WH-INTERROGATIVES IN THE MALAY CLASSICAL TEXT OF SULALATUS SALATIN

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1 Introduction

This study is part of an on-going research project which looks at the interrogatives used in Malay classical texts. The Malay classical texts are written documents produced before the 1900s. The classic Malay genre reflects a state of the Malay language through time. The data of the classic Malay genre consists of *hikayats*, official announcements of Malay rulers, official letters of sultans to colonialist administrators or official letters to foreign rulers. Through the examination of these documents and the style of language used, we can describe the patterns of constructions used and trace the development of the forms used in these constructions.

 Sulalatus Salatin or *Sejarah Melayu* used in this study is the version edited by A. Samad Ahmad (1996) which is nearer to the original manuscript compared to the versions edited by Shellabear (1909) or Winstedt (1938). *Sulalatus Salatin* (SS hereafter) is a text which was written or compiled by Tun Seri Lanang during the times of Sultan Abdullah Ma'ayah Shah, a ruler in the southern state of Johor from approximately 1613 to 1623. The purpose of writing this collection of stories of the Malay sultans and Malay Sultanate was to inform the future generation of their heritage, culture, and roots of their lineage.

> 'Bahawa hamba minta diperbuatkan hikayat pada Bendahara, peraturan segala raja-raja Melayu dengan istiadatnya supaya didengar oleh anak cucu kita yang kemudian dari kita dan diketahuinya segala perkataan, syahadan beroleh faedah-lah mereka itu daripadanya'

SS contains interrogatives in the form of *wh*-questions, yes-no questions, alternative questions, and a small sampling of other forms of interrogatives.

_wh_-question

(1) <u>Mengapa</u> maka anakku hendak pergi bermain jauh? (p36)
   Why   that child-my wan go play far
   'Why would my child want to go play far away?'

yes/no question

(2)   Adalah kita   memanggil   paman ini,   kita   hendak beristeri,
        is-EMP we   all   uncle Dem,   we   want   marry
        'We summon uncle here, (because) we want to marry,

        carikan kita,   <u>adakah</u>   paman? (p36).
        find   us   is-QPRT   uncle
        find a wife for us, are there any, uncle?'

Alternative question

(3)   <u>Akukah</u>   Pak Si Bendul <u>engkaukah</u>   Pak Si Bendul? (p21)
        I-QPRT   the clown   you-QPRT   the clown
        'Am I the clown, (or) are you the clown?'

Our focus in this discussion is on one type of interrogatives, i.e. the *wh*-questions. We will look at the various issues regarding *wh*-movement in *wh*-questions with the purpose of trying to account for the characteristics of *wh*-movement in classical Malay of *Sejarah Melayu.*
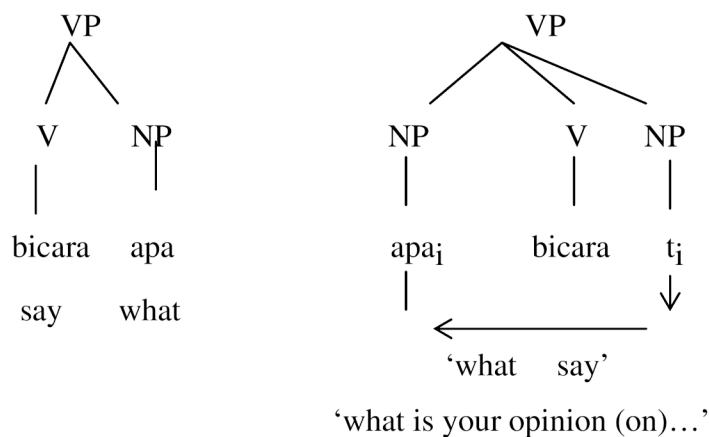
We will be employing assumptions of Government and Binding as in Chomsky (1981, 1986) in describing our data. We could not look at degrees of ungrammaticality of sentences in the data as our only source of judgment is the corpus in the book. Therefore, we will be restricting our discussion to account for the properties of *wh*-movement in the variety of Malay used in the classic text.

2 Properties of *Wh*-Interrogatives in SS

Basically, the *wh*-movements in SS do not differ much from *wh*- movements in modern Malay. Nevertheless, there are characteristics which give *wh*-movement in classical Malay as in SS a distinctive and idiosyncratic flavor.

2.1 *Absence/Presence of Internal Fronting in [+wh] constituents*

(a) <u>Verb phrases </u>(VP $_{[+wh]}$)

Verb phrases which have the feature [+*wh*] tend to undergo an internal fronting of the word containing the [+*wh*] feature in the VP constituent prior to movement to [Spec,CP] position.

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        VP                              VP
       /\                              /|\
      /  \                            / | \
     V    NP                        NP  V  NP
     |     |                         |  |   |
   bicara  apa                      apaᵢ bicara tᵢ

    say    what                      |           ↓
                                     |_____←
                                      ←
                                   'what    say'

                              'what is your opinion (on)…'
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Figure 1

now   what say   all   people   because we want to there
'Now, what does everyone think, as we want to go there,

terlalu sekali   kita berkenan   memandang   dia.] (p38)
very much   we like   look   her
(we are) very much infatuated looking (at) her'.

Other examples of this type of internal-VP movement are as in (5a) to (5f).

(5)   a.   <u>apa mahu?</u>
             what want
             'What (do you) want?'

       b.   <u>apa rasa?</u>
             what think
             'What(do you) think?'

       c.   <u>apa kerja?</u>
             what work
             'What (are you) doing here?'

       d.   <u>apa khabar?</u>
             what news
             'How are (you) doing?'

       e.   <u>apa sebab?</u>
             what reason
              'What is the reason?'

       f.   <u>apa jadinya?</u>
              what become
             'What happened?'

Following the internal movement in the VP constituent, the whole VP$_{[+wh]}$ undergoes *wh*-movement to [Spec,CP] position.

(b) <u>Noun Phrases</u> (NP $_{[+wh]}$)

There is no internal movement of the *wh*-word within the NP; instead the *wh*-word remains at the original position in the NP constituent even after *wh*-movement in the VP.
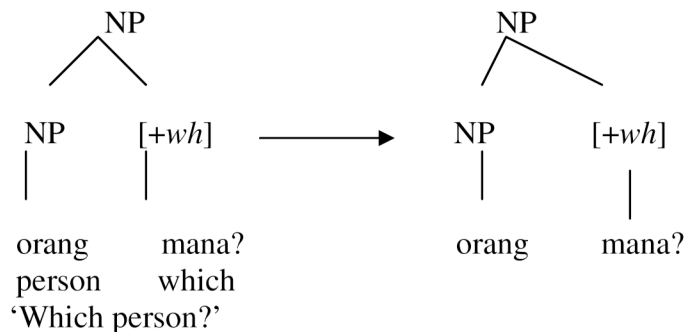


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            NP                              NP
          /    \                          /    \
        /        \                      /        \
      NP         [+wh]    ⟶          NP         [+wh]
      |            |                   |            |
      |            |                   |            |
    orang       mana?               orang        mana?
    person      which
    'Which person?'
```

Figure 2

(6)   [Orang mana [kamu ini], dan [hendak ke mana [kamu]]?
        people where you DEM and want to where you
        'What is your origin and where are you heading to?'

Other examples of NP$_{[+wh]}$ are in (7a) to (7f).

(7)   a. bahasa mana?   b. destar mana?   c. daging apa?
           language which   head-gear which   meat what
           'Which language?'   'Which head-gear?'   'What meat?'

        d. gendang apa?   e. menteri apatah?   f. orang siapa?
           drum what   minister what-EMP   person who
           'Which drum?'   'What kind of minister?'   'Whose people?'

(c) Clause (IP $_{[+wh]}$)

IP $_{[+wh]}$ in SS has examples of internal fronting of the $_{[+wh]}$ word in the clause, as in (8a) to (8c), (9), and Figure 3.

(8)   a. [$_{IP}$ apa janji paman?]   b. [$_{IP}$ apa pekerjaan lain?]
           what promise uncle   what work other
           'What is uncle's promise?'   'What other job?'

        c. [$_{IP}$ apa namanya?]
           what name-it
           'What is its name?'