phrase in French, *comment ça* ‘how that’. However, the aim is not to provide a systematic contrastive analysis. The comparative perspective rather contributes to the interpretation of KNQs in specific contexts. This corpus allows to examine the full context of KNQs in order to evaluate their discourse functions, including utterances preceding KNQ turns and responses they receive.

This article is structured as follows. Section 2 introduces surprise questions in general according to their descriptions in previous literature. Section 3 focuses on how-interrogatives and KNQs as surprise questions. Section 4 introduces the corpus and the method of this study. In Section 5, the formal properties of KNQ turns are examined and Section 6 focuses on the discourse functions of KNQs.

¹ The Estonian-French Parallel Corpus (65 million words, available at <http://corpus.estfra.ee>), created by the Estonian-French Association of Lexicography, contains several sub-corpora (including, in addition to Estonian and French texts with their translations, parallel texts of the Bible, European legislation, transcripts of the European Parliament sessions).

2. Surprise questions

The label “surprise question” has been used for a specific type of non-canonical, i.e. not information-seeking interrogatives uttered in situations where the speaker sees or hears something unexpected. This kind of interrogative has been first thoroughly described from a cross-linguistic perspective by Munaro & Obenauer (1999) who examined the functioning of “why-like” what-interrogatives in the Italian dialect Pagotto, in French and in German. In recent years, several studies concerning surprise-related interrogatives have appeared, including theoretical, corpus-based and experimental analyses in separate languages (see e.g. Trotzke & Cypionka 2022 for German; Celle & Pélissier 2022 for French; Giorgi 2016 and 2018 for Italian; Celle 2018 for English) or from a comparative perspective (see among others Celle, Jugnet & Lansari 2021 for English and French; Hinterhölzl & Munaro 2021 for German and Italian). These studies analyse different interrogative structures as surprise questions but cross-linguistically, “why-like” what-interrogatives have probably received the most attention. This interrogative structure exists also in Estonian, as some researchers have pointed out (see Metslang 2004; Pajusalu 2006; Laanesoo 2013), like in the following example, borrowed from Laanesoo (2013: 121):

- (1) *Mida sa jälle naerad?*
 what.PART you again laugh.2SG
 ‘Why are you laughing again?’

Estonian linguists treat these interrogatives as directive speech acts (prohibition or advice) without directly connecting them with the expression of surprise. The interrogative in (1) is syntactically non-canonical because the wh-word (*mida* ‘what’) is used non-argumentally, i.e. it does not ask about the object of the verb (*naerad* ‘you laugh’). Laanesoo (2013: 121) also points to the affinity of the wh-word *mida* ‘what’ with *miks* ‘why’ in these contexts. This kind of question is regarded as the “clearest example instantiating the category of surprise-disapproval questions” by Trotzke & Cypionka (2022: 241) because, as they claim, the non-argumental use of the wh-word obligatorily triggers the surprise-disapproval interpretation. Regarded as surprise-disapproval questions, this kind of what-interrogatives do not function as genuine information-seeking questions, they are used rather to

convey that the situation expressed in the proposition is unexpected and thus surprising for the speaker. In most cases, surprise is accompanied by a negative evaluation (disapproval) of the situation by the speaker. In her interactional account, Laanesoo (2013: 121) also indicates that the interrogative in (1) expresses the attitude of the speaker who considers the situation as incongruous and unacceptable (according to her, the adverb *jälle* ‘again’ in (1) is used to emphasise these meanings). Surprise-based analyses give a rather similar account of this kind of interrogative, specifying, however, that this kind of question always has a surprise effect. This interpretation allows associating them with the category of mirativity defined in typological studies as the “linguistic marking of an utterance as conveying information which is new or unexpected to the speaker” (DeLancey 2001: 369), “with overtones of surprise” (Aikhenvald 2012: 435). Interrogatives constitute a general cross-linguistic pattern for expressing the speaker’s emotional reaction to an unexpected situation.

In this regard, surprise questions are comparable to exclamative clauses generally considered to convey surprise (Aikhenvald 2012: 475). Several linguists have, however, insisted on the necessity to distinguish between surprise questions and exclamatives formed with *wh*-items (see Metslang 2017: 354 for this kind of exclamatory structure in Estonian). According to Hinterhölzl & Munaro (2021: 43), this difference is related to the illocutionary force of the two structures: unlike exclamatives, which are similar to assertions, surprise questions are “directive speech acts which request the hearer to provide an explanation for the unexpected state of affairs”. Celle, Jugnet & Lansari (2021: 144) claim that, pragmatically, surprise questions are addressee-oriented: unlike exclamatives, they “call on the addressee to provide an explanation by pointing to some problematic entity or eventuality”.² Metslang (2004: 252) also states that, with this type of *what*-question, the speaker “asks about the reason or some circumstance of the recipient’s action in order to show the unfoundedness or inappropriateness of the action” and, according to her interpretation, this “results in prohibition”. It is thus widely acknowledged that, while expressing the attitude and emotions of the speaker, this kind of interrogative also contains different degrees

2 See Celle et al. (2021: 143–144) for a more detailed account of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic differences between exclamatives and surprise questions.

of asking force. For the same reasons, surprise questions should be distinguished from rhetorical questions as well, since they do not imply answers that are obvious and available to both discourse participants (Rohde 2006).

Surprise questions are thus considered as specific speech acts that differ from exclamations as well as from information-seeking and rhetorical questions. Some linguists, like Trotzke & Cypionka (2022), adopt a broader approach. Based on their perception experiment of “why-like” what-questions compared with exclamatives and information-seeking questions in German, Trotzke & Cypionka (2022: 247) claim that these questions can be explained theoretically without postulating “a distinct illocutionary status” and that they can be regarded as “mixed types”, in the sense that they have both an exclamative and an interrogative component.

3. KNQs as surprise questions

Recent research concerning surprise questions is not restricted to what-interrogatives. The surprise effect has also been associated with how-interrogatives, especially when they are not used to ask about the manner or means of an action but rather about its reasons or circumstances, like in the example (2) in French, borrowed from Tovena (2022):

- (2) *Comment* *Max* *peut* *regarder* *dehors?*
 How M. can look outside
 ‘How can Max be looking outside?’

Answer: *Tu sais, la conversation est ennuyeuse.* ‘You know, the conversation is boring.’

According to Tovena (2022), the question in (2) could be interpreted as asking about manner (with the answer ‘Carefully’) or means (with the answer ‘With binoculars’), but with the answer given in (2), it is used to inquire about the reasons of the situation (*Max looking outside*).³ Many languages have this use of manner wh-words with reason reading,

3 Note that in (2), the modal verb favours the reason-reading, but this interpretation is available also for *comment*-interrogatives without modal markers (see Tovena 2022).

including Estonian, e.g. *kuidas* ‘how’ can be interpreted as a reason-how in the following example, extracted from CoPEF:

- (3) *Johannes... kuidas siis sina siin oled?*
 J. how then you here are
Sa pidid ju Riias...
 you were supposed [to be] in Riga
 ‘Johannes... How come you are here? I thought you were in Riga...’
 (Kross 1994)⁴

These kinds of why-like how-interrogatives have been thoroughly examined from syntactic and pragmatic perspectives in French (see Fleury & Tovena 2018; Fleury 2021; Tovena 2022).⁵ The surprise effect of these interrogatives arises from what Tovena (2022: 212) calls “the speaker’s expectation failure”. They involve a conflict between the state of affairs expressed in the interrogative and the expectations of the speaker.⁶ In (3), the speaker is wondering about the presence of the addressee because he expected him to be elsewhere (in Riga). In Tovena’s terms (2022), by asking the question, the speaker is seeking to overcome his expectation failure: he is looking for further information to be able to resolve the conflict and to reconsider his expectations.⁷

The interpretation of reason-how interrogatives involves different levels of linguistic analysis. Reason reading can be favoured by various linguistic elements, including lexical (e.g. modal expressions, intensity markers, etc.) and morphosyntactic (e.g. negation) means, although, as in (2), the how-interrogative may have the same structure in its different interpretations. There are, however, significant prosodic

4 Where available, published translations for English versions of examples are used. The reference of the translation is then given after the citation. Without indication, the translation is mine.

5 See also Castro (2019) for an analysis of Spanish reason-how interrogatives.

6 According to Tovena (2022: 211), these interrogatives are also syntactically non-canonical (like why-like what-interrogatives) because the *wh*-word is not related to its typical domain of manner/means and “is not linked to a position inside the IP”. Metslang (1981) also points out interrogatives prefaced by *kuidas* ‘how’ with a large scope in Estonian.

7 Halonen & Sorjonen (2012) give a very similar account of the functions of Finnish *miten* ‘how’ interrogatives containing the intensifier *nii(n)* ‘so, that, as’ in the framework of interactional linguistics. They also regard these interrogatives as both stance-taking (wondering about an action) and questioning actions (looking for an account).

differences between pure information-seeking and surprise-related how-interrogatives, as recent experimental studies have pointed out (see Brunetti et al. 2021 and Brunetti, Tovena & Yoo 2022 for French). The production experiment carried out by Sakhai, Asu & Lippus (2022) indicates that Estonian surprise-induced *kuidas*-interrogatives exhibit prosodic differences both from information-seeking and rhetorical questions.

Corpus-based and experimental studies reveal that reason-how questions constitute a complex and heterogeneous category. In written corpora, it is often difficult to decide between manner and reason interpretations. The extent of their surprise effect varies, depending on different contextual factors, and although it is often accompanied by negative evaluation, it can also feature neutral or positive valence (Brunetti, Tovena & Yoo 2022; Treikelder 2022).

Estonian verbless *kuidas nii* interrogatives have not been investigated before. They seem to form a more homogeneous group than complete reason-*kuidas* interrogatives. The wh-word always gets a reason reading and these questions always produce a surprise effect. The following example illustrates one of the uses of KNQs. It comes from the translation of a French novel (CoPEF) and forms a separate turn:⁸

- (4) A: *Mida sa leidsid?*
 ‘What did you find?’
- B: *Mitte midagi.*
 ‘Nothing.’
- A: ***Kuidas nii?***
 ‘KN?’
- B: *Saastest ega mingist võõrainest polnud jälgegi.*
 ‘No trace of pollution or foreign substances.’
- A: *See pole võimalik... [...]*
 ‘It’s not possible.’
- FR: *Comment ça, rien?*** (‘How that, nothing?’)

8 In the examples extracted from CoPEF, the full context is provided only for Estonian examples with a general translation in English after each turn. In some cases, published translations are used, indicated by references added at the end of the citation. For French, only the main question utterance is presented. When no published translations are available, the *kuidas nii* phrase is not translated, since it has no unequivocal equivalent in English.

In (4), the wh-word *kuidas* is definitely not used for asking about the manner of the action implied in the prior elliptical turn (*I found nothing*). The previous turn itself is an answer by speaker B to the initial information-seeking wh-question by A “What did you find?”. This question presupposes that B found something and thus conveys that speaker A has some expectations regarding the situation. The KNQ is uttered in reaction to the answer “Nothing” that is inconsistent with these expectations. With the KNQ, speaker A indicates that this answer is not the one he expected to hear, but also that he needs a further explanation. KNQ thus behaves like a typical surprise question: it expresses the speaker’s surprise concerning the content of the prior turn (the surprise effect is reinforced in the next turn by the speaker A indicating that he considers the results as impossible), but it also has a relatively high asking force. The two components of the KNQ seem in this case equally salient. Speaker B, however, does not provide an explanation but simply specifies his first answer (no trace of pollution or foreign substances was found). Speaker A’s expectation failure is thus not immediately resolved. In the French original, the correspondent form is *comment ça*, which is, in this case, followed by the repeat of the previous turn *rien* ‘nothing’.

Elliptical *kuidas*-questions without *nii* may also be used in surprise contexts, as in the next example from an Estonian source text in CoPEF (translated by bare *comment* in French):

- (5) A: *Aga, h arra professor – mina ei s oida ju  ulepea Peterburi.*
 ‘But Professor Martens – I’m not going on to St Petersburg...’
- B: ***Kuidas?! Te ju  ttlesite?***
 ‘Oh? But – you said you were.’
- A: *Nojaa, s oidan k ull. Aga alles homme v oi tunahomme.*
 ‘Well, yes. I will be going there. But not until tomorrow, or the day after.’ (Kross 1994)
- FR: *Comment?!***

However, bare *kuidas* frequently occurs in neutral clarification requests as well, without a supplementary counter-expectational effect:

- (6) *Kiirabiarst [...] keerutas muudkui teelusikat kruusis.*
 ‘The paramedic tirelessly turned his teaspoon in his bowl.’

A: *Kas liiga kuum?*
 ‘Is it too hot?’

B: ***Kuidas?***
 ‘Pardon?’

A: *Kas kohv on liiga kuum?*
 ‘Is the coffee too hot?’

B: *Ei, pole viga.*
 ‘No, it’s okay.’

FR: Pardon?

Example (6) illustrates a very frequent use of *kuidas* in CoPEF (particularly, in Estonian translations), asking the hearer to repeat or clarify what she just said and indicating that the speaker simply has an issue of hearing or understanding. In French, a typical device (*pardon*⁹ ‘sorry’) for requesting clarification is used.

The reason reading and the surprise effect of KNQs seem thus to be related to the particle *nii* added to the wh-word *kuidas*. Keevallik (2010: 356) points to the great frequency and variety of the uses and functions of *nii* ‘so, in that way’ in Estonian. It has been analysed as a deictic pro-adverb pertaining to the domain of action deixis (Pajusalu 1999: 32) or as a discourse marker indicating a topical shift in conversations (Pajusalu 1999: 71). Keevallik (2010: 356) points out its use as a “pragmatic transition marker” in interactions. In KNQs, *nii* is always related to a previous discourse entity, thus seeming to act as a discourse marker, similarly to the French demonstrative *ça* ‘that’ in *comment ça* according to the interpretation by Smirnova & Abeillé (2021). However, differently from the French *ça*, which can be combined with several other wh-words (including e.g. *qui* ‘who’, *où* ‘where’, *quand* ‘when’, see Smirnova & Abeillé 2021), *nii* only appears besides *kuidas* in elliptical questions with *miks* ‘why’, like in (7):

9 Although *comment* ‘how’ is also possible in this function, *pardon* ‘sorry’ is more current in this corpus. In CoPEF, translators frequently add to *kuidas* in this function *palun* ‘please’ (*kuidas palun*), which seems to give a certain surprise flavour to the request for clarification.

- (7) – *Mõnikord lähen kuhugi pimedale hoovile, poen seal kuhugi müüri-või seinanurka ja seisan. Aga siiski, seda ma enam ei tee, see on liig hirmus.*
 ‘Sometimes I go out the back door, I slip into the yard, into the corner of a wall, and I stay there. But I stopped that, it’s too scary.’
- *Miks nii? küsis Indrek huvitatult.*
 ‘Why so? asked Indrek with interest.’
- *Võib jälle mõni koer tulla, vastas Kristi.*
 ‘A dog may come again, Kristi answered.’

FR: Comment ça? — *À cause des chiens.* ‘Because of the dogs.’

Although it has no overt correlate in the previous discourse, it is possible to interpret *nii* anaphorically and to regard it as coreferential with the action described in the prior turn. However, it seems that *nii* in combination with *miks* ‘why’ does not engender the same degree of surprise effect (the speaker has no expectations regarding the action expressed in the prior turn); *miks nii* question seems to allow asking about the cause of this action in a more neutral way and is thus pragmatically less loaded. Note that this question has been translated by *comment ça* in French that seems to add a greater surprise flavour to the utterance. In combination with *kuidas*, the marker *nii* influences the reading of the wh-word *kuidas*, which can only have a reason reading in this case, unlike *kuidas* in full verbal questions and bare *kuidas* elliptical questions. This is possibly related to the meaning of the pro-adverb *nii*: indicating manner, it blocks the manner reading of the wh-word. The surprise effect of KNQs seems thus mainly associated with the use of the wh-word outside its typical domain of manner.

4. Material and method

The material of the present study comes from the sub-corpora of Estonian and French fictional and non-fictional texts (source texts and their translations, ca 10 million words) of the Estonian-French Parallel Corpus (CoPEF). All interrogatives prefaced by *kuidas* (*kuis*) *nii* have been extracted from Estonian original texts and from translations of French texts, providing a total number of 59 examples (40 from Estonian originals and 19 from translations). With one exception, the examples come from literary texts and mostly from dialogues (see Table 1). The

six examples that do not appear in dialogues represent the narrator's or characters' inner speech. The only occurrence of *kuidas nii* in non-fictional texts comes from a reconstructed dialogue in translation and is very similar to the literary examples. The present corpus thus contains twice as many examples from Estonian originals than from translations. The variety of authors and translators is greater in the sub-corpus of French literature, offering examples from 10 authors and 9 translators. The examples of Estonian literature come from six authors, but most of them from two writers: Anton Hansen Tammsaare with 21 examples (3 translators) and Jaan Kross with 15 examples (2 translators). Four authors (August Jakobson, Karl Ristikivi, Andrus Kivirähk and Eva Koff) are each represented in the corpus with one single example. French literary texts are generally more recent. The specificity of the Estonian literature sub-corpus has an impact on the variation of the interrogative phrase and, to a certain extent, also on its translation equivalents in French. Table 1 gives an overview of the distribution of all examples included in the corpus of the present study, with their most frequent equivalents in French.

Table 1. *Kuidas nii* and its variants with French equivalents in CoPEF (the occurrences in dialogues are given in brackets).

	EST–FR				FR–EST	Total
	<i>Kuidas nii</i> 'how so'	<i>Kuidas nõnda</i> 'how so'	<i>Kuis nii</i> 'how so'	<i>Kuidas siis nii</i> 'how then so'	<i>Kuidas nii</i> 'how so'	
<i>Comment cela</i> 'how that'	11	1	5	2	1	20
<i>Comment ça</i> 'how that'	5	–	2	–	10	17
<i>Comment donc</i> 'how then'	2	–	4	–	–	6
<i>Comment</i> 'how'	2	–	1	–	2	5
<i>Quoi</i> 'what'	–	–	–	–	2	2
<i>Pourquoi</i> 'why'	–	–	–	–	1	1
Other	3	–	1	1	4	9
Total	23 [21]	1	13	3 [2]	19 [16]	59 [53]

In Estonian originals, the *kuidas nii* phrase has some variations. Firstly, the wh-word figures quite often in a reduced form *kuis*. The Estonian language dictionary EKSS (2009) defines the form *kuis* as colloquial, with a remark that, in many cases, it is also more literary. In the present corpus, all examples of *kuis nii* come from Tammsaare (first half of the 20th century) and thus this form may also have a more archaic flavour. The only example of *kuidas nõnda* comes from the same author. The dictionary EKSS (2009) regards *nõnda* as a synonym of *nii*, but with a more restricted and sometimes more colloquial use. Neither of these forms occur in more recent texts and they are not used by translators. In some cases, another particle *siis* ‘then’ is inserted in the interrogative phrase, this also occurs only in Estonian original texts. All these variations were included in the corpus of the present analysis because they exhibit a very similar use to *kuidas nii* interrogatives in surprise contexts.

The most frequently used French equivalents for the Estonian *kuidas nii* are *comment ça* and *comment cela* ‘how that’ that are two variants of the same interrogative phrase. *Ça* is usually considered as a more colloquial variant of the neutral demonstrative *cela* ‘that’. The most common form of the interrogative phrase in present day French is *comment ça* (see Smirnova & Abeillé (2021: 242) who consider *cela* used with wh-words as a “hypercorrected form of *ça*”). In Table 1, these variants are presented on different lines in order to illustrate the difference between the two translation directions. *Comment cela* is used only once in French original texts while it occurs in 19 translated examples. The frequent choice of this form by French translators is probably driven by stylistic considerations related to the above-mentioned characteristics of Estonian texts in the corpus.

The corpus reveals a great affinity between *kuidas nii* and *comment ça/cela*, which is the principal equivalent of KNQs in the corpus. However, some other elements appear, including *comment* accompanied by another discourse particle *donc* ‘then’ and bare elliptical *comment*. *Kuidas nii* is used once in Estonian to translate elliptical *pourquoi ça* ‘why that’, illustrating the affinity of *kuidas* with *miks* ‘why’ in this phrase. The category of “other” includes some cases where different interrogatives have been used in French translations (*qu’est-ce que tu veux?* ‘what do you want?’, *qu’est-ce que tu veux dire?* ‘what do you mean?’)

or the turn is reformulated in some other way. These translations usually pertain to some specific contextual aspect in the use of *kuidas nii*.

Although the number of examples is limited, the corpus of the present study offers a relatively large range of uses and allows accounting for the main characteristics of KNQs. The examples are analysed from a qualitative perspective in the general framework of pragmatic speech act theories. KNQs are considered here as specific mixed speech acts featuring different illocutionary forces. They may be regarded as directive speech acts, functioning as requests for some kind of information on the part of the hearer, and as exclamation-like expressive speech acts conveying the speaker's surprise and possibly other emotions with respect to a state of affairs (see Trotzke & Cypionka 2022). The corpus examples show that, according to the context, these illocutionary forces appear at different degrees in KNQs. This study aims to explore what kind of formal and contextual elements help to assess the dominant illocutionary force of a KNQ and what kind of discourse functions are related to KNQs in dialogues depending on the salience of one of these components.

In the following sections, first the structure of the KNQ turns will be examined. The next sections deal with the pragmatic and discursive functions of KNQs, examining their full context, including in addition to the KNQ turn, their preceding and subsequent context. The French equivalents will be examined insofar as they inform on the formal peculiarities or the discourse functions of KNQs in specific contexts.

5. The structure of KNQ turns

KNQs may appear in a form reduced to the wh-phrase (as in (4) on page 247) but they may also be accompanied by a repeat of a textual segment of the previous turn:

- (8) – *Kui aga peenrad ja ristikivid paigal seisaksid, lausus Sauna-Madis nagu endamisi.*
 ‘Hoping the curbs and bollards are still in place, Madis muttered.’
- *Kuidas nii – paigal seisaksid? küsis peremees.*
 ‘KN, in place? asked the farmer.’

FR: *Comment ça, à leur place?*

In (8), *kuidas nii* is followed by the word-for-word reprise of a phrase in the previous utterance (*paigal seisaksid* ‘would stay in their place’) localising and specifying the source of the speaker’s puzzlement and incomprehension concerning the prior turn. In the corpus, a textual segment is repeated after *kuidas/kuis nii* in 17 cases (9 in Estonian originals and 8 in translations), so it is rather frequent, but stand-alone *kuidas nii* is, however, the dominating form (with 42 occurrences). In (8), the French *comment ça* is also accompanied by a repeat and it behaves generally rather similarly to *kuidas nii* in this respect (see, however, example (4) on page 247 where the repeat appears only in French).

In dialogues, KNQs are usually turn-initial, but there are some examples where the echoed part precedes *kuidas nii* (3 occ.):

(9) A: *Tähendab, Nikolai on teie meelest ka surnud?*
 ‘You mean that you think Nicholas is dead, too?’

B: *Nikolai? Kuidas nii?*
 ‘Nicholas? What do you mean?’ (Kross 1992)

FR: Nicolas? *Comment cela?!*

In some cases, *kuidas nii* is followed by a complement clause introduced by *et* ‘that’, all of them in translated texts. The complement clause is mostly elliptical, as in (10) with a lacking subject (‘you’) in Estonian. In French, the repeat is not preceded by a conjunction (albeit it is also possible and occurs twice in the present corpus) and it reproduces a complete clause. In both languages, there is a deictic shift, always occurring in echoes if the action constituting the source of surprise involves one of the participants. In (10), the first-person prior turn is reprised in the second person after *kuidas nii*:

(10) A: *Ma ei küsigi.*
 ‘I’m not asking for anything.’

B: *Kuidas nii, et ei küsi?*
 KN that don’t ask
 ‘KN, you’re not asking for anything?’

FR: *Je ne demande rien, justement. – Comment ça, tu ne demandes rien?*

The particle *nii* is nevertheless always linked to the wh-word and the repeated segment is often, but not always, separated from the interrogative phrase by a comma or sometimes by a dash. The punctuation at the end of the KNQ also varies: mostly, a question mark is used, but there are some cases with both a question mark and an exclamation mark, reflecting the mixed character of KNQs, or an exclamation mark alone, highlighting its exclamative component. A bare exclamation mark is, however, relatively rare in the corpus; it occurs twice in self-addressed KNQs representing the inner speech of a first-person narrator. In both cases, the KNQ is used as an equivalent to the French *Quoi* ‘what’, which also expresses the speaker’s surprise about a situation.

Either with or without repeats, KNQs may form a separate turn or be followed by other utterances by the same speaker. A separate turn occurs in 11 examples in the corpus (7 occurrences in Estonian originals and 4 in translations). More often, KNQs are followed by other elements within the same turn. Two kinds of elements can be found in the corpus:

a) utterances justifying the reaction of the speaker: the speaker specifies what goes against her expectations and what constitutes the basis for her surprise (these elements are very frequent).

b) utterances expanding the KNQ: the speaker specifies her initial KNQ and indicates what needs an explanation on the part of the hearer (these elements occur less often, see examples 14 and 17 below).

6. Discourse functions of KNQs

Interpreted as surprise questions, KNQs are always supposed to convey both the surprise of the speaker and her search for an explanation on the part of the addressee. These are the basic pragmatic functions of a KNQ, constituting respectively its exclamative and interrogative component. Depending on the context, however, one of these components may become more salient. The interrogative component is more prominent when the speaker has a problem with the statement made in the previous turn and the KNQ is then used as a sort of request for clarification. The exclamative component is in focus when the speaker uses a KNQ for expressing her disagreement with the interlocutor and challenges or rejects the statement of the prior turn. Request for clarification and expression of disagreement are two discourse functions pointed out by Brunetti, Fliessbach & Yoo (2022) for the French interrogative

phrase *comment ça*.¹⁰ The same labels will be used here for the dominant discourse functions of KNQs. The term ‘clarification request’ is, however, used in a broader sense than it generally appears in conversation analysis, where it refers to a means for other-initiated repair (see e.g. Purver 2004). KNQs never signal a hearing issue or a problem of understanding the previous utterance itself, but they rather indicate the speaker’s problem of processing the prior utterance and her difficulties of integrating received information to her previous knowledge. The expected clarification concerns the reasons or circumstances of the state of affairs expressed in the prior turn or of its uttering act. By uttering a KNQ, the speaker thus rather expects an explanation, justification or elaboration of the previous utterance, regarded here as different forms of clarification.

In the following sections, these two functions will be examined separately. The discourse functions of KNQs are interpreted in a broader context, including the minimal sequence of three turns:

1. The turn triggering the KNQ: the specific discourse functions of KNQs depend on the nature of this initial utterance.
2. The KNQ turn (with or without repeat and with a possible continuation).
3. The response of the addressee: the nature of the answer of the addressee depends on the specific discourse function of the KNQ.

In fictional texts, the previous or the following turn can also be presented indirectly by the narrator, but this is not frequent in the present data. Additionally, simple turn alternations are not very frequent in a literary corpus. Except for drama texts, dialogues are usually accompanied by reporting clauses and/or narrator’s comments. These elements may also reflect the intended discourse functions of KNQs. In the present corpus, reporting clauses are more frequent in Estonian originals: in 32 occurrences from 37 in dialogues, the KNQ is accompanied by a reporting verb. French texts and their Estonian translations are very different in this respect. In this sub-corpus, the reporting clause is generally missing, and although some comments of the narrator appear, they never

10 Brunetti, Fliessbach & Yoo (2022) distinguish a third discourse function called mirative. The present analysis differs in this point: KNQs are here considered to convey counter-expectation in all their uses and surprise effect appears thus in clarification requests and disagreement KNQs.

contain a verb of utterance. These contextual indications will also be considered while evaluating the discourse functions of KNQs.

6.1. Interrogative focus: clarification request

In most of the cases, the KNQs of the corpus can be interpreted as clarification requests in a broad sense. The speaker is puzzled because she has a problem of understanding the reasons or the circumstances of the situation presented in previous discourse or of the uttering act of the prior turn and asks for a clarification. KNQs always contain more interrogative force when they appear in a separate turn, as in (11).

- (11) A: *Ema ütles, et sul on jälle sinu angiin ja et sa tunned ennast sandisti.*
 ‘Your mother told me that you had angina again, that you were not well at all.’
- B: *Ema valetas.*
 ‘Mother lied.’
- A: ***Kuidas nii?***
 ‘KN?’
- B: *Nagu emad alati.*
 ‘Like all mothers.’
- A: *Mida ta siis valetas? Ja miks?*
 ‘What did she lie about? And why?’
- B: *Seda, et mul olevat angiin. Miks? Noh, esteetilistel kaalutlustel. Või moraalsedel, ma ei tea.*
 ‘That I had angina. Why? Well, for aesthetic reasons. Or moral, I don’t know.’

FR: *Comment ça?*

The speaker indicates with the KNQ that he has trouble processing the unexpected information uttered in the prior turn (“Mother lied”) and requests a justification, provided by the addressee in the next turn (“like mothers always do”). The speaker then specifies his question (“What did she lie about and why?”) and obtains a full explanation in the next turn. In this case, the interrogative force seems to be in the foreground, but the surprise effect, related to the unexpectedness of the previous utterance (“Mother lied”), is also present.

Clarification requests are also frequent when the KNQ is followed by other utterances within the same turn, as in (12).

- (12) – *Sest Uluots lahkus täna varahommikul maalt.*
 ‘Because Uluots left the country this very morning.’
- *Mõned ministrid olid hüüdnud: – **Kuidas nii?! Tema on ju ometi meie kontinuiteet!***
 ‘Some of the ministers cried out: How can it be?! He does, after all, embody our continuity!’
 - *Ja Tief oli vastanud: – Just sellepärast. Kui kellegagi meist siin midagi juhtub, ei lähe kontinuiteet kaduma.*
 ‘And Tief had replied: For that very reason. If anything should happen to any of us, the continuity will not be broken.’ (Kross 2003)

FR: *Mais comment cela?!*

In the previous context of this example, the ministers ask why it is impossible to consult the Prime Minister Uluots and the information that he left the country comes as unexpected for them. Additionally, it can be understood that they do not approve of this action. The KNQ is followed by an exclamative that provides their basis for considering this event as counter-expectational. The answer shows that the addressee interprets the KNQ as a request for clarification and gives an explanation justifying the event.

Both in (11) and (12), the speaker reacts with a KNQ to an informative utterance and the KNQ targets the content of the prior turn (the situations of mother lying and prime minister leaving the country). In some other cases, the KNQ seems to mainly pertain to the speech act of the previous turn and it functions then on the enunciative level. This is particularly clear in some examples where clarification KNQs respond to a question, as in (13).

- (13) – *Kas revolvrte hinnad ka peaksid olema tõusnud? küsis Indrek.*
 ‘Do you think the prices of revolvers have also increased, asked Indrek.’
- ***Kuis nii?** küsis voorimees arusaamatuses, sest ta ei taibanud, millises ühenduses hobuse heinad ja kaerad seisavad revolvritega.*
 ‘KN? asked the coachman, perplexed, because he did not understand what the connection was between hay and oats and revolvers.’
 - *Ma ehk pean endale ostma, sellepärast küsin, seletas Indrek.*
 ‘I may have to buy myself one, that’s why I’m asking, Indrek explained.’

FR: *Comment donc?*

In the preceding context, the coachman complains about the increase of hay and oats prices. Indrek's question about revolver prices constitutes thus an unexpected topic shift. The narrator also indicates that the speaker has trouble in understanding the relevance of the question and describes the source of his puzzlement. In response to the KNQ, Indrek provides an explanation justifying his previous speech act. This is one of the examples where *comment donc* 'how then' is used in French, but it is not specifically related to the enunciative use. In the present corpus, this interrogative phrase only occurs in clarification requests with a relatively high asking force and it seems to convey a very similar meaning to *comment ça/cela* in these contexts (see (11) and (12) above).¹¹ In (14), *comment cela* is used in the translation of a KNQ responding to a question and containing a more salient exclamative component:

- (14) – *Härä Voitinski, kas olete poissmees? küsis v. Elbe [...].*
 'M. Voitinsky, are you single? asked v. Elbe'
- *Kuidas nii? hüüdis Voitinski nagu haavunult. Kes teile ütles, et mina olen poissmees?*
 'KN, exclaimed Voitinsky looking hurt. Who told you I was single?'
- *Aga miks te siis selle juuditüdrukuga süinagoogi läksite? küsis v. Elbe.*
 'But then why did you go to the synagogue with that Jewish girl, asked v. Elbe.'

FR: *Comment cela?*

In this example as well, the speaker is wondering about the previous speech act (why the interlocutor thinks that he is single and why he asks about it). With the KNQ, he indicates that he needs a justification. He continues with another question specifying the KNQ, asking about the evidence the interlocutor has for his assumption. The interlocutor provides a justification in his answer to the whole KNQ turn (also in interrogative form, indicating that he did not hear it from anybody, but inferred it from the speaker's previous actions).

11 According to Smirnova & Abeillé (2021: 260–261), *comment ça* is a much more frequent combination than *comment donc*. They indicate a difference between the two particles: *ça* tends to point more to the preceding context, while *donc* is more apt to point to the discourse continuation.

KNQs generally get answers explaining the reasons of a situation mentioned in the prior turn or of the previous speech act (telling or asking something). The presence of the answers contributes to their interpretation as clarification requests. However, in some cases this interpretation is possible even if there is no direct answer to the KNQ, as in (15). In this example, the speaker offers the addressee a job in his firm and the latter presents his terms.

- (15) A: *Ma nõustun ühel tingimusel. Firma maksab mulle kakssada uut marka kuus, [...] aga minu staatus on vabatahtliku kaastöölise oma. [...]*
 ‘I will agree on one condition. That the firm pays me two hundred new marks per month [...] but that my status remains someone in voluntary collaboration.’
- B: *Kuidas siis nii? imestas isa. See oleks ju üpris ebatavaline. Säherdusi, nagu te ütlete, vabatahtlikke kaastöölisi minu firmal ei ole.*
 ‘How do you mean? my father wondered. That would be most unusual. My firm does not have anyone in what you term “voluntary collaboration”.’ (Kross 2012)

FR: Comment cela?

The speaker continues within the same turn by proposing to the addressee a position of junior engineer and the addressee declines the offer. The addressee’s answer does not pertain directly to the KNQ but to the following proposal. The surprise effect is clearly notable in this example, stressed by the use of the verb *imestama* ‘to wonder’ as a reporting verb and also by the speaker’s next utterance explicating the incongruity of the conditions presented by the addressee and indicating that the speaker is not willing to accept these conditions. *Kuidas nii* appears in this example with the particle *siis* ‘then’, which is the only element that can be inserted in this interrogative phrase, and it seems to reinforce here the surprise effect of the KNQ.¹² The speaker, however, indicates with the KNQ that he also has a problem understanding the reasons of the addressee for making this unusual proposal, even if he does not wait for the answer from the addressee after explaining his confusion, and it nevertheless seems to convey a certain degree of asking force.

¹² Metslang (2004: 252) regards *siis* also as a particle intensifying prohibition in interrogatives.

The examples presented in this section reveal that the interrogative force of KNQs varies even if they have a dominant clarification request function. The exclamative component is generally more salient in contexts where KNQs are followed by other elements detailing the source of puzzlement (as in (12) and (14)). Even if KNQs in separate turns are more likely to receive a direct response from the addressee (as in (13)), explanations may be provided for the whole sequence prefaced by the KNQ if following elements specify the KNQ. KNQs signal a problem of understanding in a very general way. Separate turn KNQs may thus need further specification in subsequent turns (see (11) on page 257), especially when they are not accompanied by a repeat localising the trouble source. Regardless of their interrogative force, KNQs always contain a counter-expectational effect. Surprise is sometimes accompanied by additional emotions (like disapproval in (12) or being hurt in (14)) that enhance the exclamative component of KNQs, without entailing necessarily a higher degree of surprise effect.

All the occurrences of *küsima* ‘to ask’ – the most frequent reporting verb accompanying KNQs in the corpus (20 occ. from 32 occ. of reporting verbs in total) – are used to introduce KNQs interpreted as clarification requests. In 14 cases, this verb appears with an adverbial expressing the surprise of the speaker (*jahmunult* ‘with astonishment’, *üllatuses* ‘with surprise’) or her puzzlement resulting from not understanding (*arusaamatuses* ‘without understanding’ occurring in 12 cases). Additionally, there are two instances of *imestama* ‘to wonder’ used as a reporting verb (see example (15)). The examples (12) and (14) show however, that the reporting verb *hüüdma* ‘to cry’, referring preferentially to an exclamation, is also used to introduce clarification requests.

6.2. Exclamative focus: denial/disagreement

In other cases, the KNQ does not signal only a problem of understanding the reasons of a previously expressed state of affairs or of a prior speech act, but rather indicates that the speaker does not acknowledge as true the proposition expressed in the prior turn. The KNQ then indicates the speaker’s disagreement or denial. This use is less frequent in the present corpus, identified in 10 occurrences (7 in Estonian originals and 3 in translations). The KNQ is used to respond to a previous turn containing some kind of evaluative statement, usually involving

the speaker. In this use, the KNQ never occurs in a separate turn, it is always followed by other utterances by the same speaker, as in (16).

- (16) – *Isa Velgre ütles: No näed, peaministri-isand ikkagi mäletas. Sina kahtlesid.*
 ‘Old Velgre said: Well, well, the Prime Minister was good enough to remember. You will have wondered...’
- *Kuidas nii? vaidles Maret tasahääli vastu. Mina ei kahelnud üldse. Sina ise kahtlesid, et ju ta on unustanud...*
 ‘How d’you mean? said Maret gently. I didn’t wonder anything. It was you who was wondering if he hadn’t forgotten.’ (Kross 2003)

FR: Comment cela?

In the Estonian original, the reporting clause contains the verb *vastu vaidlema* ‘to object’, which explicitly indicates the intended meaning of the KNQ in this example. The KNQ is followed by an overt denial of the action attributed to the speaker in the previous turn (“I didn’t wonder anything”). This KNQ obviously features lower asking force than in its clarification uses. In (16), the dialogue stops at this turn, the KNQ turn thus receives no answer and the reaction is not described by the narrator. Responses are, however, possible in this case, as in (17).

- (17) – *See on ju puhas vesi! möirgas Slopašev täiest kõrist. Teie teete minuga kurja nalja!*
 ‘It’s pure water! Slopashev roared at the top of his voice. You’re laughing at me!’
- *Kuidas nii? piiksus Voitinski. Kuidas nalja?! Mina teiega nalja, Aleksander Matvejevitš?!*
 ‘KN? said the small voice of Voitinsky. How! I, Alexander Matveïitch, laughing at you!’
- *Maitske ise! karjus Slopašev.*
 ‘Taste for yourself! shouted Slopashev.’
- *Vesi mis vesi, kinnitas ka Voitinski natukese aja pärast.*
 ‘No doubt it’s water, Voitinsky agreed after a moment.’

FR: Comment cela?

In (17), the interlocutor (Slopashev) accuses the speaker of playing a trick on him by replacing vodka with water. The speaker responds with a KNQ, followed by a bare elliptical *kuidas*-question with a repeat and

an echo-question, both reinforcing the denying effect of the initial KNQ. The interlocutor responds with an imperative, inviting the speaker to prove the validity of his previous accusation. The addressee thus does not provide a direct explanation responding to the KNQ, but he reacts in a very effective way, as he succeeds in convincing the speaker.

Both in (16) and (17) the KNQ prefaces a series of utterances repeating and confirming the expression of disagreement. The utterances following the KNQ may also provide a justification for rejecting the content of the prior turn, as in (18).

- (18) – *Talle oli öeldud: – Tähendab, te tunnistate ise, et andsite fašistlikele ohvitseridele teadlikult põgenemisvõimaluse?*
 ‘When asked: You mean to say that you actually admit to having given Fascist officers the opportunity to escape?’
- *Tema oli hüüdnud: – Kuidas siis nii – kui ma võtsin neilt ohvitseri-ausõna, et nad ei põgene?!*
 ‘He had cried: **Whatever do you mean** – how could they possibly escape when they had given me their word of honour?!’
- *Talle oli öeldud: – Kuulge, kuna te ei ole erakordne idiot, siis peate te olema erakordne küünik, et meenutada niisugust feodalismiaegset totrust fašistlike ohvitseride puhul!*
 ‘He was then told: Listen, since you are not a complete idiot, then you must be a very cynical man, if you went and believed such feudalistic twaddle in the case of Fascist officers!’ (Kross 1995)

FR: *Mais non!* ‘But no!’

In (18), the speaker denies admitting (in his previous talk) the action he is accused of (helping the Fascist officers to escape). The following justification (literally: ‘when I took their word of honour that they would not escape’) refers to the impossibility of the action and thus also to the impossibility of having acknowledged it. In this case, the interlocutor’s answer does not give an explanation either, but rather demonstrates the invalidity of the provided justification (considered as a “feudalistic twaddle” by the interlocutor). In this case, a different equivalent is used in French (*mais non* ‘but no’), referring explicitly to denial. But as (16) and (17) illustrate, the French *comment ça/cela* is possible in this use as well. The *kuidas nii* phrase also contains here the particle *siis*, which seems once again to have a reinforcing function and adds an emotional flavour to the act of denying. The exclamative component of the KNQ is

stressed by the narrator using the verb *hüüdma* ‘to cry’ in the reporting clause.

Disagreement KNQs thus respond to accusations or evaluative utterances addressed to the speaker and they usually do not feature in separate turns but are followed by other utterances by the same speaker, reinforcing disagreement or providing justification for rejection. They feature an emotional flavour appearing to different degrees, according to the intensity of disagreement (from gentle objection in (16) to vehement rejection in (17) and (18)). With the KNQ, the speaker also indicates that the evaluation presented in the prior turn is unexpected for her and expresses her surprise that may be genuine or feigned (as it probably is in (17) and (18)). The counter-expectational effect of KNQs in this use may also be related to the previous speech act when the speaker wonders about the reasons for the interlocutor to make the accusation (e.g. in (16), the KNQ can be interpreted also as “How can you say that I wondered?”). Although the exclamation component is more prominent in disagreement KNQs, the asking force is not completely lacking. The speaker chooses to verbalise her objection in the form of an interrogative, giving the impression of leaving the addressee the opportunity to explain, and thus mitigating the act of denial.

7. Conclusions

This article examined the use of the Estonian elliptical interrogatives formed with the phrase *kuidas nii* in dialogues of (mainly) literary texts. It is argued that KNQs can be analysed as surprise questions since they always contain a counter-expectational effect and variable degrees of asking force. As such, they pertain to the category of mirativity and can be regarded as a mirative strategy in terms of Aikhenvald (2012). The surprise effect of KNQs results from the meaning of the *wh*-word in this interrogative phrase: *kuidas* always has a reason interpretation in combination with the particle *nii*. As surprise questions, KNQs are considered as mixed speech acts, having both exclamative and interrogative features. Depending on the context, one of these features may become more prominent and, accordingly, KNQs perform different discourse functions. In the corpus, KNQs act most frequently as clarification requests, used in situations where the speaker has trouble understanding

the reasons of a state of affairs expressed in the prior turn. In this function, KNQs feature a relatively high asking force. KNQs are also used for expressing denial or disagreement, foregrounding the KNQ's exclamative component. KNQs with this function are less frequent in the corpus, appearing when the prior turn contains an appraisal or an accusation concerning the speaker. In both functions, counter-expectation may be accompanied by other emotions and KNQs receive additional values.

The form of the KNQ – i.e. the presence or absence of textual reprises of prior turn elements – is not correlated to their discourse functions, since reduced forms and repeats appear in KNQs with both functions. The repeated segment may either specify the source of an understanding issue or the element that is denied. Separate KNQ turns seem possible only in clarification requests, but in both functions, KNQs may be followed by other utterances produced by the same speaker.

KNQs are responsive speech acts and they are strongly discourse-related. They always suppose a verbalised trouble source in the prior turn. The counter-expectational effect can thus pertain not only to the content of the interlocutor's utterance (the situation expressed in the utterance), but also to the act of uttering (with the meaning "Why are you telling/asking me that?"). KNQs may have this use in both discourse functions.

The study of French examples reveals that French *comment ça/cela* 'how that' is a very close equivalent of *kuidas nii*, although the particle added to the wh-word is of a different nature. It has the same formal properties and is the most frequent equivalent of KNQs in all its discourse functions. It is noteworthy that the available English translations consulted for this study manifest a much greater variety of equivalents for KNQs: mostly *how do you mean*, *what do you mean* are used, but other equivalents occur, including *whatever do you mean*, *how so*, *why not*, *but why*, *how can it be*. The two most frequent English equivalents (and not only in clarification requests) are devices used for "other-initiated repair" in the terms of conversation analysis (see e.g. Kendrick 2015). Kendrick (2015: 181) points out that these devices (like *what do you mean*) can be genuine inquiries used as "vehicles for other actions", but they occur also as "pseudo other-initiation repairs" when they are not genuine indications of lack of understanding and are used to per-

form other actions, like display of surprise or disagreement.¹³ KNQs thus have very similar uses and that explains the frequency of these equivalents in translations, but KNQs are never used as neutral other-initiated repair devices, i.e. as indications of a problem of hearing or understanding the meaning of an utterance. They always have a surprise effect and are often used for performing other actions, e.g. the expression of disagreement.

Although the number of examples analysed in this study was rather limited, they offered a relatively diverse use of KNQs and allowed some general properties of KNQs to be pointed out. However, it would be useful to consult other corpora providing more recent data and possibly oral material that would enable the analysis of the distribution of KNQs' different syntactic patterns and discourse functions and to carry out more systematic studies from a cross-linguistic perspective.

Acknowledgements

I thank the two anonymous reviewers for their attentive reading and valuable comments on this paper. This work was supported by the project EKKD10 “The prosody and information structure of surprise questions in Estonian in comparison with other languages” and the French-Estonian cooperation programme G. F. Parrot project “Surprise Questions from a Comparative Perspective”.

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13 See also Rossi (2015: 278), who analyses the Italian other-initiated repair with a repeat *come x* 'how x' with the meaning 'what do you mean?' and points out very similar uses of this format.

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Kokkuvõte. Anu Treikelder: *Kuidas nii, kalapulki?! Ühest üllatusküsimesest eesti keeles.* Selles artiklis uuritakse elliptiliste *kuidas nii*-küsimuste kasutust Eesti-prantsuse paralleelkorpuse kirjanduslikes tekstides, keskendudes nende diskursiivsetele funktsioonidele. *Kuidas nii*-küsimusi vaadeldakse kui üllatusküsimusi, mis väljendavad kõneleja üllatust kaaskõneleja eelnevas voorus esitatu või tema kõneakti suhtes ja kõneleja soovi saada selgitusi ootuspäratu olukorra kohta. Koos partikliga *nii* on küsisõnal alati põhjuslik, küsisõnaga *miks* sarnane tähendus. *Kuidas nii*-küsimusi käsitletakse artiklis kui „segatüüpi“ kõneakte, millel on nii küsimuse kui hüüatuse tunnused, mida vastavalt kontekstile rohkem või vähem rõhutatakse. Korpusenäidete põhjal võib eristada *kuidas nii*-küsimuste kahte põhilist funktsiooni: selgituse küsimine (mille puhul küsiv komponent on esiplaanil) ja eitamine või mittenoustumine (mille puhul rõhk on pigem kõneleja hoiakut väljendaval hüüatuslikul komponendil). Prantsuskeelsete vastete uurimine näitas, et küsifraasil *comment ça/cela* on *kuidas nii*-küsimusega väga sarnased kasutused.

Märksõnad: üllatusküsimused, kuidas-küsimused, elliptilised küsimused, diskursiivsed funktsioonid, eesti keel, prantsuse keel, miratiivsus