

Question Formation in the Òndó Dialect of Yorùbá

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*Interrogative constructions and their various mechanisms of derivation have attracted the attention of Yorùbá language scholars working on Standard Yorùbá and its dialects but there are no available works on interrogative constructions in the Òndó dialect of Yorùbá. This paper therefore seeks to provide a detailed description of interrogative construction in the Òndó dialect of Yorùbá. In this study, it is demonstrated that the polar question words in the Òndó dialect are *Şé* and *dà...í/in*. It is also shown that there are five basic content question words in the Òndó dialect while the others are derived through *kí* prefixation. Data in this study were obtained from native speakers of Òndó dialect through oral interview and their responses were recorded. The study adopts Chomsky's (1995) Minimalist Program for its analysis. This research, we hope, will contribute to knowledge in no small measures in the area of dialectology.*

Keywords: *Polar Question, Content Question, Òndó dialect, Standard Yorùbá*

1. Introduction

Researchers in the field of Yorùbá dialectology have carried out research works on interrogative constructions in standard Yorùbá and some of its dialects such as Àwòrì, Ìkálẹ̀, Ìgbóminà, Èkitì, M̀òbà and Owé (Awobuluyi 1978, Bamgbose 1990, Ajiboye 2013, Akintoye and Adeoye 2014). It has been argued that interrogative sentences in Yorùbá are in two forms: polar and content questions. The two, as they have pointed out, differ in terms of their syntactic and semantic properties. They submit that polar question markers are introducers while the content question words are nominal. According to them, polar interrogative sentences demand yes/no answers as a response while content questions, on the other hand, demand elaborate answers. In addition, Bamgbose (1990), relying on the syntactic properties, groups polar question words in the Standard Yorùbá into three: sentence introducer, sentence modifier and conjunction. He further categorises content questions into three by considering their syntactic properties. The three categories are nominal, modifier and verbal. In a similar vein, Ajiboye (2013) considers the semantic properties of polar question markers and groups them into five categories. The five categories are confirmatory, expression of doubt, affirmative and negative, emphatic and rhetoric. However, there are no available works on Òndó one of the dialects of Yorùbá. This present study therefore focuses on the Òndó dialect and show, among other things, that the Òndó dialect has two polar question markers. It is also demonstrated in the study that there are five basic content question words in the Òndó dialect while the others are derived through *kí* prefixation.

2. Theoretical Framework

The Minimalist Program (henceforth **MP**) is the latest version of the transformational generative grammar. The program is developed on the economy of principles and derivations. The Minimalist Program is structured around three systems namely: the lexicon, computational system, LF and PF. The mechanisms of operation of the Minimalist are **select, merge and**

agree. MP assumes that the lexicon expresses items that have semantic, syntactic and phonetic features. Derivation in MP starts from the lexicon where items are selected directly through a numeration system called merge. Merge combines items in a pair wise manner. Merge is divided into two external merge and internal merge. External merge selects and combines items directly from the lexicon through numeration while internal merge applies to a merge operation that affects syntactic elements that are introduced into already derived convergent. Agree is an operation that establishes between two elements if they share certain grammatical features (Kremers 2003: 6). The operation consists of two elements **probe** and **goal**. The **probe**, in order to be able to enter into an agree relation must be active. It can be active if and only if it has unvalued feature so that it can value its feature by probing for an active **goal** that has the same matching features but valued (Al-Horas 2013). Probe is the functional element which serves as the highest head with [-interpretable] features while goal is lexical element with [+interpretable] feature.

3. Previous Studies on the Yorùbá Dialects

Works on interrogative construction in Yorùbá and its dialects include Bamgbose (1967, 1990), Awobuluyi (1978), Ajiboye (2011, 2013), Akintoye (2011), Akanbi (2011), and Akintoye and Adeoye (2014). These scholars agree that Yorùbá interrogative constructions are formed through the use of overt interrogative markers, content question phrase and raising of voice. Ajiboye (2013: 09) notes, among other things, that Standard Yorùbá (henceforth SY) has the following as the polar question words: *şé, ñjé, àbí, şèbí, ha, bí, ha...bí* and *ni*. He also asserts that the following dialects of Yorùbá have the following polar question words:

- | | | |
|-----|----------|------------------------------------|
| (1) | Àwóri | <i>şé, àbí, lá(à)</i> |
| | Ìkálẹ̀ | <i>şé, ñjé, àbí. bé</i> |
| | Ìgbómìnà | <i>ñjé, şé, àbí, şèbí, fẹẹ, ni</i> |
| | Mòbà | <i>şé, àbí, şèbí, yá, ni</i> |
| | Owé | <i>şé, ñjé, àbí, şèbí, há, un</i> |

He notes further that polar question words in Yorùbá dialects differ and they occur in sentence initial, medial or final position. See the examples 2a, b and c below.

- (2) a. **Standard Yorùbá**
Şé Yáràduà dé?
 Inter Y. arrive
 ‘Did Yaradua arrive?’
Ñjé Yáràduà dé?
 Inter Y. arrive
 ‘Did Yaradua arrive?’
Şèbí Yáràduà dé?
 Inter Y. arrive
 ‘Isn’t that Yaradua arrive?’
Yáràduà ha dé?
 Y. Inter arrive

‘Did Yaradua arrive?’
Yàràduà dé bí?
 Y. arrive Inter
 ‘Did Yaradua arrive?’

b. **Ìgbómìnà dialect**

Ọ́ fée jeun?

2sg Inter eat

‘Did you eat?’

Oúnjẹ́ fée ti dèlẹ̀?

food Inter asp done

‘Is food ready?’

c. **Owé dialect**

Ñjé Bùnmi hé resi á?

Inter B. Cook rice the

‘Did Bùnmi cook rice?’

Sé Bùnmi ghá un?

Inter B. come

‘Did Bùnmi come?’

(cf. Ajiboye 2013) (The interlineal gloss is mine)

From these examples, one can see that *şé* is common to Àwòrì, Ìkálẹ̀, Ìgbómìnà, Mòbà and Owé while other polar question words such as: *Ñjé*, *Şèbí*, *ha*, that are present in SY are not attested in some dialects or better still have another form. For instance: ‘*ha*’ polar question in (SY) is realised as ‘*bé*’ in Ìkálẹ̀, ‘*fée*’ in Ìgbómìnà and ‘*yá*’ in Mòbà while it is completely missing in the Owé dialect. In the present study, we show that the marker is realised as *dà* in Oṅdó dialect. Interestingly, one unique thing about *dà* (polar question marker) that differentiates it from other polar question marker in other dialects of Yorùbá is that it must be obligatorily followed by a focus marker *i/in* that are conditioned by oral or nasal assimilation) at the sentence final position.

Akintoye and Adeoye (2014) show clearly that polar question words in Èkìtì are fewer than the Standard Yorùbá. They claim that Èkìtì uses ‘*Şé*’ and ‘*à*’ as its polar question words. They also assert that Èkìtì attests the following content question words *kí/rí* ‘what’, *isí* ‘who’ and *sí* ‘where’ which can be added to a noun to derive other question words that denote time, place, action, etc. For example, the dialect has *ibi sí* ‘which place’, *ònà sí* ‘which way’, *ùgbà sí* ‘what time’, *bẹ̀ẹ̀ sí* ‘how’, *òkàn sí* ‘which one’ etc. In addition, they claim that the content question words are moved to sentence initial position to form an interrogative sentence.

Having reviewed the previous works on question formation in SY and some dialects of Yorùbá with examples that show the question words and their positions of occurrences in sentences, the remaining sections of this work will be dedicated to the investigation of the Oṅdó dialect to discover the types of question words (polar and content) that are attested in the dialect and also investigate the mechanisms used in deriving the interrogative sentences.

4. Polar Interrogative Sentences in Òndó Dialect

Polar interrogative sentences are questions whose expected response could be either yes/no. Konig and Siemund (2007: 271) assert that “polar interrogatives are typically used to inquire about the truth and falsity of the propositions they express”. They note further that different strategies are adopted by languages in forming polar interrogative sentences. They mention six methods that have been established typologically in forming polar interrogatives in languages. They are:

- i. the use of interrogative particles
- ii. a change of relative word order
- iii. the use of special intonation patterns
- iv. the addition of special tags
- v. the use of disjunctive – negative structures
- vi. the use of particular verbal inflection.

However, cross linguistic evidence has shown that languages differ in terms of the mechanism or strategies used in deriving polar interrogatives. Some languages such as Igbo and Urhobho use tone to derive their polar questions (see Ileonu 2010 and Aziza 2010) while some others e.g. Yorùbá and Dagbani use designated question words and raising of pitch (see Bamgboṣe 1967, 1990, Awobuluyi 1978 and Issah 2015). In this present study, we shall show that the Òndó dialect adopts two mechanisms in forming its polar questions. The two mechanisms are:

- i) the use of interrogative particles such as *ṣé* and *dà...í/ín* and,
- ii) raising of voice on declarative sentences.

Let us consider the examples in 2a-5b below:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>(3) a. Adé jẹ uṣu.
Adé eat yam
'Adé ate yam.'</p> <p>b. Sé Adé jẹ uṣu ?
Inter Adé eat yam
'Did Adé eat yam?'</p> | <p>(5) a. Adé bọ.
Adé come
'Adé came.'</p> <p>b. Adé dà bọ í?
Adé Inter come Foc.
'Is it the fact Adé has come?'</p> |
| <p>(4) a. Olú ti jeun
Olú perf. eat
'Olú has eaten.'</p> <p>b. Sé Olú ti jeun?
Inter Olú perf. eat
'Has Olú eaten?'</p> | <p>(6) a. Olú ti jeun
Olú perf. eat
'Olú has eaten.'</p> <p>b. Olú dà ti jeun ín?
Olú Inter perf. eat Foc
'Is it the fact that Olú has eaten?'</p> |

In the examples (3b) and (4b), one observes that the question word occurs at the sentence initial position while in (5b) and (6b), the question marker/particle occurs at the medial position and it is accompanied by a focus marker at the final position. The response to the question in (3b), (4b), (5b) and (6b) may either be *en-en* 'Yes' or *én-èn-én* 'No' depending on whether the statement is true or false. The answer to a large extent determines the truth based or falsity of the propositions made in the questions. For instance, when a polar question is posed to someone

and the response is *en-en* ‘Yes’ it clearly shows that the proposition is true. On the other hand, *èn-èn-èn* response shows that the assumption is false. However, as stated earlier, voice can be raised on declarative sentences without polar question words to form polar interrogative sentences in the dialect. Ilori (2016) claims that the interrogative marker is a high pitch intonation which scopes over the whole of a declarative sentence to derive a polar question clause. The examples are shown in (7b) &(8b) below:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>(7) a. Adé jẹ uṣu.
Adé eat yam
‘Adé ate yam.’
 ↗ (Inter)</p> <p>b. Adé jẹ uṣu?
Adé eat yam
‘Has Adé eaten the yam?’</p> | <p>(8) a. Adé bọ.
Adé come
‘Adé came.’
 ↗ (Inter)</p> <p>b. Adé bọ?
Adé come
‘Has Adé come?’</p> |
|---|---|

Examples (3a), (4a), (5a) and (6a) are declarative sentences without the raising of voice and their counterpart polar questions are in (3b), (4b), (5b) and (6b). In (5b) and (6b), we observe that focus marker occurs at the sentence final position. One also notices that the focus markers have two forms: *í*, *ín* which are in complementary distribution. In example (5b) *í* occurs in the environment of oral vowel while *ín* occurs in the environment of nasal vowel as shown in (6b). The focus marker in this case focused the whole polar interrogative sentence. This is not strange as it is attested in the SY and Oñdó dialect; focus marker can focus a whole sentence when it occurs at the final position. See examples 9 a,b and c:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>(9) a. Adé lọ.
Adé go
‘Adé went’</p> <p>c. Sé Adé lọ ní?
Inter Adé go Foc
‘Did Adé go?’</p> | <p>b. Adé lọ ní.
Adé go Foc
‘It was Adé that went’</p> |
|--|---|

Standard Yorùbá

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(10) a. Adé lọ.
Adé go
‘Adé went’</p> <p>c. Adé dà lọ í?
Ade Inter go Foc
‘Did Adé go?’</p> | <p>b. Adé lọ í.
Adé go Foc
‘It was Adé that went’</p> |
|--|--|

Oñdó dialect

In 9b, *ní* focus the declarative sentence but in (9c) it focuses the polar question just like *í/ín* in the Oñdó dialect as shown in 10b and 10c. However, with examples 5b, 6b, 9b and 9c, it can argue that *ní* in SY is not a polar question marker as claimed in Ajiboye (2013) but a focus marker. We establish that where *ní* is purported to be a polar question word, the polar question particle has been deleted.

5. Content Interrogative Constructions in the Oñdó Dialect

A Content interrogative sentence demands elaborate answer as opposed to a polar interrogative sentence; but this is not to say that a polar interrogative cannot receive sentence answer. The Oñdó dialect has five basic content question words which are: *èsí* ‘who’, *èlú* ‘how much/many’, *kẹ̀* ‘where’ *sá* ‘where’ and *kí* ‘what’. However, *kí* can be added to nouns to derive other content question words that denote place, manner, selection, time and reason. For example, we can have *kése* ‘why’, *kíghi* ‘when’, *kíyi* ‘which one’, *kíwé* ‘how’ *kíbi/kíbè* ‘where’ and *kuše* ‘how’. These content interrogative words in Oñdó are nominal expressions, adverbs, and noun qualifiers that occur at the sentence initial position. See the examples (11-25):

- | | |
|--|--|
| (11) a. Kí _i wé fò -----i?
Qw 2sg wash -----
‘What did you wash?’ | b. Wé fò kí in?
2sg wash Qw foc.
‘You washed what?’ |
| (12) a. Kí _i Adé gbà -----i?
Qw DP collect
‘What did Adé collect?’ | b. Adé gbà kí in?
DP collect Qw foc.
‘Adé collected what?’ |
| (13) a. Èsí _i Adé lù ----- i?
Qw DP beat
‘Who did Adé beat?’ | b. Adé lù èsí in?
Adé beat Qw foc.
‘Adé beat who?’ |
| (14) a. Èsí _i Adé ri -----i?
Qw Adé see
‘Who did Adé see?’ | b. Adé ri èsí in?
Adé see Qw foc.
‘Adé saw who?’ |
| (15) a. Èlú _i òrombó Olú rà -----i?
Qw orange Olú buy
‘How many oranges did Olú buy?’ | b. Olú rà òrombó èlú un?
Olú buy orange Qw foc
‘Olú bought oranges how many?’ |
| (16) a. Èlú _i Adé san -----i?
Qw Adé pay?
‘How much did Ade pay?’ | b. Adé san èlú un?
Adé pay Qw foc..
‘Adé paid how much?’ |

In (11a -16a), we observe that the content question word occurs at the sentence initial position, while in the counterparts in (11b-16b), it also observed that question words occur as the object of the verb and they are followed by a focus marker which normally assimilates the features of the last vowel of the question word. One also notices that when the question word is moved to sentence initial position the focus marker is deleted as shown in (11a -16a). However, there are instances where the content questions occur at the final position are not followed by a focus marker. See examples (17b and 18b) below:

- | | |
|--|--|
| (17) a. Kíbi _i Adé lọ -----i?
Qw Adé go
‘Where did Adé go?’ | b. Adé lọ í kíbè?
Adé go Qw
‘Adé went where?’ |
|--|--|

- (18) a. **Kíbi** i **Òkẹ** ti jà -----i?
Qw Òkẹ Asp fight
'Where did Oke fight?'
- b. **Òkẹ** ja ní kíbẹ?
Òkẹ fight in Qw
'Òkẹ fought where?'

In examples (17a & 18a), one can see that the question word is moved to sentence initial position and the last vowel of the question word is replaced by a front high vowel. Apart from the two instances above, there are also instances where adverb of time/reason that occurs after a verb becomes content question words when they are moved to sentence initial position. See examples (19a -25a) below:

- (19) a. **Kíghì** i **Adé wa** -----i?
Qw Adé come?
'When did Adé come?'
- b. **Adé wa nálé.**
Adé come evening
'Adé came in the evening.'
- (20) a. **Kíghì** i **Sọlá wá** -----i?
Qw Sọlá arrive
'When did Sọlá come?'
- b. **Sọlá wá nà ago mẹta.**
Sọlá come by three o'clock.
'Sọlá came by three o'clock.'
- (21) a. **Kése; di Adé lù Òjó** -----i?
Qw did Adé beat Ojo?
'Why did Adé beat Ojo?'
- b. **Adé lù Òjó toghí toghó.**
Adé beats Ojo reason money
'Adé beat Ojo because of money.'
- (22) a. **Kése; di Adé lo uli**-----i?
Qw did Adé go home
'Why did Adé go home?'
- b. **Adé lọ Ulí toghí Òjò**
Ade go home reason rain
'Adé went home because of rain.'

Moreover, there are cases where the nominal that occur after the verb becomes question words when they are moved to sentence initial position. This is demonstrated in 23a-25a

- (23) a. **Kíyì** i **wé fẹ** -----i ?
Qw 2sg want
'Which one do you want?'
- b. **Wò fẹ ìyí .**
2sg want this
'You want this.'
- (24) a. **Kóna; ghén gbà** -----i?
Qw way pass
'Which way did he pass?'
- b. **Ó gbà ọnà-ẹn**
3sg pass way that
'He passed that way.'
- (25) a. **Kúṣe wé ti ẹ** -----?
Qw 2sg asp. do
'How did you do it?'
- b. **Wò ẹ bí ẹyí**
2sg do like this
'You did it like this.'

Based on the data presented in (11a-25a) above, we demonstrate that content interrogative words occur at the sentence initial position. However, the instances of the occurrence of the content question word at the sentence final position seen in (11b-16b) are cases of echo questions. The echo questions in Oñdó dialect such as (11b-16b) are used to express surprise or amazement or request that part of a sentence be repeated for clarity. The examples presented in (19-25) show clearly that they have no echo counterparts; the simple explanation for this is

that derived content question words most especially with *kí* prefix are not always accompanied by focus. As shown in examples (11a-25a) above, one will observe that the question words in Oñdó are not followed by a focus maker when they occur at the sentence initial position. Ajiboye (2006:29) shows that content question words in Mòbà dialect prohibit *in* focus marker when they are moved to the sentence initial position but the focus is overt in the echo questions. See the examples 26a and b:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (26) a. Kí Ikúnlé rà?
What NP buy
'What did Ikúnlé buy?' | b. Ikúnlé rà kín in?
buy what foc
'Kúnlé bought what?
(echo question)' |
|---|---|

In addition, we also observe that each of the question words in Oñdó dialect is a noun, an adverb or a noun-qualifier at their base before they are turned to content interrogative words at the sentence initial position.

However, apart from these stated facts above, one also notices that question words in Oñdó dialect are disyllabic except for *Kí* 'what' *kẹ* 'where' *sá* 'where'. We suspect that *èlú* 'how much' and *èsí* 'who' must have been derived through *è* prefix to the root. We also notice that when the morphemes in the two words *èlú* and *èsí* are divided, the morphemes will lose their meanings. Our explanation for this is that in the historical development of the dialect the meanings of the roots *lù* and *sí* have been lost in the present day usage. However, Èkiti dialect has *sí* which can be attached to a noun to derive question words such as *omọ sí* 'which child' and *ona sí* 'which way' and it can take a prefix as well. Akintoye and Adeoye (2014) note a similar thing in some dialects of Yorùbá. Consider the examples 27:

- | | | |
|------|--------------------|---------------------|
| | | Gloss |
| (27) | Èkitì | ì sí 'who' |
| | Ègbá/Ìjẹ̀bú | Lè sí 'who' |
| | Ìjẹ̀ṣà | Yè sí 'who' |
| | Ìtsẹ̀kírì | Nè sín 'who' |
| | Ìyàgbà | Nè ghí 'who' |

From the illustration in (27) above, one can argue that *èlú* and *èsí* must have been derived through *è* prefixation. This argument advanced here is supported by the fact that *èwó* 'which' and *mélòó* 'how many' in SY are derived through the process of prefixation:

- | | | |
|------|-----------------|-----------------|
| (28) | | Gloss |
| | è # wó | prefix + which |
| | mú # èló | take + how much |

Based on this fact and the robust nature of prefixation as a morphological process in Ondo dialect, we can conclude that *èsí* 'who' is derived just like the examples in (28) while *èlu* (how much) is one morpheme just like *èló* 'how much' in SY that is not derived. Moreover, the disyllabic question words that are derived through *kí* prefixation as shown in (17a& 25a) are sustained in Oñdó dialect simply because there is no basic question word that denotes time, place, reason, manner and selection in the dialect. As a result, the dialect prefix *kí* which is the

basic question word to other nouns to derive the question words, thus, we propose these underlying forms for these question words:

(29)			Gloss
	Kí	# ibi/íbẹ̀	‘what + place’ (where)
	Kí	# ighi	‘what + time’ (when)
	Kí	# ùṣe	‘what + reason’ (how)
	Kí	# ònà	‘what + road’ (which way)
	Kí	# iyí	‘what + one’ (which one)

In (29) above, one observes that the basic question word is the *kí* that is attached to the nouns to derive other question words. In the Standard Yoruba, *wo* ‘which’ is often times added to nouns to derive other question words like *ilé wo* ‘which house’, *ònà wo* ‘which way’ among others. Ajiboye (2006:33) notes the same situation in Mòbà dialect where noun is attached to *sí/sín* to derive the following question words:

(30)		Gloss
	Kàbi sí/sín	‘where’
	Èlò sí/sín	‘how much’
	Ùgbà sí/sín	‘when’
	Ùse sí/sín	‘how’

We see instances of vowel elision across morpheme boundary in the examples (17a-25a). According to Abiodun (2005), elision is a phonological process which involves the loss of a vowel in a word or across morpheme or word boundary. In (17a) and (25a), we notice that the vowel of the question word *kí* is elided before the noun that begins with a vowel. We also observe that the high tone of the front high vowel re-aligns with the first tone bearing unit of the noun that precedes it and then simplifies to a high tone.

5.1 Other Content Question Phrase Sentences in Òndó

Kẹ̀ and *sá* content question words/phrases in the Òndó dialect do not involve question phrase movement. The question markers have been traditionally analysed as verbs and there is no evidence of operator movement in their derivations. See examples 31 and 32:

(31) a.	Òun kẹ̀ 3 rd sg Qw ‘How is he?’	*b.	Òun ti kẹ̀? 3 rd sg asp. Qw
(32) a.	Òun sá ? 3 rd sg Qw ‘Where is he?’	*b.	Òun ti sá? 3 rd sg asp. Qw

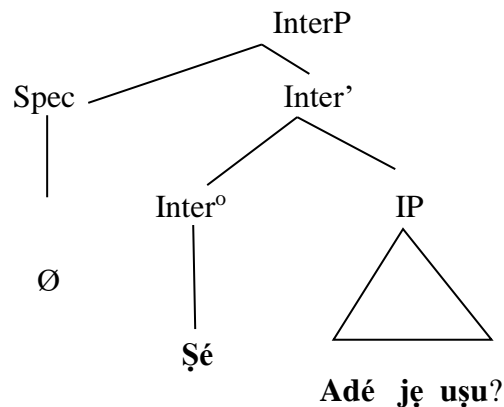
It must be noted that *kẹ̀* is used to show the situation of things while *sá* is used to show the exact location of things or people. Thus, the question word *kẹ̀* has the semantics of making inquiry about the welfare of the person in question. As expressed in Ilori (2010), there is no syntactic justification to show *dà* and *ńkọ̀* are verbal question phrases in Yorùbá. Also, in Òndó dialect, the phrases *sá* and *kẹ̀* have similar shape and same syntactic distribution. This study agrees with the position of Ilori (2010) because the question words cannot be preceded by a

preverbal particle, take DP or PP object and they cannot be reduplicated. Thus, the name question phrase/word is more plausible than verbal question word because they do not exhibit the features of verb in the examples. In this study, we adopt question phrase/word for *sá* and *kè* pending further proof.

6. Derivation of Polar Interrogative sentences in Oñdó Dialect

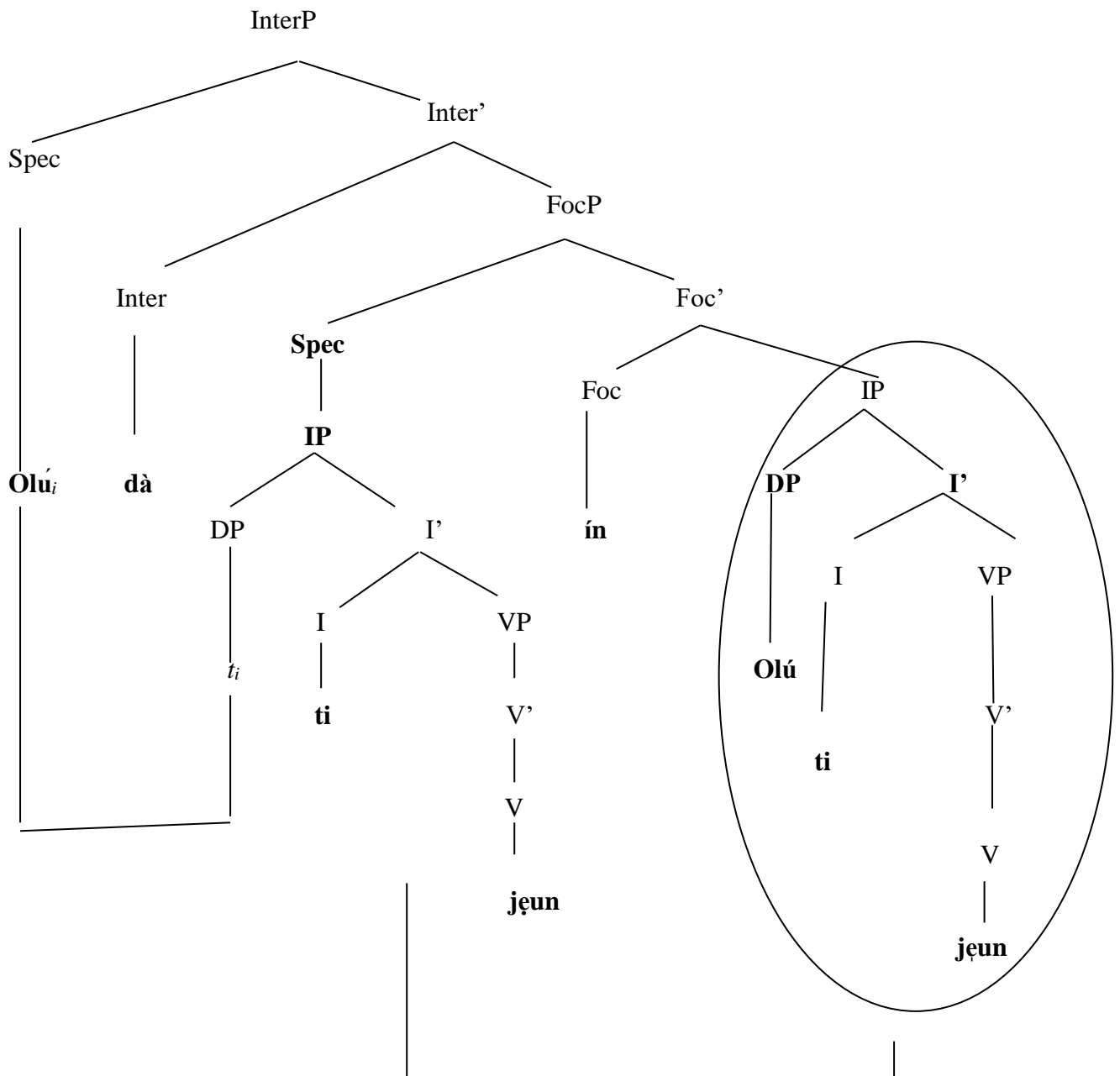
In deriving the polar interrogative sentence in Oñdó dialect, we proposed Inter head that selects Fin/IP to project maximally below ForceP. We observe that polar interrogative sentences where the polar interrogative marker is spelled-out at clause initial position; the marker/head remain in-situ. See the tree diagram in (33a) for the illustration.

(33) a.



However, for polar interrogative sentences where the polar question marker is spelled-out at medial position with a focus marker at the final position; it is argued that both the Inter head and the focus marker occur at sentence initial position, that is, the left periphery of the IP. Thus, we propose multiple CP layers above IP which are InterP and FocP. In this case, it logically follows that Foc head externally merges with Fin/IP which projects into Foc' and FocP. Thus, the Foc head becomes the probe which attracts the Fin/ IP which is the active goal to Spec FocP. The Fin/IP moves to Spec FocP to satisfy the EPP feature. Moreover, the Inter head externally merges with FocP, the Inter head becomes the probe which attracts the subject DP at the Spec IP which is the active goal to Spec InterP to satisfy the EPP feature. The tree diagram in (33b) illustrates the syntactic projection.

(33) b.

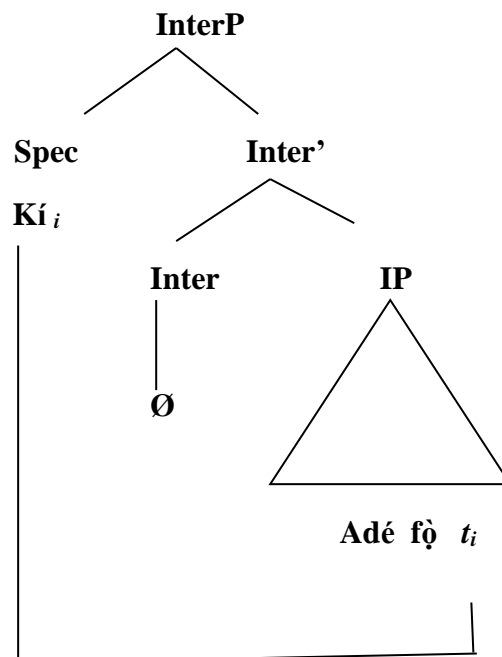


6.1 Derivation of Content Interrogative Sentences in Oñdó Dialect

In the derivation of content interrogative sentences in the Oñdó dialect, I adopted the movement analysis approach bearing in mind that the content question word head has a strong feature which must be checked before spell-out within the minimalist framework. Thus, the Wh-operators head feature must check the **Feature question (F_{Qst})** to eliminate the strong feature of **Question (Q_{st})** (Chomsky 1995:289). Given this fact, I proposed an **Interrogative Phrase (InterP)** where the content question phrase (Content Question Word operator) is raised to **Spec**

InterP, the **Inter head** position is phonetically empty and it selects **IP** as its complement. The structural derivation is presented in (34)

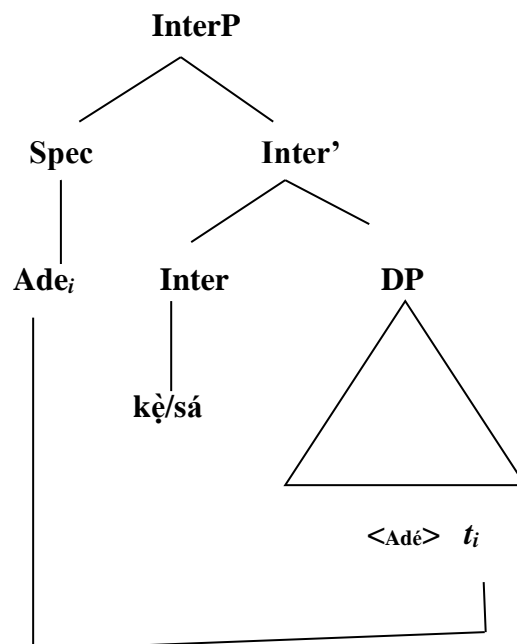
(34)



6.2 The Derivation of other Content Question Phrase Sentences in Oñdó

In accounting for the derivation of interrogative sentences with *kẹ̀/sá* interrogative words, I assume that the structure is a truncated IP, as a result, I proposed that **Inter head** merges with DP to project **Inter'** and **InterP** respectively. The **Inter head** which is the probe attracts the DP to **Spec- InterP**, the movement of the DP is licensed to satisfy the EPP and eliminates the strong feature of **Spec- InterP**. The structural derivation is presented in (35)

35)



7. Conclusion

In this study, we have examined question formations in Oñdó dialect of Yorùbá, the structures and their derivations. We observed that the polar question words are *Şé/dà...í/in* and the mechanism of derivation follows the same pattern of the SY except for *dà* which is obligatorily followed by a focus maker. We have also shown that some of the content question phrases are formed through *kí* prefixation while others are not derived. We established that content interrogative sentences are derived through the movement of the content question word to the sentence initial position. It is also shown that when the content question phrases are moved they are not accompanied by focus marker.

Abbreviations

InterP	Interrogative Phrase
Inter ^o	Interrogative head
FocP	Focus Phrase
Foc	Focus
IP	Inflectional Phrase
I	Inflection

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