

SYNTACTICAL PATTERNS OF THE INTERROGATIVE SENTENCE IN LIO LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT. This study focuses on syntactic patterns in Lio interrogative sentences, Lio is a regional language belonging to the Austronesian language family and has around 200,000 to 250,000 speakers spread across areas such as Detusoko, Wolowaru, Maurole, and Ndona. This language plays an important role in the daily lives of the Lio people, both in informal and traditional communication contexts. The main objective of this study is to describe and analyze syntactic patterns in two types of questions, namely Yes-No questions and WH questions. This study uses the sentence structure theory proposed by Brown and Miller (1991) to understand the elements in sentences and the relationships between their components. Qualitative descriptive methods are applied to observe and analyze interrogative sentence data obtained from native Lio speakers. The results of the analysis show that there are five syntactic patterns used in Yes-No questions and six syntactic patterns in WH questions. These patterns reflect variations in the structure of sentence elements, such as the position of the subject, predicate, and question particles, both for yes-no answers and specific information. This research is expected to contribute to understanding the structure and function of interrogative sentences in the Lio language.

Keywords: Syntactical Patterns; Interrogative sentences; Lio Language; Syntax.

POLA SINTAKSIS KALIMAT INTEROGATIF DALAM BAHASA LIO

ABSTRAK. Penelitian ini berfokus pada pola sintaksis dalam kalimat tanya bahasa Lio, bahasa Lio merupakan bahasa daerah yang termasuk dalam rumpun bahasa Austronesia dan memiliki sekitar 200.000 hingga 250.000 penutur yang tersebar di wilayah-wilayah seperti Detusoko, Wolowaru, Maurole, dan Ndona. Bahasa ini memainkan peran penting dalam kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat Lio, baik dalam konteks komunikasi informal maupun tradisional. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis pola sintaksis dalam dua jenis pertanyaan, yaitu pertanyaan *Yes-No* dan pertanyaan *WH*. Kajian ini menggunakan teori struktur kalimat yang dikemukakan oleh Brown dan Miller (1991) untuk memahami elemen-elemen dalam kalimat dan hubungan antarkomponennya. Metode deskriptif kualitatif diterapkan untuk mengamati dan menganalisis data kalimat tanya yang diperoleh dari penutur asli bahasa Lio. Hasil analisis menunjukkan adanya lima pola sintaksis yang digunakan dalam pertanyaan *Yes-No* dan enam pola sintaksis pada pertanyaan *WH*. Pola-pola tersebut mencerminkan variasi struktur elemen kalimat, seperti posisi subjek, predikat, dan partikel tanya, baik untuk jawaban ya-tidak maupun informasi spesifik. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi dalam memahami struktur dan fungsi kalimat interogatif dalam bahasa Lio.

Kata kunci: Struktur Kalimat; Kalimat Tanya; Bahasa Lio; Sintaksis

INTRODUCTION

Lio language is one of the regional languages in Indonesia, spoken by the Lio ethnic group who primarily inhabit the Ende Regency on Flores Island, East Nusa Tenggara Province. This language belongs to the Austronesian language family, specifically the Central Malayo-Polynesian branch, which includes many languages from eastern Indonesia. As a regional language still actively spoken by its community, Lio plays a significant role in daily communication, cultural practices, and oral traditions. However, like many other regional languages in Indonesia, Lio faces the threat of declining numbers of speakers

due to the dominance of Indonesian in education and modern life (Michael C. Ewing, 2014.). Therefore, linguistic studies on the Lio language are crucial for its preservation and development. The Lio language has a long history closely tied to the social and cultural life of the Lio people. The Lio ethnic group is known as one of the indigenous groups of Flores, with a rich tradition and a language that reflects their unique identity. This language is primarily spoken in Ende Regency, including areas such as Detusoko, Wolowaru, Maurole, Nangapanda, and Ndona. ([https://petabahasa.kemdikbud.go.id/infobahasa2.php?idb=271&idp=Nusa%20Tenggara%20Timur.](https://petabahasa.kemdikbud.go.id/infobahasa2.php?idb=271&idp=Nusa%20Tenggara%20Timur)) Additionally, the Lio language is used in regions bordering the Ende-speaking community. While closely related to the Ende language, Lio has

significant differences in vocabulary, phonology, and sentence structure, making it a distinct language. According to available data, the Lio language is estimated to have around 200,000 to 250,000 speakers (Ni Made Suryati, et al., 2012). Most of the speakers are rural inhabitants who still use Lio as their primary language for daily communication. In formal contexts, such as education and government, Indonesian is dominant, but Lio remains the primary means of communication in informal and cultural contexts. However, the vitality of the language is increasingly threatened, especially among younger generations who tend to use Indonesian more frequently in school and in interactions with modern media.

Phonologically, the Lio language has a relatively simple sound system. It contains five basic vowels: /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/. Its consonant system includes common sounds such as /p/, /t/, /k/, /m/, /n/, /s/, and /l/, while sounds like /f/ and /v/ are rarely used. The syllable structure in Lio is generally simple, with a dominant CV (consonant-vowel) pattern. Morphologically, the Lio language exhibits agglutinative and isolating characteristics. The use of affixes such as prefixes and suffixes is limited, but reduplication is frequently used to convey specific meanings, such as intensity or plurality. For example, the word *nuru* (bright) can become *nuru-nuru* (very bright). Additionally, the Lio language has a system of pronouns that includes forms for the first, second, and third persons, both singular and plural. In terms of syntax, the Lio language generally follows a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order as its basic structure, although variations can be found in specific contexts, especially in traditional language or poetry. (Ni Made Suryati, et al., 2012). Interrogative sentences in Lio primarily consist of two types: Yes-No questions and WH-questions. The syntactic patterns of both types of questions show the language's flexibility in arranging sentence elements.

The Lio language is not only a tool for communication but also serves as a medium for expressing cultural values and traditions. In ceremonial contexts, such as the *peo* (traditional ritual), the Lio language is used to convey prayers, chants, and oral stories. The oral tradition in Lio includes various folktales, regional songs, and wise sayings passed down through generations. The use of Lio in cultural ceremonies highlights its crucial role in maintaining the community's cultural identity.

The purposes of the study were to find types of interrogative sentences and to analyse their syntactical patterns found in Lio language. The study used the theory by Brown and Miller (1991) about sentence

structures. According to Brown and Miller (1991: 11), there are four ways to represent the constituent structures namely, using bracketing, labelled and bracketed, tree diagram, and vine diagram. This study used labelled to analyse the sentence structure of interrogative sentences. They also stated that the declarative sentence is related to the interrogative sentence, and to change the declarative sentence into an interrogative sentence is by moving the wh-word to the middle and the end of the sentence. The study chose this topic because Lio language was interesting to analyse the structure which was a little different or has a uniqueness from other language in general.

There were some previous studies reviewed which are related to Lio language. (Eka, Erlina Intantiana, et al., 2023.). From this study it can be seen that: (1). There are 5 types of vowels, namely; a, I, u, e, o in Lio and English, (2) there are 20 types of consonants in Lio b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s,t,w and 24 consonants in English, namely; B,C,D,F,G,H,J,K,L,M,N,P,Q,R,S,T,V,W,X,Y,Z. (3) The difference between the two languages lies in the sound of speech and consonants. Different consonants are: consonants q, y, z, x, which exist in Lio besides that there are changes in pronunciation sounds in English vowels and consonants while in Lio language there can be no sound changes in both vowels and consonants. (4) The similarities between the two languages are vowels of both languages and some consonants (Serlin, Maria Floriana, et al., 2021.) The study indicates that in the kinship relations based on descent (direct lineage) in the Lio language community of Ende Regency, there are 16 terms of address, namely: *Ema, Ine, Babo, Mamo, Eda, No'o, Weta, Nara, Ka'e, Aji, Ana mamo, Ana embu, Ame du'a, Ine du'a, Ame Lo'o, and Ine Lo'o*. Furthermore, there are 13 terms of address related to marriage-based kinship in the Lio speech community, which include: *Ema (tu'a), Ine (tu'a), Ana tu'a, Ane, Tata/fai eda, No'o, Haki no'o, Weta, Nara, Ka'e, Aji, Ipa, and Eja*. (Halim, Rahmatia A. 2016). This research shows that in the Ende-Lio language in Flores, NTT, there are indeed homonymous words that are in the form of root words commonly used in daily communication. The study includes a total of 52 words, with each representing the Ende-Lio language. These homonymous words are used the same way by both Ende and Lio speakers, though there are slight variations in Lio. The research identified 104 different meanings in total. These homonyms are ambiguous when standing alone without a sentence context. (Rini, Maria Magdalena, et al., 2021.). The study found that in the Mego dialect of Lio, there are two types of terms of address: kinship

and non-kinship terms. Kinship terms are divided into direct (blood) relations and indirect (marriage) relations. Non-kinship terms are grouped into five categories: terms based on occupation, traditional terms, religious terms, age-based terms, and terms based on social status.

The main distinction is that while previous studies like Serlin, Maria Floriana, et al., 2021., Halim, Rahmatia A. 2016., and Eka, E. I. (2023), concentrate on aspects like vocabulary, homonyms, kinship terms, and phonology, this research fills an important gap by focusing on the syntactic structure of interrogative sentences in Lio, a topic that has not been explored in detail in these studies. This research brings a focused, syntactic analysis of question formation in Lio, specifically addressing the placement of question words and how they interact with sentence elements. This adds a valuable layer of understanding to the broader body of research on Lio.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative method to investigate the syntactical patterns of interrogative sentences in the Lio language. The primary goal is to describe how Yes-No and WH questions are structured in Lio by focusing on data collected through direct observation and translation. The informants were carefully selected based on age and occupation, ensuring that they possess a functional proficiency in both Lio and Indonesian, which is essential for the accuracy of the translation task. The informants ranged in age from 18 to 60 years to cover a broad spectrum of linguistic experience, with younger informants providing insight into the contemporary use of language, while older informants contributed to a more traditional understanding of Lio syntax.

Data collection involved two main techniques: observation and translation. Initially, the socio-cultural context of the informants was observed, with particular attention to their linguistic environment and usage of Lio in everyday conversation. Following this, the informants were asked to translate 30 interrogative sentences written in Indonesian into Lio. These sentences were crafted to represent a variety of question types (Yes-No and WH questions), providing a comprehensive sample of how interrogative structures function in Lio. Once the data were collected, the next step was to analyze the syntactical patterns by first reading the Lio translations and then translating these sentences into English for comparative analysis. This process allowed the researcher to identify patterns in sentence

structure, focusing specifically on the placement of question words (in WH questions) and the overall structure of Yes-No questions. By examining how these structures differ from standard declarative sentences, the study aims to reveal key syntactic characteristics of the Lio language. The analysis also involved identifying linguistic evidence related to the morpho-syntactic features of interrogative sentences, such as word order, intonation, and the use of question particles in the language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Syntactical pattern of Yes-No question of Lio language

The first syntactical pattern of the interrogative sentence in Lio language is the Yes and No questions. Look at the following sentences:

- Apakah kamu makan nasi di rumah kemarin?

1. Pattern I

Kau ka are gheasa'omeremai?

You eat rice at home yesterday?

Subject verb object adv.place adv.time

Did you eat rice at home yesterday?

The sentence “*Apakah kamu makan nasi di rumah kemarin?*” consists of subject that stands in the front of the sentence, verb stand after the subject, followed by the object and an adverb.

2. Pattern II

Ka are kau gheasa'omeremai?

Eat rice you at home yesterday?

V O S adv.place adv.time

Did you eat rice at home yesterday?

The sentence “*Apakah kamu makan nasi di rumah kemarin?*” consists of verb that stand in the front of the sentence which follow by object, subject and verb.

3. Pattern III

Are kau ka gheasa'omeremai?

Rice you eat at home yesterday?

O S V adv.place adv.time

Did you eat rice at home yesterday?

The sentence “*Apakah kamu makan nasi di rumah kemarin?*” the object stands in front of the sentence and followed by subject, verb and adverb.

4. Pattern VI

Meremai kau ka are gheasa'o?

yesterday you eat rice at home?

Adv.time subject verb object adv.place

The pattern shows the position of adverb of

place in the front of the sentence followed by subject, verb, object and adverb of time.

5. Pattern V

Meremai ka are kau gheasa'o?
 Yesterday eat rice you di rumah?
 Adv.time verb object subject adv.place

The last pattern shows the position of adverb of time in front of the sentence followed by the verb, object, subject and adverb of place.

Seeing the sentence patterns above, there are some points to be stated. In general, the yes – no question of Lio language is marked by the phonological features and syntactic feature. Phonological feature shows the interrogative sentence with rising the intonation of vocal speech. Syntactical feature shows the interrogative sentence by using yes – no questions to mark the order of the words structures.

In Lio, *Yes-No* questions are formed using a particular word order, which can include flexible positions of the subject, object, and adverbs (place and time). The verb “ka”, which means “eat” here, appears after the subject, marking the action of eating in the question.

In Lio, *Yes-No* questions are formed using a particular word order, which can include flexible positions of the subject, object, and adverbs (place and time). The verb “ka”, which means “eat” here, appears after the subject, marking the action of eating in the question. Key phonological marker of the interrogative structure. The rising intonation at the end of the sentence signals to the listener that the sentence is a question, asking for confirmation or denial. The word order follows the *Subject-Verb-Object-Adv. Place-Adv. Time* structure, where “ka” (eat) is the main verb. It does not function as a question marker but as the main verb in the interrogative sentence. The question marker in this case comes from the intonation rather than a separate particle. In this pattern, the focus is placed on the verb (“ka”) and the adverbs (“gheasa'o” and “meremai”), which follow the object. The flexibility seen in this sentence structure also illustrates the variation in the syntax of *Yes-No* questions in Lio, allowing different arrangements of the subject, verb, object, and adverbs. The position of adverbs (such as time and place) can shift to emphasize certain elements of the sentence.

There are four syntactical structures for the sentence “*apakah kamu makan nasi di rumah kemarin?*” as seen as follows:

“*kamu bisa makan nasi di rumah kemarin?*”

1. Pattern I

Kau ngala ka are gheasa'o meremai?

You could eat rice at home yesterday
 S modal V obj adv.place adv.time

This sentence is a variation of the previous example “*Kau ka are gheasa'o meremai?*” (Did you eat rice at home yesterday?). The main difference in Pattern I is the use of the modal verb “ngala” (could), which introduces a possibility or ability to perform the action. In this sentence, we observe a shift in the syntactic structure compared to the previous examples. In Pattern I, the modal verb “ngala” precedes the main verb “ka” (eat). The word order follows this sequence: Subject (S) + Modal Verb (V) + Main Verb (V) + Object (O) + Adverb of Place (Adv. Place) + Adverb of Time (Adv. Time). This pattern shows how a modal verb such as “ngala” (could) can be incorporated into the sentence, allowing for a possibility rather than a simple Yes-No question. “Kau” (You) remains the subject, “ngala” expresses the modal (could), “ka” is the main verb (eat), and the object (“are” - rice), along with adverbs of place and time, follow the basic order of a declarative sentence but are structured into a question. The presence of the modal verb “ngala” introduces the idea of ability or permission, which shifts the tone of the question compared to a simple Yes-No question. This syntactical change is important in forming interrogative sentences that seek to confirm not just the occurrence of an event, but its possibility or feasibility.

2. Pattern II

Ngala kau ka are gheasa'o meremai?
 Could you eat rice at home yesterday?
 Modal subject verb object adv. Place adv. Time

This pattern is another variation of a Yes-No question, but with the modal verb at the beginning. This structure follows the pattern: Modal + Subject + Verb + Object + Adverb of Place + Adverb of Time. The structure in Pattern II emphasizes the positioning of the modal verb “ngala” at the front of the sentence. This differs from the Pattern I structure, where the modal verb comes after the subject. The use of a modal verb at the start of the sentence transforms the question to inquire about the ability or possibility of performing the action (eating rice at home yesterday).

3. Pattern III

Ngala ka are kau gheasa'o meremai?
 Could eat rice you at home yesterday?
 Modal verb object subject adv.place adv.time

The main feature in Pattern III is the shift in the typical subject-verb-object order. The modal verb still precedes the main verb, but here the object comes

before the subject. This word order is unconventional and provides an interesting syntactic variation in the construction of Yes-No questions in Lio. Pattern III demonstrates the flexibility of word order in Yes-No questions in Lio. The modal verb “ngala” remains at the beginning of the sentence, followed by the main verb, object, subject, and adverbs. This word order offers an alternative to the more common subject-verb-object structure and highlights the syntactic flexibility of the language structure and intonation in forming interrogative sentences.

4. Pattern IV

Are kau kangalagheasa'o meremai?
Rice you eat could at home yesterday?
Object subject verb modal adv.place adv.time

Pattern IV demonstrates another variant of word order in Yes-No questions in Lio. By placing the object at the beginning of the sentence, this pattern creates a structure that emphasizes the object in the question. The modal verb follows the verb, and the adverbs of place and time are added at the end. The rising intonation remains a crucial phonological feature, marking the sentence as an interrogative. This flexibility in word order reflects the syntactic richness of Lio language, allowing speakers to adjust the structure of interrogative sentences to convey different nuances.

2. Syntactical Patterns of WH questions of Lio language

WH questions is the one that needs the answer in terms of giving information. There are at least nine different types of such questions. The second syntactical patterns of interrogative sentence that shows in the data below:

a. Apa “what”

Pattern I

- Kamu makan apa di rumah kemarin?, (What did you eat at home yesterday?)

Kau ka apa gheasa'o meremai?
You eat what at home yesterday?
Subject verb QW adv.place adv.time

In this pattern, *apa* directly follows the verb, emphasizing the action before introducing the object of inquiry. This order aligns with typical subject-verb-object-adverb syntax in declarative sentences, with *apa* replacing the object.

Pattern II

Ka apa kau gheasa'o meremai?
Eat what you at home yesterday?
Verb QW subject adv. Placeadv. Time

In this sentence pattern above the position of questions word “apa” comes after the verb “ka” and

followed with the subject, adverb of place and adverb of time.

Pattern III

Ghea sa'omeremai kau ka apa?
At home yesterday you eat what?
Adv. Placeadv.time subject verb QW

In this sentence pattern above the position of question word “apa” stands in the end of the sentence after the verb “ka”.

Pattern IV

Ghea sa'omeremaika apa kau?
At homeyesterdayeat what you?
Adv.placeadv.timeverb QW subject

In this sentence pattern above the position of questions word “apa” stands in the middle of the sentence after the verb “ka”.

Pattern V

Meremai kau ka apa gheasa'o
Yesterday you eat what at home
Adv.time subject verb QW adv.place

In this sentence pattern above the position of question word “apa” stands in the middle of the sentence after the verb “ka”.

In Lio language WH question word “apa” in the data above always followed by a verb.

b. O Emba (which)

“yang mana jagung kamu (Which one is your corn?)”

Pattern I

O emba jawa kau?
Which corn you
QW object subject

In the sentence above the position of question word “o emba” or which is stands in the front of the sentence and is followed by the object and subject.

Pattern II

Jawa kau o emba?
Corn you which?
Object subject QW

In the sentence above the questions word “o emba” stands in the end of the sentence after the subject “kau”.

In Lio language there are two syntactical patterns for question word which “ oemba”. “O emba” is use to make a choice.

c. Pa emba (where)

“Di mana kamu tinggal? (where do you live?)”

Pattern I

Pa emba kau mera?

Where you live?
 QW subject verb
 Pattern II
 Kau mera pa emba?
 You live where?
 Subject verb QW

Based on the syntactic patterns displayed, the usage of *pa emba* (where) as a question word in Lio language exhibits two primary structures. Pattern I *Pa emba* (where) serves as the question word, positioned at the beginning of the sentence, followed by the subject (*kau* - you) and the predicate (*mera* - live). While Pattern II *Pa emba* (where) is positioned at the end of the sentence, following the subject (*kau* - you) and the predicate (*mera* - live). The question word *pa emba* is utilized to inquire about location or place. Its position can be at the beginning or the end of the sentence without altering the core meaning, though there is a difference in nuance or emphasis

a. Mbanaemba (where)

“Kemana kamu pergi kemarin? (where did you go yesterday?)”

Pattern I

Kau mbana emba meremai?
 You where y esterday?
 Subject QW adverb time

Pattern II

Mbana emba kau meremai?
 Where you yesterday?
 QW subject adv. of time

Pattern III

Meremai kau mbanaemba?
 Yesterday you where?
 Adverb of time subject QW

Pattern IV

Meremai mbanaemba kau
 Yesterday where you
 Adverb of time QW subject

The fourth sentences patterns above shows the position of question word “*mbanaemba*” in the front, middle and in the end of the sentence and is followed with the subject. In Lio language there are four syntactical pattern for “*mbanaemba*” which is used to provide information about the destination.

b. Sai “who”

“siapa yang makan nasi kemarin? (who ate rice yesterday)”

Pattern I

Sai ka are meremai?

Who eat rice yesterday?
 QW verb object adverb of time
 Pattern II

Are sai ka meremai?
 Rice who eat yesterday?
 Object QW verb adverb of time

Pattern III

Meremai sai ka are?
 Yesterday who eat rice?
 Adv. of time QW verb object

Pattern IV

Meremai are sai ka?
 Yesterday rice who eat
 Adverb of time verb object QW

The fourth sentences patterns above shows the position of question word “*sai*” in the front, middle and in the end of the sentence and is followed with the verb “*ka*”. In Lio language there are four syntactical pattern for interrogative question “*soi*” which is used to provide information about the person.

c. Wengi (When)

“kapankamumakan nasi di makanrestoran? (when did you eat rice in the restaurant?)”

Pattern I

Wengi kau ka are ghealosme?
 When you eat rice in restaurant
 QW subject verb object adv. Of place

Pattern II

Kau ka arewengi ghealosme?
 You eat rice when in restaurant?
 Subject verb object QW adv. of time

The two sentences pattern above shows the position of question word “*wengi*” in the front, middle and in the end of the sentence and is followed with the subject and object. In Lio language there are two syntactical patterns for “*wengi*” which is used to provide information about the destination.

d. O sai (Whose)

“rumahsiapa ini? (whose house is this?)”

Pattern I

Sa’o o saina?
 House who’s this
 Object QW

Pattern II

Na sa’o o sai?
 This house whose?
 Object QW

The two sentences above shows the position

of question word “*o sai*” in the front and in the end of the sentence and is followed with the object. In Lio language there are two syntactical patterns for “*o sai*” which is used to provide information about the ownership.

e. Ngai tau apa (why)

“mengapa kamu menangis di pasar kemarin? (why did you cry in the market yesterday?)”

Pattern I

Ngai tau apa kau ke ghearega meremai?
 why you cry in market yesterday?
 QW subject verb adv.place adv.time

Pattern II

Kau kengai tau apa ghearega meremai?
 You cry why in market yesterday?
 Subject verb QW adv.place adv.time

Pattern III

Meremai ghea rega kauke ngai tau apa?
 Yesterday in market youcrywhy?
 Adv.timeadv.place subject verb QW

Pattern IV

Meremai ghearega ngai tau apakauke?
 Yesterday in market why you cry
 Adv.timeadv.place QW subject verb

The fourth interrogative sentences above show the position of question word “*ngai tau apa*” stands in the front, middle and in the end of the sentence and is followed by the subject, adverb and verb. There are four syntactical patterns for question word “*ngai tau apa*” in Lio language and is used to asked about reason.

f. Ngereemba (how)

“bagaimana kau mencuci pakaian di sungai? (how did you wash the dress in the river?)”

Pattern I

Ngereemba kau teba lambu ghealowo ae?
 How you wash dress in river?
 QW subject verb object adv.place

Pattern II

Kau teba lambu ngereemba ghealowo ae
 You wash dress how in river?
 S V O QW adv.place

Pattern III

Ghea lowo ae kau teba lambu ngereemba?
 In river you wash dress how?
 Adv.place subject verb object QW

Pattern IV

Ghea lowo ae ngereemba kau teba lambu?

In river how you wash dress?
 Adv.place QW subject verb object

The fourth interrogative sentences above shows the question word “*ngereemba*” stands in the front, middle and in the end of the sentences and is followed by subject and object. There are four interrogative sentence for the questions word “*ngereemba*”.

CONCLUSION

The research of interrogative constructions in the Lio language reveals a complex and dynamic system of syntactic structures that distinguish yes-no and WH-questions. Yes-no questions are characterized by phonological features, such as rising intonation, and syntactic variations, including flexible word order and the strategic positioning of modals and adverbs to emphasize different elements of the question. In contrast, WH-questions employ a range of question words, each exhibiting unique syntactic patterns. These patterns demonstrate a high degree of structural flexibility, with WH-words appearing at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence, depending on the desired focus or sentence intent. For instance, the WH-word *apa* (what) often follows the subject and verb, while *pa emba* (where) typically appears at the sentence’s start to emphasize the location. Similarly, other WH-words like *sai* (who) and *wengi* (when) also adapt their placement to the context, reflecting the speaker’s focus and intent.

The interplay between syntactic in both question types underscores the Lio language’s linguistic richness. Yes-no questions rely on intonation and constituent reordering to create meaning, while WH-questions depend on the strategic use of question words and their syntactic flexibility. Together, these features demonstrate how Lio speakers use syntax structure to convey emphasis and clarity in interrogative sentences. This research contributes significantly to our understanding of the Lio language and its typological characteristics within Austronesian languages. The findings highlight the importance of examining lesser-studied languages to uncover unique linguistic patterns and broaden our understanding of human language diversity.

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