# Questions in Trial in District Court (Cyanide Coffee Case)

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to explore the types and objectives of questions in the trial of cyanide coffee cases. The method used is qualitative descriptive. The source of research data is the trial conversation of Jessica Wongso's case in the form of video recordings from the Kompas TV YouTube channel. The research corpus was drawn from four trial videos asked in 2016. Based on analytics, the use of declarative questions as the most common type is a form of strategic manipulation by lawyers by forcing the recipient to answer the question in a yes or no way without providing additional information. Second, when viewed by objective, these types of questions consist of three objectives, namely 713 or 45% of questions constructed for confirmation purposes, 603 or 38.1% of questions aimed at obtaining information, and 267 or 16.9% of questions for clarification. The confirmation objective was found to be the most widely used. It shows the existence of an imbalance of power by limiting information through the construction of questions. Thus, the process of analyzing the data of the question in the trial of the cyanide coffee case is interrelated between the type and purpose of the question.

A R T I C L E I N F O

## 1. Introduction

One of the striking facts about legal discourse is the language used. The language used in the courtroom has its own pragmatic, ideological, and discursive function (Zydervelt, 2017). The language is carried out using certain communication mechanisms that have been established as a legal genre. In general, there are two types of communication used in legal practice, namely monological and dialogical communication. Among the two types of communication, dialogical communication is more predominantly used in trials. This is because the trial is basically seen as a construction of narrative discourse, which is the discourse from at least two different perspectives (Coulthard & Johnson, 2010).

Through this narrative discourse, monological and dialogical interactions in legal activities aim to achieve justice in an effort to produce a decision, one of which is a court decision. Therefore, one of the important aspects in achieving the goal of justice is through communication (Widodo, 2019). In practice, trials often combine these two types of communication. However, dialogical communication is preferred because it allows for a more transparent and fair legal process. However, monological communication is also necessary in certain situations, for example to verify the truth based on evidence in the form of videos or documents at the time of the trial.

Like other communicative events, the act of questioning in the courtroom is a series of processes to examine and decide the case fairly based on the applicable law. This process ensures that the rights of all parties are protected. The parties involved consisted of active participants and passive participants (Sari et al., 2024). Active participants include judges, prosecutors, and legal counsel while passive participants include defendants, eyewitnesses, expert witnesses, and participants who witness

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the trial (Coulthard & Johnson, 2010). Judges, prosecutors, and legal counsel are trial participants who are active participants and have the authority to ask questions in the trial. Meanwhile, the defendant, the witness, and the expert witness only have the right to answer questions.

The parties involved during the trial must have the readiness of knowledge and in-depth analysis of the case at hand. Therefore, questions that are not allowed to be asked should not come up in the trial. However, because they are too motivated to prove the truth based on their own perspectives, sometimes active participants in the trial, especially prosecutors and lawyers, use unproductive questions that are unable to gather evidence-based information related to the criminal event being investigated. Therefore, (Milne & Bull, 2008) grouped the types of questions as a trial evaluation instrument classified based on the GQM (*Griffiths Question Map*) category consisting of (1) productive questions and (2) unproductive questions.

One of the important factors that can affect the accuracy of information in a trial is the type of questions asked, whether by the judge, legal counsel, or the public prosecutor. In other words, the accuracy of the information obtained depends on the effectiveness of the questions (Bachari, et al., 2013) (Shodell, 1995). This is because the main purpose of the trial is to investigate criminal cases to dig up information with evidentiary value. Therefore, an effective questioning strategy is needed to prove the truth of a case, the perpetrator, and the chronology of the incident. The ability of an interviewer is very important to obtain answers that may be hidden so that the truth of a case can be revealed through the right forms of questioning.

The forms of questioning in the trial basically seek to prove that a perpetrator of a crime is found guilty and admits his actions honestly. The prosecutor's questioning strategy may be different from the strategy carried out by the lawyer during the trial. It is emphasized (Luchjenbroers, 1997) that the interrogation strategy used by lawyers and prosecutors is interpreted differently from the perspective of the defense or the prosecutor. The questions asked by the prosecution tend to seek to prove that the defendant was found guilty and admitted to his actions. Meanwhile, the legal counsel's questions lead to a response that proves the defendant's innocence. Therefore, the breadth of questions is a strategy that can affect the outcome of the trial.

Among the many criminal cases in Indonesia, such as the Vina Cirebon murder case in 2016 whose end is still unclear, the trial of the Jessica Kumala Wongso case in 2016 which is still hot to this day is used as an object to be researched. Although the suspect was declared released on parole on August 18, 2024, the suspect and his legal counsel again filed a PK because they felt they were made a 'scapegoat' and did not accept the results of the verdict declaring him a suspect in the case. Because the case has not yet been settled until this research takes place, the researcher is interested in researching the construction of the question in the trial of the case. The connection of the case with forensic linguistic studies is due to the presence of linguistic evidence in the form of statements of defendants and witnesses that function as linguistic fingerprints to assist law enforcement in decision-making.

In addition, other things that are behind this research include the large influence of trial questions on the final verdict of a case. The quality or not of the questions given can also accompany an innocent person so that they are in a guilty position (Sari et al., 2024). It is undeniable that each lawyer has their own method of asking questions during the trial. However, deviations in questioning techniques will have a negative impact on the trust-accuracy relationship so that the way of questioning can sometimes reduce the confidence of witnesses, perpetrators, and victims in the trial decision which can result in a compromise of accuracy (Oxburgh et al., 2010).

In addition to affecting the details of the information obtained and the verdict of the trial, the suspect or witness will deny or give the answers as needed depending on the way of asking questions. Both the defendant and the witness will deny if the question given seems to accompany an innocent person so that he is in a guilty position (Sari et al., 2024). This is relevant to the fact that previous research found that there are still many lawyers who use questions that are not in line with the main purpose of the trial. One of them is due to different motive factors between prosecutors and defenders as has been pointed out in the research of Bruer et al., 2022 & Wylie et al., 2024 so that unproductive questions and untargeted strategies tend to be more prevalent in trials.

In fact, the questions in the courtroom are very meaningful to determine the direction of communication and confirm it as a legal fact. Based on this background, the researcher formulated this research on the topic of questions in the trial in the district court in the Jessica-Mirna case in 2016 which is still the center of discussion to this day. In addition to examining the types of questions used in the

trial, the researcher also analyzed the purpose of the questions. Although some previous studies (Hale, 2004; Coulthard & Johnson, 2010) Having clarified courtroom questions in the Western context, studies of trials in Indonesia that focus on the form of questioning as one of lawyers' strategies are still rare. Meanwhile, the purpose of the study is to identify and analyze the strategy of asking lawyers in the Indonesian courtroom through a review of the types and objectives of questions in trials.

## 2. Methods

This research is a forensic linguistic study with a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen with the aim of identifying the phenomenon of language use in trials in district courts. The data collection technique is carried out by the listening technique and the recording technique. The viewing technique was carried out on oral data, namely questions and answers in the courtroom on four downloaded trial video recordings. Meanwhile, the recording technique is used to record the data from the transcript into a data card and data recapitulation table.

The research time span starts from October 05, 2024 to May 20, 2025. This research was conducted in a virtual environment through the Kompas TV www.youtube.com/@kompastv Youtube channel  which was held at the Central Jakarta District Court. Four videos of the 2016 Cyanide Coffee trial taken from the digital media were used as data sources. The details of the trial video recordings that were used as data sources include two videos of expert witness trials, one witness trial video, and one trial video of the defendant. Methodologically, the four recordings were used as samples because they were broadcast in full from the beginning to the end of the trial. While other recordings of the trial were not found *original live streams* that were recorded in full, but only fragments of certain parts. Then, the recording is downloaded through a help website, namely *SaveFrom.net-YouTube Downloader* and then saved for follow-up at the next stage of data processing. Details of the data sources are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Data Details and Data Sources

|  | Video Caption | Duration | Download Link |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Expert witness testimony presented by the prosecutor | 01.55.45 | https://youtu.be/SFwoAeL5Ccw?si=3R LFW8N-qssLYvcb |
| 2. | Expert witness testimony presented by legal counsel | 02.40.53 | https://youtu.be/7V3DwL9NaT0?si=7eB N695hKHaK7BGS |
| 3. | Testimony of an eyewitness who is one of the defendant's friends | 01.48.17 | https://youtu.be/jXPoFY9vjl8?si=Ljs4jo 8_vmv032Be |
| 4. | Defendant's statement | 04.53.10 | https://youtu.be/tLDLD6RU9Tw?feature =shared |

Through the four recordings, data was collected in four stages based on Denscombe's theory (2008) and carried out manually, First, the researcher prepared the research data by transcribing four video recordings of the trial of witnesses, expert witnesses, and defendants (as detailed in table 1) into written form. The transcription process is carried out through *youtubetotranscript.com,* then the transcription results are downloaded in *word form*. Second, read the data repeatedly so that there are no errors when grouping the data into a data categorization table. The categorization process refers to the following theory.

Table 2. Data Categorization

| Number | Question Types | Features |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Declarative Questions | It is characterized by the form of a question that does not use a question word, but is formulated in the |

| | | form of a declarative sentence and is pronounced with an ascending intonation at the end of the sentence (Danet & Bogoch, 1980 & Aldosari, 2024). |
|---|---|---|
| 2. | Disjunctive Questions | It is characterized by the presence of the conjunction "or" as a selection conjunction in the question sentence (Danet & Bogoch, 1980 & Bongelli et al., 2018). |
| 3. | Wh- Question | It is characterized by the use of the element of the question *wh* in the design of the question, including *what, when, where, why, who, how, how much/how long, how often/how fast, how far,* and *which* (Danet & Bogoch, 1980; Bongelli et al., 2018; & Aldosari, 2024). |
| 4. | Polar Questions | Do not use question words as question particles, but use auxiliary verbs (e.g., what, *have, have, never, not,* etc.), inventions, or tags (Bongelli et al., 2018). |

Third, data interpretation. At this stage, the researcher labeled the data by providing data codes using different colors based on the type of data, including blue for declarative questions, green for disjunctive questions, yellow for wh-questions, and pink for polar questions. Next, the researcher creates a table of the overall data and separates the data based on categories that have the same typology. Fourth, the development of general concepts and conclusions.

The instruments used are *human instruments* (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Creswell, 2015; Creswell, 2018 & Sugiyono, 2020). This is because in descriptive research, the researcher has a special position, namely as a planner, implementer of data collection, analysis, data interpreter, and reporter of the results of his research (Moleong, 2013 & Sugiyono, 2019). The validity of the research data was carried out by means of a credibility test obtained through triangulation. Data triangulation is defined as checking data by utilizing various sources, techniques, theories, methods, and time (Moleong, 2017 & Sugiyono, 2020). This study uses theoretical triangulation to test the validity of the data obtained by referring to various references about theories relevant to the research so that the research results are valid and appropriate. In addition to using triangulation, data validity tests are also carried out by *intrarater* and *interrater*.

Data analysis was carried out using matching and distribution techniques (Sudaryanto, 2015). The distribution technique is used to determine the types of questions used by judges, prosecutors, and lawyers in the courtroom by looking at the construction of the language. Meanwhile, the matching technique is used to see the purpose of using questions by judges, prosecutors, and lawyers in the courtroom by looking at the context of the speech.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Types of Questions at the Cyanide Coffee Case Trial Conversation

Based on the processing and analysis of the data, there are four types of questions found from the overall research data, namely declarative questions, disjunctive questions, wh-questions, and polar questions. The four types of questions were found in this study with different frequencies in each type of question as shown in the following figure.
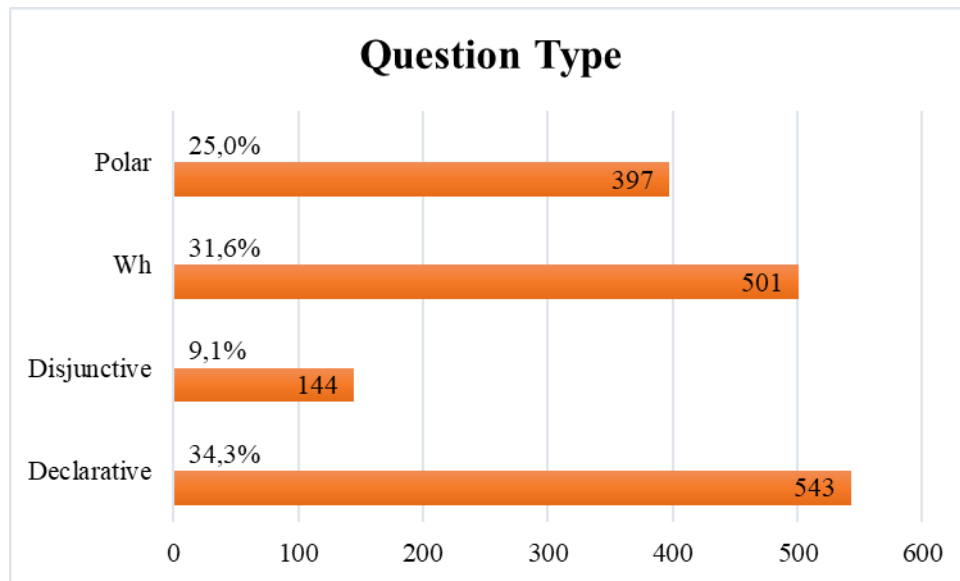
Figure 1. Question Type and Frequency

Figure (1) shows the results of the recapitulation of the conversation data of the Cyanide Coffee case trial obtained from the transcription of the video recording of the trial in 2016. The picture shows that the types of questions asked by judges, prosecutors, and lawyers are at most declarative questions. The frequency of this type of question consists of 543 out of a total of 1585 questions so that the percentage achieved, which is 34.3% of all other types of questions. This fact corroborates the findings of Hale (2004) that declarative questions, as well as polar questions, allow lawyers to maintain complete control over the evidence presented through a series of questions. This is because the information in the declarative question asks for the declarative to be confirmed (Loftus, 1980) rather than providing information or narrative. Each type of question found is described in the following discussion.

### 3.1.1 Use of Declarative Questions

When viewed based on the total data obtained, declarative questions were found to be the most used than other types of questions. The total number occupies the highest position, at 34.3% of the total data (see figure 1). These findings are in line with the declarative prosodic inquiry previously put forward by Woodbury (1984) that this type of question is most predominant because it forces a lawyer's interpretation of the evidence on witnesses. Examples of declarative questions on the data studied are described below.

(1) *"Saudara tidak punya SIM Indonesia sehingga Saudara minta diantarkan oleh Ayah saudara?" (Jaksa ke Terdakwa)*

Translation: "You don't have Indonesian SIM so you asked father to deliver it?"

Data (1) is the data of declarative questions submitted by the prosecutor to the defendant. The characteristic that the question is declarative is marked by the form of questions that do not use question words (Danet & Bogoch, 1980 & Aldosari, 2024). The question is formulated in the form of a declarative sentence and is spoken with an ascending intonation at the end of the sentence. The expected answer to this type of question is in the form of yes/no or in the form of a brief confirmation of the information that has been/is being discussed (Bongelli et al., 2018). The use of this form of question is a lawyer's strategic way to silence witnesses or defendants from providing information that becomes a language fingerprint as a legal fact. This type of question is a form of compelling questioning. In question (1), the prosecutor asked the defendant about the reason why the defendant was escorted by the defendant's father. The type of question used to ask this question is declarative with closed answers because the answers to be given are already listed on the question. The form of question (1) constructed

by the prosecutor demands an answer *yes* from the defendant. Therefore, this type of question does not give the defendant freedom in giving answers, but forces the defendant to answer according to the questioner's wishes.

### 3.1.2 Use of Disjunctive Questions

A further strategy to question witnesses/defendants in the courtroom is a disjunctive question. Disjunctive questions were found to be used the least than other types of questions in each of the trial participants. Although it is classified as the least of the other types, it is relatively large when viewed based on the function and role of this question.

Disjunctive questions do not contain question words just like declarative questions, i.e. there is no *wh-* word or auxiliary word that serves as the initial initiator of the question. However, its characteristics as a disjunctive question are characterized by the presence of the conjunction "or" as a selection conjunction in the question sentence (Danet & Bogoch, 1980; Rossano, 2010; & Bongelli et al., 2018). In addition, it is categorized as a disjunctive question as well because of interrogative intonation which is characterized by an ascending intonation at the end of a sentence. This question is similar to the polar question in that the questioner makes a claim in the form of several options in anticipation that the witness/defendant will affirmatively or negatively confirm. The following is an example of a disjunctive question found in the research data.

(2)　　*"Kalau misalkan sianida itu ada di minuman, menurut saudara sebagai ahli, kalau di lidah itu ketika diminum itu berasa atau tidak atau mengalir langsung aja ke dalam?" (Jaksa ke SA Djadja)*

Translation: "If for example there is cyanide in the drink, in your opinion as an expert, when you drink it, is it felt on the tongue or not or does it just flow straight in?"

Data (2) is a sample of the prosecutor's questions to expert witnesses presented by the defense. The prosecutor asked the expert witness about the signs that a person feels if they drink a drink containing cyanide. The use of prosecutor questions is a disjunctive question. This type of question is characterized by the presence of a disjunctive conjunction "or" as a selection conjunction in the question sentence (Danet & Bogoch, 1980; Rossano, 2010; & Bongelli et al., 2018). The prosecutor tried to control the defendant's answer by providing two options as the expected answer. This is a form of linguistic strategy used by prosecutors in trying to confirm legal facts based on their versions. The power imbalance occurs through the form of questions that force the recipient to choose the answers provided. However, the level of control given to the above question is lower. It is characterized by the use of conjunctions *or* more than one. This means that the answer options given are more than two so that expert witnesses can give answers outside of the options mentioned.

### 3.1.3 Use of Wh- Questions

Wh- questions are another type of question used in the courtroom. This type of question gives the witness/defendant the flexibility to provide an explanation of the topic being asked. It also depends on the question word used. Questions with the question of *how* and *why* require more than just minimal responses (Harris, 1984). Meanwhile, questions of *what* type, *how much*, *how long, who, when,* and *where* generate minimal responses from the recipient (Thornborrow, 2002).

When viewed from the overall total, this question gets the second most used position after declarative questions, which is 31.6% or 501 of the total questions. However, if you look at the frequency of each session participant, this type of question occupies the most position in the two participants. Here is an example of wh- questions found in the research data.

(3)　　*"Bagaimana pendapat saudara tentang satu adagium atau prinsip hukum mengatakan lebih bagus membebaskan 1000 orang yang bersalah ketimbang harus menghukum satu orang yang tidak bersalah?" (Pengacara ke Saksi Eddy)*

Translation: "What do you think about an adage or legal principle that says it is better to free 1000 guilty people than to convict one innocent person?"

Based on the data, the question wh- is characterized by the use of the element of the question *wh* in the design of the question, including *what, when, where, why, who, how, how much/how long, how often/how fast, how far,* and *which* (Danet & Bogoch, 1980; Gobber, 2015; Bongelli et al., 2018; & Aldosari, 2024). The question is attached to the interrogative sentence wh- which is characteristic of the type of question. In data (3), the wh-question can be identified from the use of the question *word how* as the question operator. Questions with question words *how* are they constructed to obtain an answer in the form of a way, state, or process of something.

The defense lawyer asked about the expert witness's opinion on the legal principle that it is better to release 1,000 guilty people than to have to punish one innocent person. The defense deliberately led the question as a form of affirmation of prudence to the judge in making decisions. The questions are an open-ended type of question that allows the recipient to provide an independent narrative. This is because the question with the question of *how* and *why* requires more than just a minimal response (Harris, 1984). That is, the expected answer is in the form of an explanation related to the topic asked. Meanwhile, questions of *what* type, *how much*, *how long, who, when,* and *where* generate minimal responses from the recipient (Thornborrow, 2002).

Based on this data, it can be observed that the wh- question emphasizes more on obtaining information from witnesses/trial participants. These questions are the types of questions that judges, prosecutors, and defense often use to extract information from witnesses or defendants. Some relevant research on courtroom questions also shows that wh- questions (in some literature called open-ended questions) tend to be found in courts. The total number (501 or 31.6%) of wh- questions found also indicates that this type of question is one of the frequently used question patterns in the courtroom, especially in direct examination and is usually always found in cross-examination. This question is designed to be examined to provide information  freely Hadiyani (2014) & Ndatyapo (2022).

### 3.1.4 Use of Polar Questions

One of the most commonly used questions in the courtroom, in addition to the ones discussed earlier, is the polar question. Polar questions can be identified by the presence of relevant affirmations/confirmations or disconfirmations. This question contains propositions with two possible answers (positive/negative) in semantic terms: yes/no, true/not true, never/never, already/not, etc. (Enfield et al., 2012). That is, unlike wh- and disjunctive questions, polar questions must be answered with 'yes' or 'no' explicitly or implicitly. Although the percentage was the third highest of the total questions with a frequency of 25% or 397 questions (see figure 1), this type of question was relatively frequently used when viewed at the frequency of each participant. An example of such a question can be observed in the following sample data.

(4)     *"Bukankah dari berita acara pemeriksaan sebagai tersangka yang pertama, kedua dan ketiga itu Saudara selalu didampingi oleh pengacara?" (Jaksa ke Terdakwa)*

Translation: "Didn't the minutes of the examination as the first, second and third suspect show that you were always accompanied by a lawyer?"

The above data is a question of the prosecutor and defense against witnesses and defendants of a polar type. In contrast to wh-questions, polar questions do not use question words as question particles, but use auxiliary verbs (e.g., what, *have, have, never, aren't,* etc.), inventions, or tags (Bongelli et al., 2018). In data (4), the prosecutor asked the defendant about the existence of a lawyer with the defendant in each examination minutes. The characteristics of polar questions can be identified in the use of the word *"Isn't it".* This question belongs to the type of closed-ended question that demands two poles of answer, i.e. "yes" or "no" and does not expect an answer other than that. On this question, it can be clearly observed that the prosecutor tried to extract some kind of justification from the defendant on the point of argument "The defendant was always accompanied by a lawyer at the time of the Minutes of Trial (BAP) as the first, second, and third suspects."

The controller of the argument used in the polar question is the word *isn't* and *always. Isn't it from the minutes of the examination as the first, second, and third suspects that you are always accompanied by a lawyer?* The answer needed for this type of question is very short, i.e. "yes" or "no". However, the question is more demanding than the "yes" answer. This is because the prosecutor's question contains information that has been believed to be true, so the prosecutor asked to get approval for the facts asked. Therefore, this type of question does not provide an opportunity for freedom to elaborate or clarify.

Short-answer questions like the above show the level of control of the polar question. Therefore, Aldosari (2024) categorizes polar questions as argument controllers. That is, this question serves to control and direct the arguments presented in the courtroom towards a certain meaning to make a clear argument in front of the trial judge. This function is clearly demonstrated in the above data sample. That is, unlike wh- and disjunctive questions, polar questions must be answered with 'yes' or 'no', explicitly or implicitly.

### 3.2 Purpose of Questions in the Conversation of the Cyanide Coffee Case Trial

Based on the investigation of each type of question, the purpose of the question of judges, prosecutors, and lawyers of the four types of questions is three, namely obtaining information, obtaining confirmation of previous information, and clarifying information/arguments. The questions with the most information search purpose came from wh- questions that were attached to the *questions who*/who, *when*, *what*/what, *where/*where, *why*/why, and *how*/how. The questions that aim to get confirmation are found to come from declarative and polarity questions. This is because this type of question contains facts/statements that want to confirm the truth to witnesses or defendants. While questions with clarification purposes come from disjunctive questions and some from other types of questions. The three objectives of the question, namely information, confirmation, and clarification were found in this study with different frequencies in each of the question objectives as shown in the following figure.
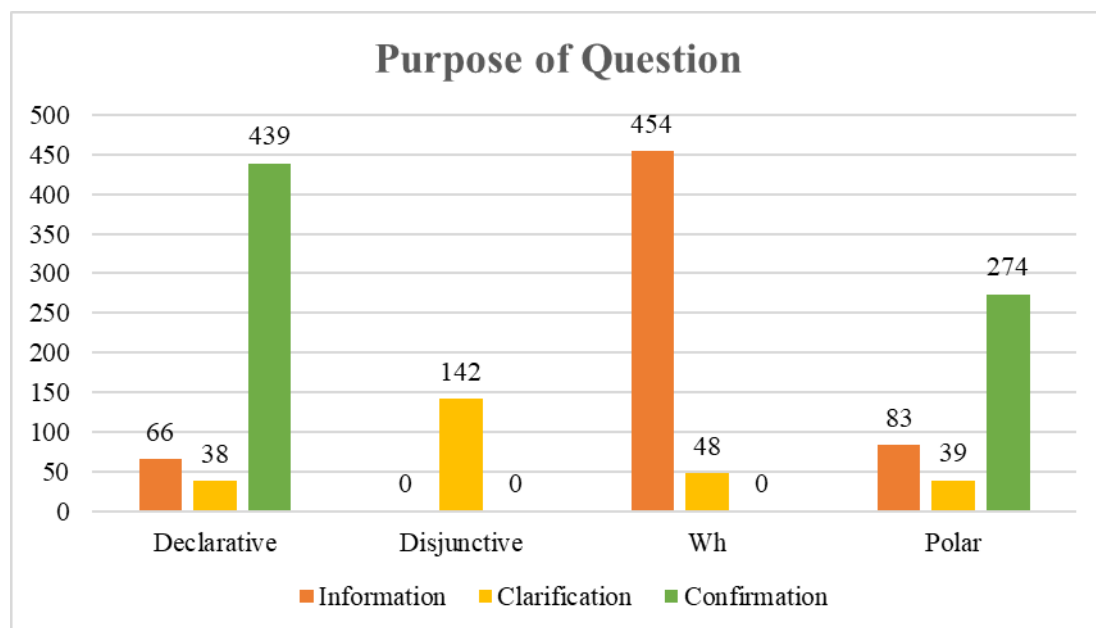


Figure 2. Purpose of Questions by Question Type

From figure (2), it can be observed that the dominant question objective is found in each type of question. The purpose of obtaining the most information is found in the wh-type of question. This means that the wh-question, based on the context, is indeed constructed to obtain information from the recipient. The purpose of clarification is most often found in the type of disjunctive question. While the purpose of confirmation is most commonly found in the types of declarative questions and polar questions.

This fact is in line with the analysis of data on question types that show that the construction of language in the courtroom is used to achieve certain goals. As has been shown in the analysis, the purpose of the four types of questions is not only to search for information but also to confirm information and clarify arguments. These findings correlate with several previous studies (e.g., Aldosari (2024), Aldosari & Khafaga (2020), Hale (2004)).

Further investigation also showed that questions, regardless of type, are sometimes used in the courtroom to emphasize and validate information (confirmation) rather than to gather information. This is due to the background of the goals and roles of each lawyer in the case at hand (Bruer et al., 2022 & Wylie et al., 2024). Baldwin (1993) also corroborates that the question in legal interrogation is more about obtaining evidence than finding the truth. In detail, the purpose of the question from the findings of this study is described in the following discussion.

### 3.2.1 Obtaining Information

One of the purposes of courtroom questions is to obtain information. Obtaining information is the general purpose of the trial so that the judge can decide the case being litigated. In general, wh-questions are one type of question used to obtain detailed information (Bongelli et al., 2018 & Aldosari, 2024) in addition to other types of questions. This goal can be observed in the following data.

(5)     *"Kenapa Saudara memilih Cocktail itu? Kenapa tidak memilih menu yang lain?"*
        *(Jaksa ke Terdakwa)*

Translation: "Why did you choose that Cocktail? Why didn't you choose another menu?"

The question in data (5) is a wh- question asked by the prosecutor to dig up information from witnesses on a certain topic. The purpose of the prosecutor's question to the defendant was to find out the reason why the defendant chose a cocktail drink for himself. The purpose of obtaining information in the form of reasons was explored by the prosecutor by asking the defendant using the word ask *why*. This is because the question with the question *why* requires information in the form of an explanation of a certain reason. The prosecutor asked with an open-ended question for the defendant to give a free narrative in delivering a factual version of the answer to the actual incident before the legal verdict was determined.

The information sought through these types of questions, in turn, serves to clarify a point to the court constructed through the question or as an introductory phase to other questions that support the information. Although this information collection is not necessarily objective or impartial. This is consistent with the argument made by some experts that questions are not always used to find answers, but are used to draw the focus of the jury (judges) on certain points that are to be conveyed (Alkabiri, 2024). Therefore, questions are considered a polite and manipulative way to convey a message to the recipient (Flowerdew, 2002; Pinto, 2004) Because the legal facts come from the testimony of witnesses or defendants.

### 3.2.2 Clarifying Arguments

In addition to obtaining information, courtroom questions also aim to clarify information/arguments. The main purpose of clarifying questions is to ensure proper understanding. This is done to eliminate doubts or ambiguities so that judges, prosecutors, and lawyers ask for further explanations to avoid misunderstandings in the trial. The pattern of questions intended for this purpose can be observed in the following data.

(6)     *"Jadi saudara mengatakan kalau dia tadi sebagai dokter memeriksa kemudian dia diminta menjadi ahli yang ditetapkan oleh pendataan pengadilan maka kewajiban menyimpan rahasia jabatan itu bisa diabaikan. Kalau bukan karena perintah pengadilan tapi karena dengan sukarela dia menjadi ahli dan membocorkan rahasia kliennya itu bagaimana?" (Pengacara ke Saksi Eddy)*

Translation: "So you are saying that if he was a doctor who examined and them he was asked to become an expert as determined by the court records, then the obligation to keep the secret of his position can be ignore. If it was not because of a court order but because he voluntarily became an expert and leaked his client's secret, how could that be?"

Data (6) is a sample of questions that aim to clarify. In contrast to the purpose of the question of obtaining information, the purpose of clarification is not intended to obtain new information, but to identify the ambiguity of previously obtained or even unknown information. In data (6), the legal counsel asked for clarification of the information submitted by Expert Witness Eddy to prevent miscommunication that the understanding of the legal procedures that had been carried out was valid or not. The defense asked about a doctor's obligation to keep his client's secrets when the doctor was required to be an expert designated by the court's data collection. Based on the analytical review, the question was not constructed to clarify the ambiguity of the argument, but rather a form of presumption of guilt made by the lawyer to invalidate the testimony of the prosecution.

### 3.2.3 Confirming Prior Information

In addition to the two questions above, there is another question objective that is the highlight of the courtroom question, namely confirmation. Confirmation is one of the three purposes of the courtroom questions found. The purpose of this question is often found in cross-examination (Aldosari, 2024 & Haijuan, 2019) to ensure the fairness of the verdict. Therefore, sometimes some information on the main examination is resubmitted with the aim of confirmation to avoid misunderstandings while increasing mutual knowledge. The content of confirmation questions usually emphasizes existing information either from evidence in the form of videos, previous statements from witnesses/defendants, or other documents as seen in the following data.

(7)     *"Selanjutnya apakah benar Saudara ada berkawan atau berkenalan dengan Wayan Mirna Shalihin?" (Hakim ke Terdakwa)*

Translation: "Furthermore, is it true that you are friends or acquainted with Wayan Mirna Shalihin?"

In data (7), the purpose of the judge's question is to verify information to the defendant. Actually, the information that the judge wanted to confirm about the status of the defendant's introduction with the victim was already known. However, as a judge of such information must be questioned to improve the accuracy of a statement/information. The questioning procedure is in accordance with the fact about question-and-answer in the courtroom that instead of asking for information, the above questions are used in the courtroom to verify information (Alkabiri, 2024), either previously known or to be known. Therefore, the confirmation question always contains a statement that is to be confirmed as seen in the data sample above.

Regardless of its linguistic construction, confirmation questions serve to achieve control over the recipient's discourse, the power of using words. The witness/defendant does not have the freedom to elaborate on the answer. The control given to this type of question makes the witness/defendant not provide additional information that could incriminate certain parties. Since this type of question can have a "yes" or "no" response, Alkabiri (2024) argues that confirmation questions are equivalent to yes-no questions. The purpose of the question is to ensure that the information questioned by the judge, prosecutor, and lawyer can be confirmed to be true.

Based on this analysis, it can be understood that each type of question used in the courtroom correlates with the purpose of the questioner to the issue in question. In addition, further investigation also revealed that power dynamics were consistently portrayed in courtroom language. The use of questions is a form of linguistic manifestation in which power relations are exercised and maintained. Convincing witnesses or defendants to accept the versions of questioners, such as prosecutors and lawyers, of events is the overarching purpose of the language used. This persuasion is done by asking questions that are used to obtain information or confirm a particular version of an argument that exists in the questioner's mind (Gibbons, 2003 & Khafaga, 2021). However, resistance reactions also arise

when there is a threat to freedom which is the effect of the question (Place, 2021).

Significantly, the majority of the question-and-answer procedures in the courtroom have been prepared before the start of the court hearing. Lawyers often prepare and plan questions in a way that suits their goals (Alkabiri, 2024). This is consistent with the claim made by Aldosari & Khafaga (2020) that the analysis of language on legal data, i.e. courtroom questions, can reveal hidden meanings related to the lawyer's purpose. In this sense, language plays a major role in conveying the meaning of the law and decoding the ideology of the discourse. This, in turn, emphasizes the linguistic contribution that language plays to other disciplines, such as legal discourse (Coulthard & Johnson, 2007), political discourse (Fairclough, 2013), pragmatic (Khafaga, 2023 & Khafaga, 2022).

## 4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion that has been described, two conclusions can be drawn. First, the questions in the courtroom discourse in the Jessica Kumala Wongso case are linguistically manifested by four types: declarative questions, wh-questions, polar/yes-no questions, and disjunctive questions. The four types of questions were sorted by the number of most people found. Of the 1585 question data, declarative questions were the most used, which was 543 or 34.3% of the total questions; wh- questions as many as 501 or 31.66%; Polar questions were 397 or 25%, and disjunctive questions were 144 or 9.1%. Based on analytics, the use of declarative questions as the most common type is a form of strategic manipulation by lawyers in cross-examination by forcing the recipient to answer the question in *a yes* or *no way* without providing additional information. This fact shows that there is an imbalance of power in the courtroom with a high level of control through the form of questions. This finding is different from the previous findings, Aldosari (2024) revealed that information questions are more widely used in United States trials because the basic purpose of trials is to obtain information of evidential value.

Second, the types of questions used in the courtroom are strategically used to obtain information, confirm information/arguments, and clarify arguments. Of the total data found, as many as 713 or 45% of the questions were constructed for the purpose of confirming previous information, as many as 603 or 38.1% of the questions aimed at obtaining information, and as many as 267 or 16.9% of the questions for clarification of the incident. The findings lead to the conclusion that courtroom procedures at various stages motivate the questioner's language choice in constructing questions based on objectives. The form of confirmation questions is used to limit new information that may be incriminating to the questioner. This fact is inversely proportional to the main purpose of the trial because the motive factor has dominated the questioner.

The findings of the study have contributed to a comprehensive understanding that courtroom questioning strategies are linguistically structured, especially in terms of the use of questions that are appropriate to the questioner's purpose. The findings demonstrate the importance of applying different levels of linguistic analysis to the examination of legal data. Thus, this research will be a contribution to general research on forensic linguistics and a pragmatic approach to the rhetoric of asking questions in general. In addition, these findings not only provide insight into how questions were designed by both sides to dig up evidence-valuable information but also have implications for our understanding of one of the central rules that characterize examination in trial. Further extensive studies of the various question strategies in legal discourse can be reviewed by looking at the recipient's answers to the questions asked to see the achievement of the objectives.

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