



**A SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES IN
COLLEEN HOOVER'S *REMINDERS OF HIM***

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Abstract

This syntactic analysis aimed to shed light on the constructions and the functions of interrogative sentences found in the novel *Reminders of Him*. This research is qualitative. The writers collected data from the novel *Reminders of Him* using non-participant observation (Suwartono, 2014). The data were analyzed using a distributional method (Sudaryanto, 2015; Mahsun, 2017). The findings of this research principally support the categories of constructions and functions of interrogative sentences set out by Greenbaum & Nelson (2012) and Seaton & Mew (2007). The researchers found; 278 wh-constructions, 204 yes/no question constructions, 65 declarative constructions, 6 alternative constructions, 3 tag constructions, 2 rhetorical constructions, and 133 incomplete sentences. The writers also found 316 interrogative sentences function to ask for information, 307 to ask for agreement, 57 to confirm something, and 11 functions to give options.

Keywords: syntactic analysis, interrogative sentence, construction, function

I. INTRODUCTION

Based on syntactic properties, sentences can be classified into four types. One of the four types is an interrogative sentence. According to Burton-Roberts (2016, p.131), an interrogative sentence asks a question or requests information and ends with a question mark.

Interrogative sentences are very significant parts of the way people talk to others. People use them to collect information and clear up confusion. People also use them to ask for confirmation or alternatives, among others.

The centrality of interrogative sentences in human life triggered the writers to analyze the constructions and the functions of interrogative sentences. The interrogative sentences analyzed are from the novel whose title is *Remember of Him* by Colleen Hoover.

The novel entitled *Reminders of Him* by Colleen Hoover was chosen to be a data source. The novel contains many data needed. The novel tells a romance story about a young woman who has been released from prison after a tragic accident and is fighting for custody of her daughter.

The objectives of this research are as follows. The first objective is to

discover how interrogative sentences found in the novel *Reminders of Him* are constructed. The second one is to find out the functions of interrogative sentences in the novel *Reminders of Him*. Moreover, the writers hope that this study can make positive contribution to developing knowledge related to the field of linguistics.

The writers used the theory set out by Greenbaum & Nelson to analyze the constructions of interrogative sentences. According to them, there are six types of interrogative sentence constructions. There are yes/no construction, wh-construction, declarative construction, alternative construction, tag construction, and rhetorical construction.

To analyze the functions of interrogative sentences, the writers refer to the theories mentioned by Greenbaum & Nelson (2002) and Seaton & Mew (2007). Greenbaum & Nelson (2002) stated that there are two functions of interrogative sentences. The two functions are to confirm something and to give choices. Meanwhile, Seaton & Mew (2007) add two functions of interrogative sentences. The two functions are to get information and to ask for agreement.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

An interrogative sentence is essential to learn because it is used to ask for specific information that people require in communication. It is an essential component of how we communicate with one another. Interrogative sentences are used to solicit feedback from others and invite them to share their thoughts. Interrogative sentences are also used to obtain information. We cannot obtain clear information without the use of an interrogative sentence because if we are unsure about the information, we must ask for more time by using an interrogative sentence. We need an interrogative sentence as a communication tool to ensure that we know something important.

Greenbaum and Nelson (2002) classified interrogative sentences into six types of questions. The first type of interrogative sentence construction is yes/no interrogative. Yes/no interrogative is a type of interrogative construction that is frequently used in both written and spoken language. Because there are only two possible responses, yes/no interrogatives are also known as closed questions.

The second type of interrogative sentence is a *wh*-question. This interrogative sentence is called *wh*-interrogative since most interrogative

sentences begin with *wh*-words *what*, *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *why*, *where*, *when*, and *how* (*plus in combination with how, such as how much*). The third construction is declarative interrogative construction. Declarative interrogative sentences have the form of a declarative sentence but the force of a question.

The fourth is alternative interrogative construction. Alternative interrogatives present two or more choices and the hearer is expected to reply with one of them. The fifth construction of interrogative is the tag question. The tag question begins with the statement and is followed by the tag question. If the statement is positive, the question tag is negative, and if the statement is negative, then the question tag is positive (Rossiter, 2021, p.136).

The sixth construction is rhetorical question construction. Rhetorical questions do not expect a reply since they are the equivalent of forceful statements. If the rhetorical question is positive it has a negative force, and if it is negative it has a positive force.

An interrogative sentence is used to perform the function of a question. Seaton & Mew (2007, p. 147) argue that there are two functions of an interrogative sentence based on its construction; for seeking information and asking agreement. Additionally,

Greenbaum & Nelson (2002, p.121) mentioned two functions of interrogative based on its constructions; to get confirmation, and to give an alternative.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

As indicated in the introduction, the data for this research were from the novel *Reminders of Him* by Colleen Hoover. In line with (Cresswell, 2009, p.175), the writers, as the key instrument, employed non-participant observation as the method for collecting the data.

The data collected were analyzed by using the intra-lingual method as stated by Mahsun (2017, p.120). The data of the interrogative sentences taken from the novel '*Reminders of Him*' were observed and classified according to their constructions. The functions of the interrogative sentences were also observed and classified. These two activities led to the description of the constructions and the functions of the interrogative sentences in the novel *Reminders of Him*.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Interrogative Sentence

Constructions

As discussed in the review of

literature, according to Greenbaum & Nelson (2022), there are six types of interrogative sentence construction. The six types are yes/no construction, wh-construction, declarative construction, alternative construction, tag construction, and rhetorical construction. After collecting all of the data, the writer analyzed them and found 691 utterances included in interrogative sentences in the novel *Reminders of Him*. To avoid excessive discussion of the data, the writers discussed only one utterance of each type.

4.1.1 Yes/No Construction

The researcher found 205 interrogative sentences belonging to yes/no questions in terms of construction. The 205 interrogative sentences fall into seven types. One of the seven types is the SV pattern, 18 sentences found belong to this type. An example of the interrogative sentence that has a basic pattern SV is presented in (1)

(1) *Are you laughing?*

Data (1) has the basic pattern SV. The subject (S) and the main verb (V) are the core elements of this sentence. The subject 'you' represents the noun to fill in the NP slot. This pronoun does not allow a modifier or determiner. The main verb which is in the -ing form 'laughing' does not allow an NP to function as the object. However, it requires the auxiliary verb

'are', which agrees in person and number with the subject 'you'. To obey the rule of grammar for a yes/no question, the auxiliary verb 'are' is moved to the complementizer position which functions as a complement in a sentence, before the noun 'you' that functions as the subject.

The second type is the SVO pattern, 39 sentences found in the novel belong to this type. An example of interrogative sentences which has a basic pattern SVO is presented in (2)

(2) *Did you remember our anniversary?*

Data (2) has the basic pattern SVO. The subject (S), the main verb (V), and the object (O) are the core elements of this sentence. The subject 'you' represents the noun to fill in the NP slot. This pronoun does not allow a modifier or determiner. The main verb 'remember' needs an NP functioning as the object. The object is filled by NP 'our anniversary' which is built by the noun 'anniversary' and pre-modifier 'our' as possessive. To obey the rule of grammar of yes/no questions, the dummy auxiliary 'did' is put in the complementizer position, before the subject.

The third type of yes/no question construction found is SVOO, 8 sentences found in the novel *Reminders of Him* belong to this type. An example

of the interrogative sentences which has a basic pattern SVOO is presented in (3).

(3) *Can you tell me where I can find a pay phone?*

Data (3) has the basic pattern SVOO. The subject (S), the verb (V), the indirect object (O), and the direct object (O) are the core elements of this sentence. The subject 'you' represents the noun to fill in the NP slot. This pronoun does not allow a modifier or determiner. The main verb 'tell' is a ditransitive verb that needs two objects. The first object functioning as the indirect object is filled by the pronoun 'me'. The second object functions as direct object that is filled by the sentence 'where I can find a pay phone'. To obey the rule of grammar for yes/no questions, the modal auxiliary 'can' is added in front of the sentence and ends with a question mark.

The fourth type of yes/no question construction found is SVA, 35 sentences found in the novel *Reminders of Him* belong to this type. An example of interrogative sentences which has a basic pattern SVA is presented in (4).

(4) *Are you waiting for someone else?*

Data (4) has the basic pattern SVA. The subject (S), the verb (V), and the adverbial (A) function as complement are the core elements of this sentence. The subject 'you' represents the noun to fill in the NP slot. This pronoun does not allow a modifier or determiner. The main verb

which is in the –ing form ‘waiting’ allows a PP to function as an adverbial complement. The slot of PP is filled by **te** ‘for someone else’ prepositional phrase. However, it requires the auxiliary verb ‘are’, which agrees in person and number with the subject ‘you’. To obey the rule of grammar for yes/no questions, the auxiliary ‘are’ is moved to the complementizer position, before the noun ‘you’ that functions as the subject.

The fifth type of yes/no question construction found is SVC, 59 sentences found in the novel *Reminders of Him* belong to this type. One of the interrogative sentences which has a basic pattern SVC is presented in data (5).

(5) *Are they drunk?*

Data (5) has the basic pattern SVC. The subject (S), the verb (V), and the complement (C) are the core elements of this sentence. The subject ‘they’ represents the noun to fill in the NP slot. This pronoun does not allow modifiers or determiners. The auxiliary verb ‘are’ is moved to the complementizer position, before the noun ‘you’ functioning as subject to obey the rule of grammar for yes/no question. Afterward, the slot of complement is filled by the adjective ‘drunk’ functioning as a subject

complement. It is ended by a question mark.

The sixth type of yes/no question construction found is SVOA, 25 sentences found in the novel *Reminders of Him* belong to this type. One of the sentences is presented in data (6).

(6) *Can you put Ledger in his tank so he doesn't get lost?*

Data (6) has the basic pattern SVOA. The subject (S), the verb (V), the object (O), and the adverbial (A) are the main elements of this sentence. The subject ‘you’ represents the noun to fill in the NP slot. This pronoun does not allow a modifier or determiner. The main verb ‘put’ is a kind of transitive verb which needs an object. The object of this sentence is filled by the pronoun ‘Ledger’ which does not allow a modifier or determiner. It is continued by PP ‘in his tank so he doesn’t get lost’ as adverbial in this sentence. To obey the rule of the grammar of yes/no questions, the modal auxiliary is put in **te** complementizer position, before the noun ‘you’ that functions as the subject. The seventh construction of **te** yes/no interrogative sentence found is SVOC, 20 sentences found in the novel *Reminders of Him*. One of them is discussed in (7).

(7) *Did you get served with the restraining order this week?*

Data (7) has the basic pattern SVOC. The subject (S), the verb (V), the object

(O), and the complement (C) are the obligatory elements of this sentence. The subject 'you' represents the noun to fill in the NP slot. This pronoun does not allow a modifier and determiner. The main verb which is 'get' is transitive verb needs an object. The object is filled by the noun 'served' functioning as an object and continued by PP 'with the restraining order this week' functioning as an object complement. To obey the rule of grammar for a yes/no question, the dummy auxiliary verb 'did' is added in front of the sentence in the complementizer position, before the noun 'you' as the subject. The sentence is ended by a question mark.

4.1.2 Wh-Construction

Wh-interrogative construction is used to ask for a specific answer or complete information. According to Greenbaum & Nelson (2012, p.121), wh-construction is formed by wh-words or question words at the beginning of the sentence. Wh-construction has 3 basic constructions. The first one is begun with the wh-word + main verb + subject. The second one begins with wh-word + auxiliary verb + subject. The last one begins with wh-word + noun + subject. In the novel *Reminders of Him*, the researcher

found 281 sentences belong to wh-question in terms of construction. There are seven types of question words; what, who, when, why, where, which, and how. One of them is presented in (8).

(8) *What are we going to name you?*

Data (8) is formed by wh- question word begins with the word 'what'. The structure is 'what + aux. V + N'. In the sentence, the wh-word is followed by the auxiliary verb 'are' functioning as a complement. This auxiliary is a marker of present tense indicating an activity that verb in progress is called 'present continuous tense'. The subject is filled by the noun 'we' followed by VP which is built by the main verb 'going' while 'ing' indicates that the verb is in progress and prepositional phrase (PP) 'to name you' and it is last by question mark.

The following is the interrogative sentence form by using the wh-word 'who'

(9) *Who took you home after the wreck?*

The question word 'who' is used to ask for a subject. This question word is followed by the verb 'took' that is used for activities done in the past of taking then followed by the noun 'you' functioning as an object. Afterward, the sentence continued by NP that is built by the noun 'home' function as object complement and prepositional phrase (PP) 'after the wreck'.

The question word 'why' is used to ask a reason. The researcher found 56 interrogative sentences begin with the word 'why' in the novel *Reminders of Him*. The interrogative sentence using the wh-word 'why' will be discussed in the data (10).

(10) *Why do I always make the worst decision?*

According to Greenbaum & Nelson, data (10) is wh-construction begins with the wh-word 'why'. The word 'why' is used to ask for reason. It is followed by the auxiliary 'do' function as a helping verb filled in the position of complementizer. The subject is filled by the noun 'I' and followed by an adverbial clause. The adverbial phrase is built by the adverbial 'always', the main verb 'make', and the noun phrase 'the worst decision' function as an object.

4.1.3 Declarative Construction

In the novel *Reminders of Him*, the researcher found 63 sentences belonging to declarative questions in terms of construction. Declarative interrogative sentences have the form of declarative sentences but the force of a question. They are signaled by a rising intonation in speech and by a question mark in writing. One of them

is presented in data (11).

(11) *You think this is funny?*

Data 11 shows that there is also a question mark that signs the sentence as an interrogative sentence in written language.

An interrogative sentence constructed by declarative constructed begins with the noun 'you' as a subject, followed by the verb 'think' function as a predicate, followed by the pronoun 'this' and the verb 'is' and followed by the adjective 'funny' function as object adverbial, it ended by a question mark.

4.1.4 Tag Construction

In the novel *Reminders of Him*, the researcher found three sentences belonging to yes/no questions in terms of construction. A tag question is used to ask about or confirm the information in the statement portion of the sentence structure. The form of the tag question is a contrast between the statement and the tag question. One of them is presented in data (12).

(12) *You aren't married, are you?*

Greenbaum & Nelson's theory states that the construction of a tag question begins with a statement and is followed by a question tag. The sentence above is a tag question which is begun by a negative statement and followed by a question tag. The negative statement is built by the noun 'you' that functions as a subject, followed by the auxiliary verb 'are', and added by the

negative 'not', followed by the verb 'married'. The tagquestion is built by the auxiliary 'are' and the noun 'you'.

4.1.5 Alternative Construction

In the novel *Reminders of Him*, the researcher found four sentences belonging to yes/no questions in terms of construction. An alternative interrogative sentence is used to give the listener a choice. One of them is presented in data (13).

(13) *Is Kenna concrete like Scotty was, or does she like to use her imagination?*

According to Greenbaum & Nelson's theory, Data (13) is constructed by alternative questions since the question needs the answer by choosing one of the options that the speaker gives. The sentence also consists of two interrogative sentences and a conjunction or as a mark that the sentence is an alternative question. Interrogative sentences are built by yes/no construction. The first interrogative sentence begins by auxiliary verb 'is' function as helping verb that refers to noun 'Kenna' that function as subject. It followed by Np 'concrete like Scotty was'. The second interrogative sentence is constructed by yes/no construction that begins with dummy auxiliary 'does', it is followed

by the noun 'she' function as the subject, the slot of an object filled by verb phrase 'like to use her imagination'.

4.1.6 Rhetorical Construction

In the novel *Reminders of Him*, the researcher found two sentences belonging to yes/no questions in terms of construction. Rhetorical questions do not expect a reply since they are the equivalent of forceful statements. The questions construction may resemble either *yes-no* questions or *wh-* questions. One of them is presented in data (14).

(14) *Who wouldn't appreciate a mother who would risk going back to prison just to experience one good week with their daughter?*

Data (14) is rhetorical question that is constructed by using *wh-*word 'who'. The question consists of two sentences that connect by the relative pronoun 'who' which refers to a person.

The sentence begins with the *wh-*word 'who' to ask for the subject. It is followed by the auxiliary verb *would* + *not* indicated as negative, then the verb is filled by 'appreciate' and followed noun 'mother' as the object and object complement 'who would risk going back to prison just to experience one good week with their daughter'. The interrogative sentence has a question mark at the end of the sentence.

Besides the six constructions above based on Greenbaum & Nelson's theory, the researcher found 136 interrogative sentences in the novel *Reminders of Him* which does not follow the theory. The researcher explains some of them in data (15).

(15) *Cash or card?*

In data (15) is not overtly complete as a sentence. There is no overt subject in the sentence. There is no overt verb either. In data (15), the words *cash* and *card* are nouns, but one of them functions as the subject.

4.2 Interrogative Sentence Functions

According to Seaton & Mew (2007, p.147), interrogative sentences have two functions; for seeking information and for asking agreement. Greenbaum & Nelson (2022, p.121) also cited the functions of interrogatives: to ask for confirmation and to give alternatives. In the novel *Reminders of Him*, the writers found 318 interrogative sentences function to ask for information, 307 interrogative sentences function to ask for agreement, 56 interrogative sentences function to confirm something, and 11 interrogative sentences function to

give alternatives.

4.2.1 Seeking an Information

As cited previously, in the novel *Reminders of Him*, the researcher found 318 interrogative sentences function to seek information. Interrogative sentences functioning to seek for information usually are formed by wh-words. The information is concerned with person, thing, fact, time, place, reason, manner, etc. Examples of interrogative sentences that function to seek information are mentioned in data (16) and (17).

(16) *What does worthy mean?*

(17) *Why is he saying this?*

Data (16) is an interrogative sentence beginning with the wh-word 'what'. It is usually used to ask for information about a subject or object. In the sentence, the speaker needs information about the subject. The speaker needs to know the meaning of the word 'worthy'. So, the hearer will answer the question by the meaning of the word 'worthy'. Data (17) is an interrogative sentence that begins with the wh-word 'why'. That wh-word functions to ask for a reason. The speaker asks for information about the reason why the hearer says what he said. So, the hearer will answer the question by mentioning the reason.

4.2.2 Asking an Agreement

The second function of an interrogative sentence is asking for

agreement. In the novel *Reminders of Him*, the researcher found 307 sentences belonging to interrogative sentences in terms of the function for asking an agreement. Interrogative sentence that function for asking an agreement are mentioned in data (18) and (19).

(18) *Can you go?*

(19) *Do you want to know how much you're making?*

In data (18), the interrogative sentence begins with the modal auxiliary 'can'. The speaker asks the listener can or cannot go. If the listener agrees, he will answer with 'yes'. In sentence (19), the interrogative sentence begins with a dummy auxiliary 'do'. The speaker asks for agreement about whether the listener wants to know how much the listener is making. If the hearer wants to know or agree with that, he will answer by 'yes' and if he doesn't, the answer will be 'no'.

4.2.3 Asking Confirmation

Interrogative sentences also function to confirm something. In the novel *Reminders of Him*, the researcher found 57 sentences belonging to interrogative sentence functions of asking for confirmation. It uses tag interrogative construction (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2012). The purpose of a tag question is to ask for confirmation from the listener that the statement is

correct. Interrogative sentences that function for confirmation are mentioned in data (20) and (21).

(20) *You aren't married, are you?*

(21) *You didn't hit him back, did you?*

In data (20) and (21), interrogative sentences function to ask for confirmation. In data (20), the interrogative sentence is begun with the negative statement and followed by positive tag question to confirm whether the statement true or false. The speaker wants to confirm if the hearer has been married or not yet. In data (21), the interrogative sentence is begun by negative statement and followed by positive tag question to confirm whether the statement true or false. The sentence can explain that the speaker confirms if the hearer hit 'him' back or not.

4.2.4 Giving Alternative

In the novel *Reminders of Him*, the writers found 11 sentences belonging to interrogative sentences in terms of function for giving an option. The core element that must exist in this sentence is the conjunction 'or' as a marker of the options. Two of them are presented in data (22) and (23).

(22) *Did you do this to them, or did they show up this way?*

(23) *Is Kenna concrete like Scotty was, or does she like to use her imagination?*

In data (22), the speaker stated two statements which must be chosen by the hearer. The first choice is about whether the hearer did something to others and the second choice is about whether others show up that things. So, the speaker will answer the question with one of the choices. In data (23), the speaker wants the hearer to choose one of his statement. The sentence consist of two that Kenna concrete like Scotty or Kenna is using her imagination. So, the hearer will answer the question by one of the options.

V. CONCLUSION

Six constructions of interrogatives as Greenbaum and Nelson (2022) set out were found in the novel *Reminders of Him*. The six constructions are yes/no interrogative construction, wh-interrogative construction, declarative construction, tag interrogative construction, alternative construction, and rhetorical construction. However, the writers discovered 133 interrogative sentences that are not overtly complete, in line with the principle of economy of expression.

Four functions of interrogative sentences as Greenbaum and Seaton (2022) observe were found in the novel *Reminder of Him*. First, interrogative sentences function to look for

information. Second, interrogative sentences are used to solicit agreement. Third, interrogative sentences are used to confirm something. Fourth, interrogative sentences are used to provide choices.

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