

## **SOME ADDITIONAL TYPES OF SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE CONSTITUENTS OF ENGLISH AND BULGARIAN ALTERNATIVE INTERROGATIVE STRUCTURES**

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The article focuses on the semantic relationships between the constituents of some English and Bulgarian alternative interrogative structures (E&BAISs). The qualitative and quantitative research conducted on authentic examples from English and Bulgarian corpora has revealed that the constituents of some E&BAISs convey related meanings or stand in a relationship of synonymy or hyponymy. E&BAISs whose constituents impart related meanings denote persons and objects. In general, the meanings identified in the English corpora are different from those identified in the Bulgarian corpora.

**Key words:** alternative interrogative structure, constituents, related meanings, synonymous meanings, hyponymous relations

### **I. Introduction**

The article presents some types of semantic relationships between the constituents of English and Bulgarian alternative interrogative structures (E&BAISs). They have been identified as a result of a research conducted on authentic examples of E&BAISs excerpted from eight corpora of written and spoken English and Bulgarian. The purpose of the following text is to outline the similarities and differences between E&BAISs in terms of the identified types of semantic relationships between their constituents and to provide statistical data on their occurrences in the corpora.

The examples of E&BAISs on which the qualitative and quantitative research has been carried out have been excerpted from the following corpora:

- English Fiction Corpus (EFC, 90 508 word forms) compiled by V. Spasova for the purposes of her PhD thesis.
- English Corpus of Fiction Monologue (ECFM, 50 370 word forms) compiled by V. Spasova for the purposes of her PhD thesis.
- Charlotte Face-to-Face Corpus of Spoken English (CFCSE, 90 630 word forms). It is part of a larger corpus of spoken English, the Charlotte Narrative and Conversation Collection (CNCC, 198 295 word forms), included in the Open American National Corpus (OANC). (The corpus was available at <http://www.anc.org/data/oanc> at the time the research was carried out.)
- Switchboard Telephone Corpus of Spoken English (STCSE, 50 476 word forms). It is part of a larger corpus of spoken English, the LDC Switchboard corpus (3 019 477 word forms), included in the Open American National Corpus (OANC). (The corpus was available at <http://www.anc.org/data/oanc> at the time the research was carried out.)
- Bulgarian Fiction Corpus (BFC, 90 326 word forms) compiled by V. Spasova for the purposes of her PhD thesis.
- Bulgarian Corpus of Fiction Monologue (BCFM, 50 508 word forms) collected by Tzvetomira Venkova (Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”).
- Corpus of Spoken Bulgarian *Aleksova* (CSB–A, 89 959 word forms) collected by Krasimira Aleksova (Faculty of Slavic Studies at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”). (The corpus was available at <http://folk.uio.no/kjetilrh/bulg/Aleksova/> at the time the research was carried out.)
- Corpus of Spoken Bulgarian *Nikolova–Venkova* (CSB–NV, 50 000 word forms) collected by Tsvetanka Nikolova and Tzvetomira Venkova. (The corpus was available at <http://folk.uio.no/kjetilrh/bulg/Nikolova/> at the time the research was carried out.)

Let us explain what ground is covered by the term “alternative interrogative structure” (AIS). This is a coordinate structure whose constituents are joined in English by the coordinator *or*, and in Bulgarian by the coordinator *или* (*or*) or by such correlative pairs as *ли – или* (*li – ili*), *ли – ли* (*li – li*), *дали – или* (*dali – ili*). The structure is called “alternative” because its constituent units indicate two (sometimes more) mutually exclusive alternatives. It is called “interrogative” because it represents a coordination of phrases which (usually, though not necessarily) occurs in a full or elliptical closed interrogative independent or subordinate clause. It can also represent a coordination (usually) of closed interrogative independent or subordinate

clauses. In addition, it can form or make part of a sentence used as a question, usually closed (usually alternative, but sometimes polar, as well). The second reason why the structure is called “interrogative” in Bulgarian is that the correlative pairs joining the constituents contain interrogative words, *viz.* the interrogative particles *ли* (*li*) and *дали* (*dali*).

Corpora evidence reveals that the constituents of some E&BAISs impart related or synonymous meanings or stand in a relationship of hyponymy<sup>1</sup>.

The English alternative interrogative structures (EAISs) are 32 altogether, i.e. 12.5 % of all 256 AISs in the corpora. There are 10 occurrences in EFC, 4 in ECFM, 10 in CFCSE, and 8 in STCSE.

The Bulgarian alternative interrogative structures (BAISs) are 24 totally, i.e. 9.92 % of all 242 AISs in the corpora. There are 7 occurrences in BFC, 4 in BCFM, 10 in CSB–A, and 3 in CSB–NV.

As statistics show, EAISs outnumber BAISs by 2.58 %.

In the examples henceforth the constituents of the AIS are put in round brackets, while the AIS is enclosed in square brackets and is marked with single underlining. The abbreviated name of the corpus from which the example has been excerpted follows the example and is put in round brackets.

## II. Related meanings

AISs whose constituents convey related meanings can be divided into two subgroups:

- AISs whose constituents denote persons
- AISs whose constituents denote objects

### 1. Persons

The subgroup of AISs whose constituents denote persons is a small one. In both English and Bulgarian corpora these AISs are made up of two or three noun phrases (NPs) which usually coincide with the head nouns.

- **Prominent figures**

In the English corpora the heads (or sometimes the dependents in the NPs) can be realized by proper nouns naming particular persons, for instance prominent historical political and/or literary figures.

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<sup>1</sup> As EAISs whose constituents convey opposite meanings and E&BAISs whose constituents exhibit approximative relations were discussed in other articles (cf. Spasova 2018, 2019, 2020), the focus here is only on E&BAISs whose constituents communicate related meanings or stand in a relationship of synonymy or hyponymy as these types of relationship remained outside the scope of the above-mentioned articles.

(1) *'You didn't make a speech of any sort before getting down to brass tacks? No mention of [(Burke) (or Shakespeare) (or the poet Burns)]?' (EFC)*

● **Occupations**

The English heads can also be expressed by common nouns that denote occupations. The nouns in the example below share the meaning of a person who acts in the name of the law.

(2) *He then moved on to basic questions about whether they had been victims of crime, had relatives in prison or were related to any [(police officers) (or prosecutors)]. (EFC)*

● **Kinship**

In the Bulgarian examples the heads can be realized by common nouns that indicate kinship.

(3) *Смешното бе там, че те двама нито можеха, нито щяха да узнаят дали това дете им е [(син), (или племенник), (или братовчед)], дори да подложеха Хризоте на едноседмични изтезания. (BFC)*

*Smeshното be tam, che te dvama nito mozheha, nito shtyaha da uznayat dali tova dete im e [(sin), (ili plemennik), (ili bratovched)], dori da podlozheha Hrizote na ednosedmichni iztezaniya. (BFC)*

*'The funny thing was that they both neither could nor would find out whether that child was their son or nephew or cousin even if they put Hrizote to one-week torture.'*<sup>2</sup>

**2. Objects**

The second subgroup includes AISs whose constituents denote objects. "Objects" is used here in the widest sense of the word and covers abstract entities, concrete entities, situations. In both English and Bulgarian corpora these AISs are usually made up of NPs which often coincide with the head nouns.

● **Public holidays**

In the English examples the heads can be realized by proper nouns naming public holidays.

(4) *That's true there's some rule that's like between Labor Day, uh, no, is it [(Labor Day) (or Memorial Day)], I'm not for sure. (STCSE)*

● **Sources of information**

The constituents of EAISs can also name sources of information.

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<sup>2</sup> Single inverted commas indicate meaningful translation of the Bulgarian examples into English. Translation is mine.

(5) *I read a thing, I don't even remember if it was in [(the Dallas Site) (or the Inside one)], about, uh, companies allowing you and they said that TI was looking into it to purchase extra vacation days ... (STCSE)*

● **Educational institutions**

In both English and Bulgarian corpora the heads of the NPs (or sometimes the dependents in the NPs) can be realized by common nouns. In English, they refer to educational institutions.

(6) *Is there anything else you wanted to talk about? [(High school) (or college)]? (CFCSE)*

● **Language activities**

The English common nouns can also refer to language activities such as *reading* and *writing*.

(7) *The teacher in high school that started you with your journal, did she also, um, did she also activate in you a desire for [(any reading) (or other types of writing)], or did another teacher? ... (CFCSE)*

● **Tools**

In the Bulgarian examples the heads (respectively the NPs) can refer to tools.

(8) Г: *Виж какво си купих.*

Б: *[(Фазомер) (или отверка)]? (CSB–A)*

Г: *Vizh kakvo si kupih.*

Б: *[(Fazomer) (ili otverka)]? (CSB–A)*

Г: *‘Look at what I’ve bought.’*

Б: *‘A phase-meter or a screwdriver?’*

● **Clothes**

The Bulgarian common nouns can also refer to pieces of clothing.

(9) Е: *Добре, мисли, аз ще правя бодовете тука.*

М: *[(Жилетка) (или пуловер)]? (CSB–A)*

Е: *Dobre, misli, az shte pravya bodovete tuka.*

М: *[(Zhiletka) (ili pulover)]? (CSB–A)*

Е: *‘OK, think about it, I’m going to knit here.’*

М: *‘A cardigan or a pullover?’*

● **Situations**

The constituents of some other AISs denote similar situations. This meaning is more characteristic of the constituents of the AISs found in the English corpora.

For instance, the verb *miss* and the adjectives *sorry* and *unhappy* which make part of the constituents of the EAIS in ex. (10) convey the feeling of sadness. The noun *terror* and the adjective *suspenseful* (ex. 11) refer to negative feelings, as well – *terror* communicates “a feeling of extreme fear” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English 2006: 1528), while *suspenseful*, a derivative of *suspense*, conveys “a feeling of worry or excitement that you have when you feel that something is going to happen” (*ibid.* 2006: 1492). On their part, the constituents of the BAIS in ex. (12) share the meaning of *to no longer possess something* conveyed by the verb forms *подарих* (gave), *загубих* (lost), *дадох* (gave), and *изчезна* (disappeared).

(10) *He didn’t mention again [(how much he missed her), (or how sorry he was), (or how unhappy with Luisa he was)]*. (EFC)

(11) *Well, isn't, isn't Sleeping with the Enemy, isn't that a, is, is it, [(is it a terror movie) (or is it just suspenseful)]?* (STCSE)

(12) *Той ми беше подарил една негова много хубава работа, аз [(я подарих на един доктор) (или я загубих ли), (или я дадох там), (или изчезна)], много хубава работа, една от най-хубавите му работи ...* (CSB–A)

*Toj mi beshe podaril edna negova mnogo hubava rabota, az [(ya podarih na edin doktor) (ili ya zagubih li), (ili ya dadoh tam), (ili izchezna)], mnogo hubava rabota, edna ot naj-hubavite mu raboti ...* (CSB–A)

*‘He had given me a very good work of his, I gave it to a doctor, or did I lose it, or did I give it, or did it disappear, a very good work, one of his best works ...’*

### • Spatial location and change of spatial location

The constituent units of still other AISs indicate spatial location or change of spatial location. These meanings are more typical of the constituents of the AISs testified in the Bulgarian corpora.

Thus, the constituent units of the AIS in ex. (13) are two prepositional phrases (PPs) with the same head – the locative preposition *в* (*in*). The preposition takes an NP complement whose head is realized by a proper noun naming a housing quarter (*Бояна* and *Драгалевци* respectively). On its part, the AIS in ex. (14) is made up of two NPs headed by proper nouns referring to “geographical entities”<sup>3</sup> („географски обекти“) (Nitsolova 2008: 49), *viz.* the Macedonian towns of *Stip* and *Veles*. This time the locative preposition *в* (*in*) has been dropped. The constituents of both AISs indicate spatial location.

<sup>3</sup> Translation of terms used in books by Bulgarian authors is mine.

(13) ... *Та зор, не им е готов още апартаментът. Не знам [(в Бояна ли), (в Драгалевци)] на Ивана някаква приятелка във вилата ги прие.* (CSB–A)

... *Ta zor, ne im e gotov oshte apartamentat. Ne znam [(v Boyana li), (v Dragalevtsi)] na Ivana nyakakva priyatelka vav vilata gi prie.* (CSB–A)

‘... *They had a hard time, their flat is not ready yet. A friend of Ivana’s put them up in her villa, I don’t know if it was in Boyana or in Dragalevtsi.*’

(14) *Дядо ми е знаел девет езика и е завършил цариградския колеж, [(Штип ли), (Велес)], там, там, в тази Македония.* (CSB–A)

*Dyado mi e znael devet ezika i e zavarshil tsarigradskiya kolezh, [(Shtip li), (Veles)], tam, tam, v тази Makedonia.* (CSB–A)

‘*My grandfather knew nine languages and graduated from Robert College, was it in Stip or in Veles, there, there, in that Macedonia.*’

The constituents of the AISs in ex. (15 – 17) signal “change of location in space”, i.e. “motion from one place to another” (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 680).

The AISs are made up of two PPs with the same head, viz. the prepositions *om* (from) (ex. 15), *do* (to) (ex. 16), and *to* (ex. 17). *Om* (from) marks “the source”, while *do* (to) and *to* mark “the goal” (*ibid.* 2002: 684). The prepositions take NP complements headed by proper nouns naming geographical entities, viz. the Macedonian towns of *Veles* and *Stip* (ex. 15), the Australian cities of *Melbourne* and *Sydney* (ex. 16), and the Japanese cities of *Yedo* and *Nagasaki* (ex. 17). As the meaning of the head preposition specifies the meaning of the PP itself, we can say that the constituents of the AIS in ex. (15) indicate source, while those of the AISs in ex. (16) and (17) denote goal.

(15) *Откъде е дядо Димитър беше? [(От Велес) (или от Штип)]?...* (CSB–A)

*Otkade e dyado Dimitar beshe? [(Ot Veles) (ili ot Shtip)]? ...* (CSB–A)

‘*Where is was grandfather Dimitar from? From Veles or from Stip? ...*’

(16) *А там ... те докъде казаха, че е? [(До Мелбърн ли), (до Сидней ли)], некъде спира самолетът.* (CSB–A)

*A tam ... te dokade kazaha, che e? [(Do Melbarn li), (do Sidnej li)], nekade spira samoletat.* (CSB–A)

‘*And there ... where did they say it flies to? Does the plane fly to Melbourne or to Sydney?*’

(17) *One of our Christian spies in the Black Robes’ headquarters here whispered that the priest Tsukku-san secretly left Osaka five days ago, but we don’t know if he went [(to Yedo) (or to Nagasaki, where the Black Ship is expected)].* (EFC)

### III. Synonymous meanings

Corpora data indicate that the constituents (or some of their components) of some other AISs stand in a relationship of synonymy. These AISs are made up of adjective phrases (APs), NPs, or verb phrases (VPs).

For instance, the adjectives *imaginary* and *fictional* in ex. (18) are synonyms (Oxford Learner's Thesaurus, A dictionary of synonyms 2008: 284–5; Oxford Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms 2014: 210). The same holds true for the abstract nouns *dream* and *vision* in ex. (19) (Oxford Learner's Thesaurus, A dictionary of synonyms 2008: 225–6; Oxford Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms 2014: 454).

(18) A: *Um, what do you remember any stories they told you, your parents told you?*

B: *You mean like [(imaginary), (or fictional)] stories?* (CFCSE)

(19) *Had this been [(a dream), (or a day-time vision)]?* (ECFM)

In the BAIS below the adjectives *тъмно* (*dark*) and *черно* (*black*) make part of the first and third constituent respectively and refer to the colour of a child's hair. They are synonyms according to Sinonimen rechnik s antonimi (2013: 357). As far as the adjective *светло* (*fair*), a component of the second constituent, is concerned, it is the lexical opposite of *тъмно* (*dark*) (*ibid.* 2013: 310).

(20) *Аз не знам детето му [(тъмно ли беше), (светло ли беше), (черно ли беше)].* (CSB–A)

*Az ne znam deteto mu [(tamno li beshe), (svetlo li beshe), (cherno li beshe)].* (CSB–A)

*'I don't know if his child was dark-haired or was fair-haired or was black-haired.'*

### IV. Hyponymous relations

Finally, in the corpora there are AISs whose constituents (or some of their components) stand in a relationship of hyponymy.

“Hyponymy” is defined as “the lexical relation corresponding to the inclusion of one class in another” (Cruse 1986: 88). The term covers relations between words that reflect for instance “the genus – kind relationship” („родово-видови отношения“) (Boyadzhiev 2011: 155). The word that names “the genus” is called “hypernym”, while the word that names “a kind” is referred to as “hyponym” (*ibid.* 2011: 156). In other words, the hyponym is “a word with a particular meaning that is included in the meaning of a more general word” (Oxford Advanced Learner's

Dictionary of Current English 2006: 735). The more general word is the hypernym. In English, a hypernym is also called a “superordinate” (Palmer 1981: 85; Cruse 1986: 89). The latter term reflects the hierarchy and the relationship of subordination between a hypernym and its hyponyms, i.e. hyponyms are subordinate to a hypernym. “The ‘upper’ term is the superordinate and the ‘lower’ term is the hyponym.” (Palmer 1981: 85) Words that belong to the same hyponymous class are “co-hyponyms” (Boyadzhiev 2011: 157; Palmer 1981: 85).

The AIS in ex. (21) is made up of two NPs. The common nouns *часа* (*hours*) and *минути* (*minutes*) are components of the first and second constituent respectively. On the one hand, they can be regarded as co-hyponyms, the hypernym being the noun *време* (*time*). On the other, *часа* (*hours*) can be treated as a hypernym of *минути* (*minutes*).

The two NPs indicate temporal extent (or duration). “Temporal extent” or “duration” (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 702) refers to “the length of time that something lasts or continues” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English 2006: 457).

(21) [*Още два часа ли*] да върви до воденицата, [*или двадесетина минути*]? (BCFM)

[*Oshte dva chasa li*] da varvi do vodenitsata, [*ili dvadesetina minuti*]? (BCFM)

‘Should he walk to the watermill for another two hours or for twenty-odd minutes?’

In their turn, the constituents of the AIS in ex. (22) are two APs headed by the non-gradable adjectives *музикален* (*musical*) and *артистичен* (*artistic*). As music is one of the arts, we can say that *музикален* (*musical*) is a hyponym of *артистичен* (*artistic*). However, bearing in mind that in Bulgarian *артист* (*artiste*) is often used instead of *актьор* (*actor*), we can also analyse *музикален* and *артистичен* as co-hyponyms.

(22) Знаеш ли, че ... аз защо не съм открит сега като [*музикален*] [*или артистичен*] талант? (CSB–A)

Znaesh li, che ... az zashto ne sam otkrit sega kato [*muzikalen*] [*ili artistichen*] talant? (CSB–A)

‘Do you know that ... why I haven’t been spotted yet as a musical or artistic talent?’

Finally, the EAIS below is made up of a PP (*at Christmas*) and an NP (*holidays*). “A holiday” is defined as “a day when most people do not go to work or school, especially because of a religious or national celebration” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English 2006: 713).

Christmas is a holiday and on that account we can analyse the common noun *holidays* as the hypernym of *Christmas*.

(23) OK. *Did, um, was this at a particular time of the year, like did you say [(at Christmas) (or holidays)]?* (CFCSE)

## **V. Conclusions**

Observations on examples of AISs excerpted from English and Bulgarian corpora result in the following conclusions:

1. The constituents of some E&BAISs convey related or synonymous meanings, or exhibit hyponymous relations.

The EAISs total 32, which makes 12.5 % of all EAISs found in the corpora. Their Bulgarian counterparts are 24, i.e. 9.92 % of all BAISs testified in the corpora. As is evident from the statistics, EAISs outnumber BAISs by 2.58 %.

2. E&BAISs whose constituents impart related meanings denote persons and objects. In general, the meanings identified in the English corpora are different from those identified in the Bulgarian corpora.

The constituents referring to persons name prominent figures and occupations (in the English examples) or signal kinship (in the Bulgarian examples).

The constituents referring to objects name public holidays, sources of information, educational institutions, and language activities (in the English examples) or designate tools and clothes (in the Bulgarian examples).

The constituents of some other AISs denote similar situations. This meaning has turned out to be more typical of the constituents of the AISs testified in the English corpora.

The constituents of still other AISs indicate spatial location or change of spatial location. These meanings have proved to be more characteristic of the constituents of the AISs found in the Bulgarian corpora.

It is necessary to point out here, however, that although some related meanings have been testified only in the English corpora and others only in the Bulgarian corpora, they all exist in English and Bulgarian, which perhaps evidence from larger corpora will prove.

In both English and Bulgarian corpora the AISs which convey related meanings usually consist of two or three NPs which usually coincide with the head nouns.

3. E&BAISs whose constituents stand in a relationship of synonymy or hyponymy are usually made up of two APs or NPs.

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## APPENDIX

### List of the E&BAISs Discussed in the Article

| N   | AIS                                                                                                                                     | Corpus |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1.  | <i>No mention of [(Burke) (or Shakespeare) (or the poet Burns)]?</i>                                                                    | EFC    |
| 2.  | <i>... whether they had been victims of crime, had relatives in prison or were related to any [(police officers) (or prosecutors)].</i> | EFC    |
| 3.  | <i>... дали това дете им е [(син), (или племенник), (или братовчед)] ...</i>                                                            | BFC    |
| 4.  | <i>... is it [(Labor Day) (or Memorial Day)], I'm not for sure.</i>                                                                     | STCSE  |
| 5.  | <i>... I don't even remember if it was in [(the Dallas Site) (or the Inside one)] ...</i>                                               | STCSE  |
| 6.  | <i>[(High school) (or college)]?</i>                                                                                                    | CFCSE  |
| 7.  | <i>... did she also activate in you a desire for [(any reading) (or other types of writing)] ... ?</i>                                  | CFCSE  |
| 8.  | <i>[(Фазомер) (или отверка)]?</i>                                                                                                       | CSB–A  |
| 9.  | <i>[(Жилетка) (или пуловер)]?</i>                                                                                                       | CSB–A  |
| 10. | <i>He didn't mention again [(how much he missed her), (or how sorry he was), (or how unhappy with Luisa he was)].</i>                   | EFC    |
| 11. | <i>... [(is it a terror movie) (or is it just suspenseful)]?</i>                                                                        | STCSE  |
| 12. | <i>... аз [(я подарих на един доктор) (или я загубих ли), (или я дадох там), (или изчезна)] ...</i>                                     | CSB–A  |
| 13. | <i>Не знам [(в Бояна ли), (в Драгалевци)] на Ивана някаква приятелка във вилата ги прие.</i>                                            | CSB–A  |
| 14. | <i>... и е завършил цариградския колеж, [(Цип ли), (Велес)], там, там, в тази Македония.</i>                                            | CSB–A  |

|     |                                                                                                                 |       |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 15. | <i>[(От Велес) (или от Цун)]?</i>                                                                               | CSB–A |
| 16. | <i>[(До Мелбърн ли), (до Сидней ли)],<br/>некъде спира<br/>самолетът.</i>                                       | CSB–A |
| 17. | <i>... but we don't know if he went [(to Yedo) (or to Nagasaki,<br/>where the Black Ship is expected)].</i>     | EFC   |
| 18. | <i>You mean like [(imaginary), (or fictional)] stories?</i>                                                     | CFCSE |
| 19. | <i>Had this been [(a dream), (or a day-time vision)]?</i>                                                       | ECFM  |
| 20. | <i>Аз не знам детето му [(тъмно ли беше), (светло ли<br/>беше), (черно ли беше)].</i>                           | CSB–A |
| 21. | <i>[(Още два часа ли) да върви до воденицата, (или<br/>двадесетина минути)]?</i>                                | BCFM  |
| 22. | <i>Знаеш ли, че ... аз защо не съм открит сега като<br/>[(музикален) (или артистичен)] талант?</i>              | CSB–A |
| 23. | <i>Did, um, was this at a particular time of the year, like did you<br/>say [(at Christmas) (or holidays)]?</i> | CFCSE |