

A Study on Positions and Functions of Wh-Question Words in Amanatun Dialect of Meto Language

Sahan, Anselmus¹⁾, Kamlasi, Imanuel²⁾

¹⁾English Lecturer of FIP of Timor University, Kefamenanu

E-mail: anselsahan@gmail.com

²⁾English Lecturer of FIP of Timor University, Kefamenanu

E-mail: ikamlasi@yahoo.com

Abstract: This study is a descriptive study which mainly deals with the positions of WH-question words in Amanatun dialect of Meto language. The purposes of this research are to identify the positions of WH-questions words in sentence constructions and propose the best way for teaching English to the Meto background students. Analyzing the data, it used translation instrument by asking them to translate sentences of Indonesia into Amanatun dialect. The findings analyzed by using syntactical analysis show that *sa* (*what*) takes the initial and the final that function to ask object (choice), reason subject (condition), and gets one variation, that is, *sa* to *sa'a* because of its initial position. *sekau* taking the middle position, functions to ask for object and possession, and the final position functions to ask for object. *esme* (where) getting ten (10) variations depending on the subject of the sentences takes the final position to ask for place (location). However, *esme* gets changes on its form because of the subject of the sentences, dialect and tradition of Meto speakers. Its variations are *etme/esme*, *alme/neome*, and *nbime*, *elme/esme*, *onme/meome*, *meome*, and *mbime*, *alme/onme*, *neome* and *etme/esme/alme*. *leka* (*when*) just gets one variation, that is, *lek'at*. It happens because the subject is between *lek'at* and verb *mnao* (go) while *lek'at* takes the front position. *Nansa* (*why*) gets some variations, such as *nansa*, *neosa*, *nak'onme*, and *'moe'na' onme*. It takes the initial and final position and functions to ask questions about reason. *Onme* (*how*) functions to ask about manner, condition and opinion. *Fauk* (How many/how much) asks questions about many, much and old.

Keywords: *question words, position, function, Amanatun, Meto*

1. INTRODUCTION

Each language has different system. The system of language is exposed through its grammatical patterns and patterns are expressed orally and that can run the communication among speakers smoothly. To stress the importance of language for its speakers, Gumperz in Mariani and Mu'in (2007: 3) state that language is a set of rules enabling speakers to translate information from the outside world into sound.

Indonesian as one of the world languages is built on the basis of some vernacular languages spread over 32 provinces. The vernacular languages have different systems. One of the vernacular languages is Meto. It is spoken by its speakers in Timor island (an island of Nusa Tenggara Province), covering an area of Belu Regency (called Dawan R), North Central Timor Regency, South Central Timor Regency and Kupang Regency.

In Meto, the way and the positions of WH-question words to ask question are different. They may be in the middle or in the final positions of sentences and/or utterances having different functions. While in English and sometimes in Indonesian, the grammatical patterns of questioning are generally shown by using WH-question words in initial position then followed by question mark (?). For example, to ask the doer of an action, it always starts with this: "Who made you cry?", or to ask name of a stranger man, "What is your name?", or to ask reason, "Why do you come late?"

These differences on the positions of WH-question words between English and Meto can bring problems to the Meto background students learning English at all levels of education.

2. METHOD

This study is aimed at finding out and explaining the Question Words used by the speakers of Amanatun Dialect of Meto Language in the daily communication. On the basis of the data characteristics, this study applied a descriptive qualitative method. According to Best (1981: 106-107), Nunan (1992: 4) and Merriam (1988: 25-27), descriptive research as a way of describing fact in qualitative research is nonexperimental, for it deals with the relationship between nonmanipulated variables in a natural, rather than artificial, setting. It advocates use of qualitative methods, concerned with understanding human behaviour from the actor's own frame of reference, naturalistic and uncontrolled observation, subjective, close to data: the 'inside' perspective, grounded, discovery-oriented, exploratory, expansionist, descriptive, and inductive.

3. Finding and Discussion

On the basis of the analysis of findings above, this part presents the position, function and patterns of the seven kinds of the question words in Amanatun Dialect of Meto language. They are *sa* (what), *sekau* (who), *etme/esme/mbime/neome* (where), *leka* (when), *nansa/neusa* (why), *onme* (how) and *fauk* (how many and how much).

1. *Sa* (What)

In both English and Meto, *sa* (*what*) is used to ask question about things or something as the subject or the object in the sentences. The following data might show different positions of *sa* in Meto and therefore carry different functions.

1. *Nane* *sa*?
 Det. QW
 That what? (DT)
 What is that? (CT)
2. a) *Ma'tane* *et* *sa*?
 Adj. Det. QW
 Difficultthat what? (DT)
 What is is difficult? (CT)
 b) *Sa'a* *et* *ma'tane*?
 QW Det. Adj.
 What that difficult? (DT)
 What is it difficult? (CT)
3. a) *In* *nloim* *sa*?
 Pron V QW
 He likes what?
 (DT)
 What does he like? (CT)
 b) *Sa'a* *et* *in* *nlomie*?
 QW Det. Pron V
 What that he likes?
 (DT)
 What does he like? (CT)
4. a) *Ho* *mloim* *sa*?
 Pron V QW
 You like what? (DT)
 What do you like? (CT)
 b) *Sa'a* *et* *ho* *mlomie*?
 QW Det S V
 What that you like?
 (DT)
 What do you like? (CT)

5. *Ho* *meup'* *matane* *neo* *sa*?

Pron V Adv Conj QW
 You work hard for what?
 (LT)

Why did you work hard? (CL)

What for did you work hard? (CL)

6. *Ho* *mepu* *lenane* *in* *leokna'* *et* *sa*?

Pron V Det Pron Adv
 Prep QW
 You work that it good
 for what? (LT)

What is interesting from your job? (LT)

The data show that there are three sentences (2.b., 3.b., and 4.b.) that place *sa* (*what*) in the initial, while six sentences (Numbers 1, 2.a., 3.a., 4.a., 5, and 6) place *sa* in the final, but none is in the middle position. Although *sa* takes the same position, it in fact carries different functions. *sa* that takes the final position in sentence numbers 1, 3.a., and 4.a., functions to ask object; *sa* in sentence number 2.a., functions to ask object, *sa* in sentence number 5 functions to ask reason, and *sa* in sentence number 6 functions to ask subject.

sa in sentence numbers 2.b., 3.b., and 4.b. gets change to its form from *sa* to *sa'a* because of their position that can be altered from the final to the initial position. However, they carry different function. Sentence 2.b functions to ask subject condition, while sentences 3.b. and 4.b. function to ask object choice.

2. *Sekau* (who/whom/whose)

Sekau in Meto language functions to ask for subject, object and possession. However, this function is mainly determined by its position. The following

data can explain this phenomena.

1. Sekau ini'?
QW Pron
Whose?
2. a) Ho mu'euk sekau?
Pron V QW
You meet who? (DT)
Who do you meet? (CT)
b) Sekau et na'euk ko?
QW Det. V Pron.
Who that meet you?
(DT)
Who meets you? (CT)
3. a) Ho mok sekau et om?
Pron Conj. QW Det. V
You with who
that come? (DT)
With whom do you come? (CT)
b) Ho om mok sekau?
Pron V Conj. QW
You come with who?
With whom do you come? (CT)
4. a) Sekau in lene?
QW Pron N
Who he garden? (DT)
Whose garden?
b) Lene nane sekau ini'?
N Det. QWPron
Garden that who he?
(DT)
Whose garden is that? (CT)
5. Sekau et namas?
QW Det. Adj.
Who that beautiful? (DT)
Who is beautiful? (CT)
6. Ho mok sekau esam nao?
Pron Conj QW Adj V
You with who go? (LT)
With whom will you go? (CT)
7. Hi mitonan sekau neo
ekut noka?

Pron V QW Conj. Adv. T
You inform who for meeting tomorrow?
(LT)
Who did you invite for the tomorrow
meeting) (CL)

In the data above, *sekau* (who) takes four initial positions (sentence numbers 1, 2.b, 4.a., and 5), four middle positions (sentence numbers 3.a., 4.b., 6, and 7), and two final positions (2.a. and 3.b.). Although *sekau* takes the position, it gets different function. *sekau* that takes the initial position in sentence 1 functions to ask for possession, sentence 2.b. functions to ask for subject, sentence 4.a. and 5 function to ask for subject.

In the middle position, sentence numbers 3.a., 6, and 7) function to ask for object, while sentence 4.b. functions to ask for possession. In the final position, both sentences 2.a. and 3.b. function to ask for object.

3. *Esme* (Where)

esme (where) is Meto language gets ten (10) altering forms depending on the subject of the sentences. It is used to ask about place (location). The following data can describe their positions and functions.

1. In ume etme/esme?
Pron. N QW
He house where? (DT)
Where is his/her house? (CT)
2. Ho mutua etme/esme?
Pron V QW
You live where?
Where do you live?
3. Ho mno onme/meome?
Pron V QW

You go where?

(DT)

Where do you go? (CT)

4. Hit tkoenok alme/onme?

Pron V QW

We go where? (DT)

Where do we go? (CT)

5. Sin nao(n) neome?

Pron V QW

They go where? (DT)

Where do they go? (CT)

6. Sin natua(n) etme/esme/alme?

Pron V QW

They live where? (DT)

Where do they live? (CT)

7. In nao alme/neome?

Pron V QW

She/he go where? (DT)

Where does she/he go? (CT)

8. In nao nbime?

Pron V QW

She/he go where? (DT)

Where does she/he go? (CT)

9. Ho mnao meome?

Pron V QW

You go where? (DT)

Where do you go? (CT)

10. Ho mnao mbime?

Pron V QW

You go where? (DT)

Where do you go? (CT)

11. Hit tnao teome?

Pron V QW

We go where? (DT)

Where do we go? (CT)

Data show that all forms of *esme* (the basic form) take the final position. It carries the same function, that is, to ask for place (location). However, *esme* gets changes on its form because of the

subject of the sentences, dialect and tradition of Meto speakers. In sentence numbers 1, 7, and 8, *esme* becomes *etme/esme*, *alme/neome*, and *nbime* because the subject of the sentence is *in* (dia); In sentence numbers 2, 3, 9 and 10, *esme* becomes *elme/esme*, *onme/meome*, *meome*, and *mbime* because the subject of the sentence is *ho* (you); In sentence numbers 4 and 11, *esme* becomes *alme/onme* and *esme* itself because the subject of the sentence is *hit* (we); and In sentence numbers 5 and 6, *esme* becomes *neome* and *etme/esme/alme* because the subject of the sentence is *sin* (they).

4. *Leka* (When)

In both English and Meto, *leka* (when) is used to ask question about time. However, it just gets one variation, that is, *lek'at*. It takes different position and function as seen in the following data.

1. a) Lek'at ho mnao?

QW Pron V

When you go? (DT)

When do you go? (CT)

b) Ho mnao et leka?

Pron V Det QW

Yo go that when? (DT)

When do you go? (CT)

2. a) Leka et sin neman?

QW Det Pron V

When that they come? (DT)

When do they come? (CT)

b) Sin neman et leka?

Pron V Det QW

They come that when? (DT)

When do they come? (CT)

3. Ho neon mahointa leka?

Pron Adv V QW
 Youday birth when? (LT)
 When is your birthday? (CT)

4. In nem et leka?
 Pron V Prep QW
 He come at when? (LT)
 When did he come? (CT)
5. Leka hit moe ela?
 QW Pron V N
 When we do party? (LT)
 When do we make party? (CT)

The data show that there are three sentences where *leka* takes the initial position; two of the sentences (numbers 2.a. and 5) have the same form while one (sentence 1) is different, that is, *lek'at*. There are four sentences (numbers 1.b., 2.b., 3, and 4) in which *leka* takes the final position.

Leka becomes *lek'at* in sentence 1 because the subject is between *lek'at* and verb *mnao* (go) while *lek'at* takes the front position. Although the sentences 1 and 2 have the same subject, that is, *ho* (you), it gets variation because of the position of the subject and *leka* itself. In the rest sentences, *leka* does not get any variation.

5. *Nansa* (why)

Nansa (why) gets some variations in Meto speakers, such as *nansa*, *neosa*, *nak'onme*, and *'moe'na' onme*. It functions to ask questions about reason.

1. a) Nansa/nak'onme et
ho mkae?
 QW Det
 Pron V

Why that
 you cry? (DT)
 Why do
 you cry? (DT)

- b) Ho mkae neosa?
 Pron V QW
 You cry why? (DT)
 Why do you cry? (CT)
2. a) Nansa/nak'onme et in namnah?
 QW Det. Pron Adj.
 Why that she/he hungry? (DT)
 Why is she/he hungry? (CT)
 b) In namnah neosa?
 Pron Adj QW
 She/he hungry why? (DT)
 Why is she/he hungry?
3. a) Nansa/nak'onme et ho ka omah?
 QW Det. Pron Neg. V
 Why that you not come?
 (DT)
 Why don't you come? (CT)
 b) Ho ka omfa neosa?
 Pron. Neg. V QW
 You not come why? (DT)
 Why don't you come? (CT)
4. a) 'Moe'na' onme et ho kamu
skol?
 QW Det Pron Neg Pron V
 Why that you not
 you school? (DT)
 Why don't you go to school?
 (CT)
 b) Ho ka mu skolfa neosa?
 Pron Neg Pron V QW
 You not you school why? (DT)
 Why don't you go to school? (CT)
5. a) 'Moe'na' onme et in nem?
 QW Det Pron V
 Why that she/he come?
 (DT)
 Why does she/he come? (CT)

b) In nem neosa?

Pron V QW

She/he come why? (DT)

Why does she/he come? (CT)

The data show that there are five sentences (numbers 1.a., 2.a., 3.a., 4.a., and 5.a.) that place *nansa* (the basic form) in the initial position while five sentences (numbers 1.b., 2.b., 3.b., 4.b., and 5.b.) place *nansa* at the final position. However, the variation is not because of the subject but mostly of the dialect and tradition of the speakers of Meto.

In sentences 1 and 2, both subject 'ho' (you) and predicate 'mkae' (cry) are the same but the difference is on the use of the variation of *nansa*: *nansa/nak'onme* takes the initial position while *neosa* takes the final position. It also happens in the rest sentences which have different variations and positions of *nansa*.

6. *Onme* (How)

Onme (how) in Meto language does not have variation. It functions to ask about manner, condition and opinion.

1. Ho am'a onme?

Pron N QW

You father how? (DT)

How is your father? (CT)

2. Tanaon oko' mama onme?

V N QW

Make *oko' mama* how? (LT)

How to make *oko' mama*? (CT)

3. Meup koek ukit onme?

V N QW

Work fried banana how? (LT)

How to make fried banana? (CT)

4. Ho onme?

Pron QW

You how (LT)

How are you? (CT)

5. Onme, nen i hi

etki aomina?

QW N Det Pron

Prep Adj

How day this you in

good? (LT)

How are you today? (CT)

6. Onme kaul ho kam

naofa nen i?

QW N Pron

Neg V N Det

How if you not go day

this? (LT)

How if you cannot go today?

(CT)

7. Hi tenba' onme, kalu hi

anah in ka nasopfa ini

skolah?

Pron N QW N Pron

N Pron Neg V Pron

N

You think how if you child can not finish his school? (LT)

How do you think if your child can not finish his school? (CT)

8. Onme es lasi nbol

neo ko?

QW Prep N V

Prep Pron

How problem come to you? (LT)

How does the problem to you?

(CT)

9. Onme na ho mu'euk

lasi le'i?

QW conj Pron V N

Det

How you meet problem this? (LT)

How does you get this problem?

(CT)

On the basis of the data, *onme* takes the initial position in four sentences (numbers 5, 6, 8, and 9). In sentence number 7, *onme* takes the middle while in sentence numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, it takes the final position. Based on the function, there are four sentences that ask for manner as seen in numbers 2, 3, 6 and 9; Three sentences (numbers 1, 4 and 5) ask for condition; and two sentences (numbers 7 and 8) ask for opinion.

7. *Fauk* (How many/how much)

Fauk (how many or how much) principally asks questions about many, much and old. Five sentences (numbers 1, 2, and 3) take middle position, while sentence numbers 4, 5, 6, and 6 take the final position.

1. *Ho loita fauk et nane?*
Pron N QW Det Adv.
You money how many
that there? (DT)
How much money do you have?
(CT)
2. *Atoni fauk et neman?*
N QW Det. V
Man how many that come?
(DT)
How many men that come? (CT)
3. *Hi fauk eta msi?*
Pron QW Det V
You(Pl) how many that sing?
(DT)
How many people sing? (CT)
4. *Ho manu fauk?*
Pron N QW
You chicken how many? (LT)
How many chickens do you have?
(CT)

5. *In bie upna fauk?*
Pro N N QW
He/she cow price how much?
(LT)
How much does his cow? (CT)
6. *Ho tona fauk*
Pron N QW
You year how many? (LT)
How old are you? (CT)
7. *In anhenu' atoni fauk?*
Pron N N QW
He children man how many?
(LT)
How many sons does he/she
have? (CT)

On the basis of the data, *fauk* that asks for how many is found in sentence numbers 2, 3, 4, and 7; *fauk* that asks for how much is found in sentence numbers 1 and 5; while sentence number 6 asks for old (how old).

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the data analysis, we can summarize:

- 1) Positions of the seven kinds of wh-question words, that is, *sa* (what), *sekau* (who), *etme/esme/mbime/neome* (where), *leka* (when), *nansa/neusa* (why), *onme* (how) and *fauk* (how many, how much, and how old), in sentences of Amanatun dialect, influence their functions. The data show that although each wh-question word takes the initial, the middle or the final positions, it carries different function.
- 2) The different positions of those wh-question words will create

problems for the students coming from Amanatun dialect in special and the Atoni Meto in general to master them.

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