Tag questions (also called 'question tags') are an interesting linguistic phenomenon. Technically, they are not originally questions, but rather statements which are turned into questions by adding something at the end. In English, for example, the statement 'You like to read' can be turned into a tag question by adding 'don't you?' to the end: 'You like to read, don't you?'

We use tag questions for a number of reasons, for example to ask for the listener's approval, assurance, agreement, or simply to make sure that they are still listening. They are often used for pragmatic reasons, without the expectation of a direct answer, for example to express irony or disappointment ('You're a great friend, aren't you?).

Tag questions are very common across languages, and there are a number of different forms. Many languages use a word for 'yes' or 'no': French uses non? ('no') as in 'Tu aimes lire, non?' ('You like to read, don't you?'), and Russian uses да? ('yes'). Other languages use a variant of 'right?' or 'not true?' or simply 'or?' In German, for example, you can use nicht wahr? ('not true?') or oder? ('or?'), as in 'Du liest gerne, oder?', while a common question tag in Swedish is eller hur? ('or how?).

Then again, there are some languages that use a specific word to form a question tag. In colloquial French, for example, we have hein?, which can be added to the end of a sentence to turn it into a tag question – 'Tu aimes lire, hein?' In some southern German dialects, there is the word gell?, and the dialect spoken in the Berlin area has wa? These words are exclusively used to form tag questions.

As you can see, English is not the only European language to have tag questions. In fact, tag questions are very common in many languages, and there are different ways of forming them. They are a very complex and fascinating linguistic phenomenon.