

Journal of Universal Language 23-2. September 2022, 77-108
DOI 10.22425/jul.2022.23.2.77
eISSN 2508-5344

Typology of Constituent Interrogatives in Central Yorùbá Dialects: A Minimalist Description

Emmanuel Oṃṃniyi Oláńrewájú
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper is an in-depth analysis of constituent interrogatives in Central Yorùbá (CY) dialects, detailing the forms and strategies employed for them with a view to examining the features that CY dialects as a group exhibit in common. Primary and secondary data were collected and subjected to syntactic analysis. This paper adopts the split CP hypothesis of Noam Chomsky's minimalist program (MP) of generative grammar. CY dialects use question nouns (QNs),

Emmanuel Oṃṃniyi Oláńrewájú
Lecturer, Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Language, Olabisi Onabanjo University,
Nigeria
Email: lanrewajuprestige@yahoo.com

Received 18 June, 2022; Revised 27 August, 2022; Accepted 23 September, 2022

Copyright © 2022 Language Research Institute, Sejong University
Journal of Universal Language is an Open Access Journal. All articles are distributed online
under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0>) which permits unrestricted non-commercial
use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

question verb (QV) and interrogative qualifiers to form their non-echoed questions. In CY dialects, the QN *kà* in *kabi* (*ka ibi*) ‘where’ does not move through the spec FocP, it is externally merged at the spec-InterP. Implying that not all QNs occupy the spec FocP in constituent interrogatives in the dialects. Focus markers *ni*, *li* and *ri* are also optionally dropped in the dialects.

Keywords: central Yorùbá dialects, constituent interrogatives, dialectal variation, question marker, minimalist program

1. Introduction

Yorùbá dialects, unlike standard Yorùbá, began to attract the interest of language scholars in the last two decades. Therefore, adequate attention is still needed to be paid to research studies of these dialects. This prompted Awóbùlúyì (1998) to call the attention of Yorùbá scholars to take advantage of exploring Yorùbá dialects. Olúmúyiwá (2006) also remarks that any endeavour in line with Awóbùlúyì’s appeal above will invariably have immediate and long-term benefits for Yorùbá studies, especially on things that these dialects can teach us about the structure of standard Yorùbá. A considerable amount of research works have been carried out on the delimitation of Yorùbá dialects; Among these are Akinkugbe (1976), Oyèláràn (1976), Adetugbo (1982), Awóbùlúyì (1998) and Adéníyì & Òjò (2005). These aforementioned works use linguistic features like vowel phonemes, consonant phonemes, pronominal system and so on to delimit Yorùbá dialects. According to Awóbùlúyì (1998), CY¹

¹ The following abbreviations are used in this paper: CP (complementiser phrase), CY (Central Yorùbá), DP (determiner phrase), EF (edge feature), FOC (focus marker), FocP (focus phrase), InterP (interrogative phrase), LF (logical form), NEG (negative marker), PF (phonetic form), PIC (phase impenetrability condition),

dialects comprise Ifè, Ìjèṣà, Èkìtì and Mòbà.

Interrogatives are concerned with requesting for pieces of information. König & Siemund (2007) and Issah (2013: 4) opine that, based on syntactic and semantic properties, interrogatives across world languages can be classified into constituent and polar questions. Issah (2013) claims that interrogatives constitute ‘a linguistic device for the identification of a piece of information considered to be prominently new’. According to Kroeger (2004) in Issah (2013: 56), a question word bears pragmatic focus because it specifies the crucial piece of new information required. Aboh (2007) claims that focused interrogative words and their non-focused counterparts have different formal licensing and information structures of answers. To him, focus constituents and *wh*-phrases are closely related for the fact that they interact in question and answer pairs, and they are mutually exclusive in many languages. According to Ouhalla (1996), *wh*-questions in natural languages differ with respect to their morphological and semantic properties. In line with this, QNs in standard Yorùbá and CY dialects exhibit some ontological differences with English and some other languages. Unlike English *wh*-phrases, QNs are never used except in question formation (Olánrewájú & Taiwo 2020, 2021; Olánrewájú 2022). There are four sections in this paper: Section 1 is the general introduction. Section 2 passes remarks on some extant works on interrogatives in Yorùbá. Section 3 discusses strategies for forming constituent interrogatives in CY dialects while Section 4 provides conclusive remarks.

PISH (predicate internal subject hypothesis), PP (prepositional phrase), PRM (pre-modifier), PROG (progressive marker), PSM (post-modifier), QF (question feature), QM (question marker), QN (question noun), QP (question phrase), QV (question verb), res (resumptive pronoun), TP (tense phrase), vF (verb feature), vP (light verb phrase), WAC (Wh-attraction condition).

2. Previous Works on Interrogatives in Yorùbá

Awóbùlúyì (1978) classifies question forms in Yorùbá into two: content word questions and non-content word questions, and he identifies five ways of forming both: interrogative nouns, interrogative verbs, interrogative qualifiers, interrogative modifiers and intonational accent with great loudness or pitch rising (Olánrewájú 2017). Each of these methods is depicted in the examples below:

- (1) a. Interrogative nouns (ta, kí, èwo and so on):
Ta ni èyí?
QN be this
'Who is this?'
- b. Interrogative verbs (dà, òkò)
Owó dà?
Money QV
'Where is the money?'
- c. Interrogative qualifiers
Aṣọ wo ni Olú rà?
Cloth QM FOC Olú buy
'Which cloth did Olú buy?'
- d. Interrogative modifier (bí)
Wón lọ bí?
They go QM
'Did they go?'

e. Use of intonational accent

È rí Adéwálé?

You see Adéwálé

‘Did you see Adéwálé?’

According to Bamgbose (1990: 183–186), the following items are operated to form questions in Yorùbá: interrogative nouns, interrogative verbs, question particles, interrogative conjunctions, interrogative modifiers, interrogative qualifiers and preverbal QMs.

Awóbùlúyì (2013) disregards *dà* and *ńkó* as QVs in Yorùbá and refers to them as (interrogative) qualifiers. His arguments are based on the distributional restriction placed on these items. According to him, *dà* and *ńkó* are classified alongside *kó*, *ni*, *kẹ* and *wẹ* as shown in (2) below:

- (2) a. Ìwọ *ni* (You are)
 b. Ìwọ *kó* (You are not ...)
 c. Ìwọ *dà* (Where are you?)
 d. Ìwọ *ńkó* (What of you)
 e. Ìwọ *kẹ* (You!)
 f. Ìwọ *wẹ* (You!)

(Awóbùlúyì 2013: 72)

A cursory look at (3) below evidently reveals that the boldly written items are not qualifiers, they have different grammatical functions in (2) above.

- (3) Òjò tún **ń** rọ *kẹ/wẹ/*ni*.
 Òjò still PROG fall PSM
 ‘The rain is still falling!’

The question begging for explanatory adequacy on (3) above is ‘what are the italicised items qualifying?’ Therefore, for more plausible grammar, all environments where all these items occur must be surveyed and discussed before we can determine either their grammatical functions or their categorial status. It should be equally noted that only examples (2c) and (2d) above are predicate clauses (Taiwo & Abimbola 2014, Oláńrewájú 2022). Ajíbóyè (2006: 32) identifies the following as examples of *in-situ* content word questions in Yorùbá.

- (4) a. Ta ni?
 Who FOC
 ‘Who is s/he?’
- b. Kí ni?
 What FOC
 ‘What is it?’
- c. Níbo ni?
 Where FOC
 ‘Where is it?’
- d. Èlọ́ ni?
 How much FOC
 ‘How much is it?’

A cursory look at the examples above reveals that they are truncated forms unlike (5) below.

- (5) a. Ta ni o kí?
 QN FOC you greet
 ‘Who did you greet?’
- b. Kí ni o rà?
 QN FOC you buy
 ‘What did you buy?’
- c. Níbo ni o ti wá?
 At-QN FOC you have come
 ‘Where are you from?’
- d. Èlò ni o rà?
 QN FOC you buy
 ‘How much did you buy it?’

The preposition *ni* is not pied-piped with the QN, but gets deleted in (5d) above. It is assumed that the reason behind this irregularity is that *èlò* ‘how much’ is used to elicit information about price. This is not peculiar to *èlò* as a QN alone, it is also applicable to other nouns in this category. Let us consider the examples below:

- (6) a. [TP Olùkò rà ìwé [PP ní [DP sílè mэта]]]
 Teacher buy book at pence three
 ‘The teacher bought the book three pence.’
- b. [FOCP Sílè mэта ni [TP Olùkò ra
 Pence three FOC teacher buy
 ìwé [PP Ø [DP <sílè mэта>]]].
 book
 ‘The teacher bought the book THREE PENCE.’

- c. *_{[FocP Ni sílè mēta ni [TP Olùkó ra At pence three FOC teacher buy ìwé [PP < ní sílè mēta>]]]}.
book
- d. _{[TP Olùkó ra ìwé [PP ní àná]]}
Teacher buy book at yesterday
'The teacher bought a book YESTERDAY.'
- e. _{[FocP Ní àná ni [TP olùkó ra ìwé [PP <ní àná>]]]}.
At yesterday FOC teacher buy book
'The teacher bought a book YESTERDAY.'
- f. _{[FocP Àná ni [TP olùkó ra ìwé [PP ø<àná>]]]}.
Yesterday FOC teacher buy book
'The teacher bought a book YESTERDAY.'

As evident in (6e) and (6f) above, the preposition *ni* is optionally deleted or pied-piped with the DP *àná* “yesterday” to the clause left periphery unlike (6b) and (6c) above. The derivation in (6c) crashes because the preposition *ní* is pied-piped with the moved DP. The conclusion borne out of this is that what Ajíbóyè (2006) refers to as *in-situ* content word questions in (4b) repeated as (7a) below, for ease of reference, is an elliptical form. The QN *kí* is not base-generated at the object position in (7a) unlike (7b) below, adapted from Àkanbi (2016: 418).

- (7) a. Kí ni?
QN FOC
'What is it?'

Yorùbá, unlike Inter⁰. Consequent on this, the Inter⁰ cannot trigger the syntactic movement of the QN to the clause left periphery.

3. Formation of Constituent Interrogatives in CY Dialects

Content word questions in CY dialects are formed using QNs, QVs and interrogative modifiers.

3.1. QNs in CY Dialects

QNs in CY are shown in Table 1 (Ọláńrewájú 2022: 131):

Table 1. QNs in CY Dialects

Concept	QN	Gloss
Human/Person	yèsí/ìsì	who
Non-human/manner	kí	what/how
Enumerative	melòó	how many
Price	èlò	how much
Location	kà, (ka ibi)/ibi sí	where
Time	ìgba/ùgbà sí	when
Frequency	èèkelòó (èrìn kelòó)	what round

In Table 1, *ibi sí* ‘where’ and *ìgbà sí* ‘when’ are QPs. The QM (interrogative qualifier), *sí*, in each of the phrases has its interrogative feature percolated through the entire phrase (Ajíbóyè 2005, Ọláńrewájú & Táíwò 2020). Now, let us consider how these QNs are

operated in CY dialects.

3.1.1. Yèsí/Ìsí (Who)

- (9) a. Ifẹ̀ : Yèsí ni ó mí pè mi?
 Ìjẹ̀sà: Yèsí li ó mí pè mi?
 Adó-Èkiti: Ìsí ó í pè mi?
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Ìsí ọ̀ó í pè mi?
 QN FOC res PROG call me
 ‘Who called me?’
- b. Ifẹ̀ : Yèsí ó jẹ ị̀şu?
 Ìjẹ̀sà: Yèsí ó jẹ uşu?
 Adó-Èkiti: Ìsí ó jẹ uşu?
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Ìsí ọ̀ó jẹ ị̀şu?
 QN res eat yam
 ‘Who ate yam?’

CY dialects also optionally drop FOC as shown in (9) above. QNs are extracted from the subject positions to the clause left periphery to check the [+Focus] and the [+Q, EF] on the Foc-head and the Inter⁰.

3.1.2. Kí (What/How)

As shown on Table 1, CY dialects use *kí* to question after two things: non-human referents and manner (how). Let us consider how *kí* is used to elicit information about non-human referents before we return to discussing how it is operated to question manner.

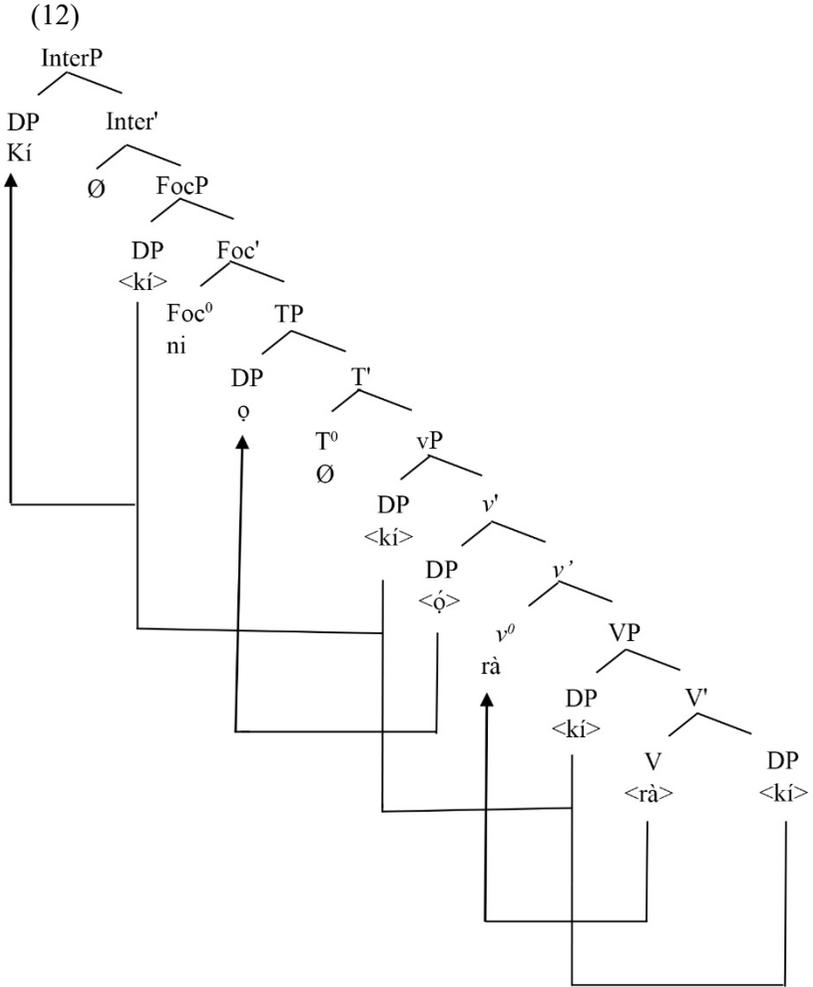
- (10) a. Ifẹ̀: Kí ni ọ rà?
 Ìjẹ̀sà: Kí li ọ rà?
 Adó-Èkiti: Kí ọ rà
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Kí ọ́ọ̀ rà?
 QN FOC you buy
 ‘What did you buy?’
- b. Ifẹ̀: Kí ni ighán mú há?
 Ìjẹ̀sà: Kí i án mú há?
 Adó-Èkiti: Kí án mú há?
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Kí án-àn mú há?
 QN FOC they take come
 ‘What did they bring?’

Èkiti and Mọ̀bà drop the FOC as shown in (10) above. The QN, object DP is extracted to the clause left periphery from the vP domain in each of the examples. Now, let us consider the usage of *kí* (how) in the questioning manner in CY dialects.

- (11) a. Ifẹ̀
 Kí ẹ ẹ ẹ ẹ é?
 QN you PRM do it
 ‘How did you do it?’
- b. Ìjẹ̀sà
 Kí ìan Ujẹ̀sà ẹ é jọ?
 QN they Ijẹ̀sà PRM PROG dance
 ‘How do Ìjẹ̀sà people dance?’

- c. Adó-Èkítì
Kí in ɕe gbó?
QN you PRM hear
'How did you hear?'
- d. Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà
Kí ọ̀ó ɕe mọ̀?
QN you PRM know
'How did you know?'

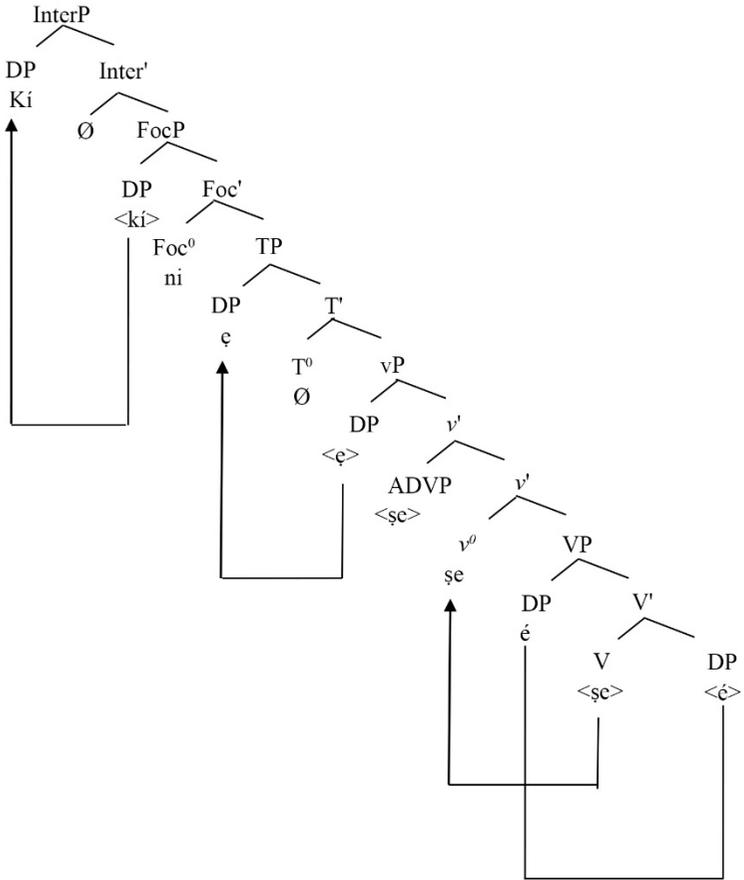
In (11) above, the QN *kí* enters the derivation at the clause left periphery. The tree diagram in (12) and (13) elucidate more on how *kí* is used for non-human referents (what) and manner (how) respectively.



In (12) above, the QN originates from the vP domain. The derivation goes thus: The lexical verb *rà* ‘buy’ merges with *kí* ‘what’ to project the v-bar *ra kí* ‘buy what’ in line with c-selection

requirement of the verb (V^0). The second person singular subject pronoun ϱ ‘you’ is copied to the spec VP to have its [+case] feature checked. The derivation proceeds by merging the null performative light verb with the VP to project the ν -bar. The strong νF on the light ν^0 attracts the lexical verb $r\grave{a}$ ‘buy’ to adjoin to itself. The second person singular subject pronoun ϱ ‘you’ is externally merged at the inner spec νP in line with the PISH. The QN $k\acute{i}$ is then copied to the outer spec νP , an escape hatch from PIC. This invariably allows it to be visible to further operations in the course of the derivation. The derivation proceeds by externally merging the abstract T^0 with the νP to project the T-bar. The T^0 as a probe attracts ϱ to the spec TP to check its [+case, EPP] feature. The derivation proceeds by merging the FOC ni with TP to project the Foc-bar. The Foc^0 as a potential probe searches its c-command domain and attracts the QN, $k\acute{i}$ to the spec FocP to have its [+Foc] feature checked. The derivation still proceeds by externally merging the abstract $Inter^0$ with the FocP to project the Inter-bar. The $Inter^0$ as a potential probe attracts the QN $k\acute{i}$ to the spec InterP to check its [+Q, EF] through specifier and head agreement. In (13) below, the QN, $k\acute{i}$ ‘how’ does not originate from within the νP domain unlike (12) above.

(13)



The derivation (in (13)) above goes as follows: The lexical verb *şe* ‘do’ merges with the third person singular object pronoun *é* ‘it’ to project the V-bar *şe é* ‘do it’ in line with c-selection requirement of the verb (V^0). The same the third person singular object pronoun *é* ‘it’ is copied to the spec VP to have its [+case] feature checked. The

- (14) a. Ifẹ̀
 Mélòó ni ẹ̀ fẹ́?
 QN FOC you need
 ‘How many do you need?’
- b. Adó-Èkiti
 Èlò in a rà á?
 QN you will buy it
 ‘How much will you buy it?’
- c. Ìjẹ̀sà
 È̀̀kelòó ni yèé jé?
 QN FOC this be
 ‘What round is this?’
- d. Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà
 Ìgbà sí in-in dé?
 Time QM you arrive
 ‘When did you arrive?’

È̀̀kelòó is used in the place of *igba kelòó* “what round” operated by standard Yorùbá. *It* can be decomposed to *ẹ̀rìn kelòó* while *ẹ̀lẹ̀̀kelòó* can be decomposed to *oní ẹ̀rìn kelòó*. The entire QPs in (14c) and (14d) are preposed to the clause left periphery in line with WAC in (15) below:

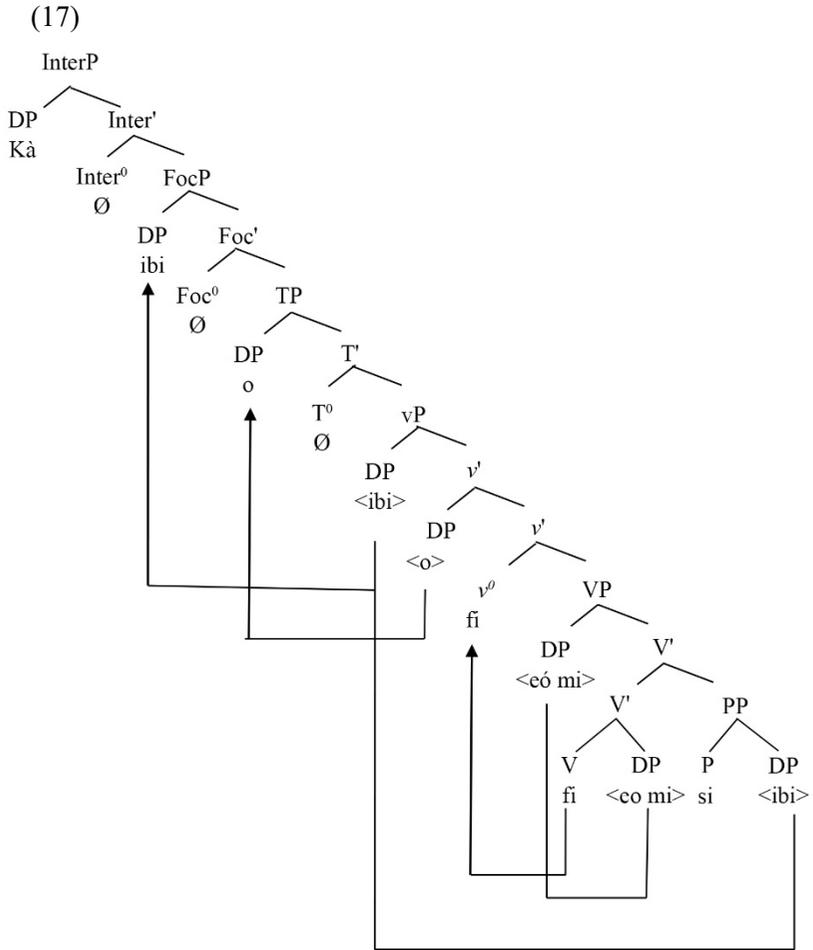
- (15) The edge feature on C attracts the smallest possible maximal projection containing the closest wh-word to move spec C.
 (Radford 2009: 216)

3.1.4. Kà (Where)

CY dialects use this QN to request for the location of referents. It is operated in two ways: One, it can be externally merged at the pragmatic domain of a derivation. When used in this form, *kà* is used alongside *ibi* ‘place’, a DP base generated within the *vP* domain. Let us consider (16a)–(16d) and (17) (the phrase-marker of (16a)) below. CY also alternate *ibi sí* with *kabi* as shown in (16e) below.

- (16) a. Ìjèsà
 Kà ibi (kabi) o fi eó mi sí?
 QN place you put money me to
 ‘Where did you put my money?’
- b. Ifẹ̀
 Kà ibi (kabi) o fi oó mi sí?
 QN place you put money me to
 ‘Where did you put my money?’
- c. Àdó-Èkítì
 Kà ibi (kabi) o mu eó mi sí?
 QN place you take money me to
 ‘Where did you put my money?’
- d. Ọ̀tùn Mòbà
 Kà ibi (kabi) oó mu eó mi sí?
 QN place you take money me to
 ‘Where did you put my money?’

e. *ibi sí ọ́ọ ti ghá?*
 Place QM you from come
 ‘Where did you come from?’



The derivation in (17) above goes thus: The verb *fi* ‘put’ merges

with the DP *eó mi* ‘my money’ in order to satisfy its c-selection requirement of the verb (V^0), and consequently projects the lower V-bar. The lower V-bar merges with the PP *sí ibi* to project the higher the V-bar. The object DP *eó mi* is copied to the spec VP to have its [+case] feature checked. The derivation proceeds by merging the null performative light verb v^0 with the VP to form the v -bar. The strong vF on the light v^0 attracts the lexical verb *fí* ‘put’ to adjoin to itself. The second person singular subject pronoun *o* ‘you’ is externally merged with the inner spec vP in line with the PISH, which conditions a subject DP to be base-generated within the predicate. The outer spec vP then becomes the escape hatch for the DP *ibi* ‘place’ so as to be licensed from the PIC, and also to be actively available for subsequent operations. The derivation proceeds by merging the T^0 with the vP to project the T-bar. The T^0 as a probe searches its c-command domain and attracts *o* ‘you’ to the spec TP where its [+case, EPP] feature is checked. The derivation proceeds by merging the abstract Foc^0 to project the Foc-bar. The Foc^0 as a probe attracts the DP *ibi* ‘place’ to spec FocP to check its [+Focus] feature. The derivation still proceeds by merging the abstract $Inter^0$ with the FocP to project the Inter-bar. Now, the QN *ka* is externally merged at the spec InterP to check the [+Q, EF] on the $Inter^0$ through specifier and head agreement. Our analysis above has the following two implications: One, *kà*, the QN does not move through the spec FocP in (17) above. Two, CY dialects do not operate *kabi* as a QN, therefore, the QN in (17) is *kà* which is externally merged at the spec-InterP in line with the interrogative condition in (18) proposed by Radford (2009).

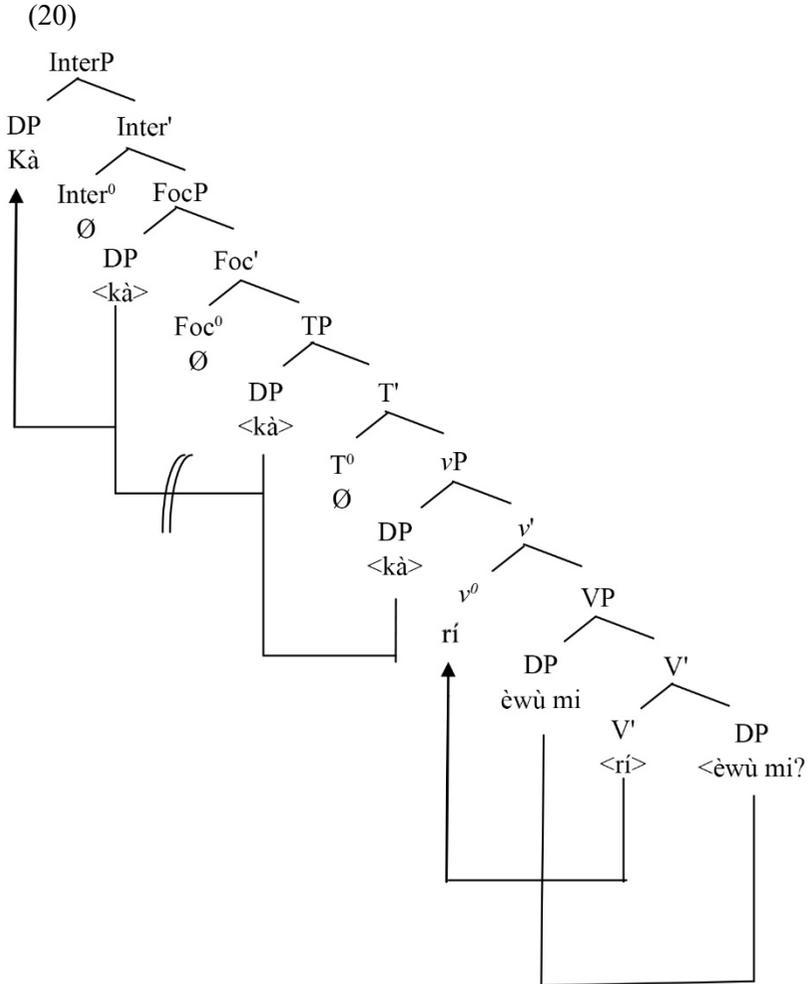
- (18) A clause is interpreted as a non-echoic question (if and only if) it is a CP with an interrogative specifier (i.e., a specifier containing an interrogative word).

(Radford 2009: 194)

Apart from the first usage of *kà* discussed above, the item can also be base-generated within the *vP* domain as shown in the examples below:

- (19) a. Ìjèsà
Kà rí in?
QN see you
'Where are you?'
- b. Ifẹ̀
Kà rí èwù mi?
QN see shirt me
'Where is my shirt?'
- c. Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà
Kà rí ilé rìn?
QN see house his
'Where is his house?'
- d. Adó-Èkìtì
Kà rí ulé rẹ̀?
QN see house his
'Where is his house?'

The phrase-marker below (20) illustrates better.



In (20) above *kà* is merged at the spec vP to satisfy the PISH. The same QN moves to the spec TP for onward valuation of the [+EPP,

case] feature on the T⁰. The implication borne out of this is that *kà* functions as a subject QN in CY dialects.

3.2. Interrogative Qualifiers in CY Dialects

CY dialects employ two methods to operate this: One, they use *sí* and *kelòó* (interrogative qualifiers) with a head noun, and two, they use any of the QNs discussed above to qualify a preceding noun. Let us consider the examples below on the first method:

- (21) a. Adó-Èkiti
 Eó sí ọ hún mi?
 Money QM you give me
 ‘Which money did you give me?’
- b. Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà
 Ìwé sí ọ́ọ́ í kà?
 Book QM you PROG read
 ‘Which book are you reading?’
- c. Ifẹ̀
 Ìgbà *kelòó* rẹ̀é?
 Time QM be-this
 ‘What number of times is this?’
- d. Ìjẹ̀sà
 Upò *kelòó* li yèé?
 Position QM be this
 ‘What position is this?’

The [+Q] feature on *sí/kelòó* percolates through the head nouns in

the examples above. The entire DPs i.e., the head nouns and their complements form the QPs. Now, let us consider the following examples on the second method.

- (22) a. Ìjèsà
 Ọmọ yèsí ò rẹ?
 Child QN you be
 ‘Whose child are you?’
- b. Ọtùn Mòbà
 Ilé kabi ọ í gbé?
 House QN you PROG live
 ‘Which house do you stay?’
- c. Ifẹ
 Ọmọ yèsí ni ọ?
 Child QN be you
 ‘Whose child are you?’
- d. Adó- Èkìtì
 Ulé kabi ọ í gbé?
 House QN you PROG live
 ‘Which house do you stay?’

The QNs all qualify their head nouns in the above examples. Their [+Q] feature percolates through the entire phrases (QPs). They function as qualifiers similarly to the italicised nouns (nominal qualifiers) in (23) below:

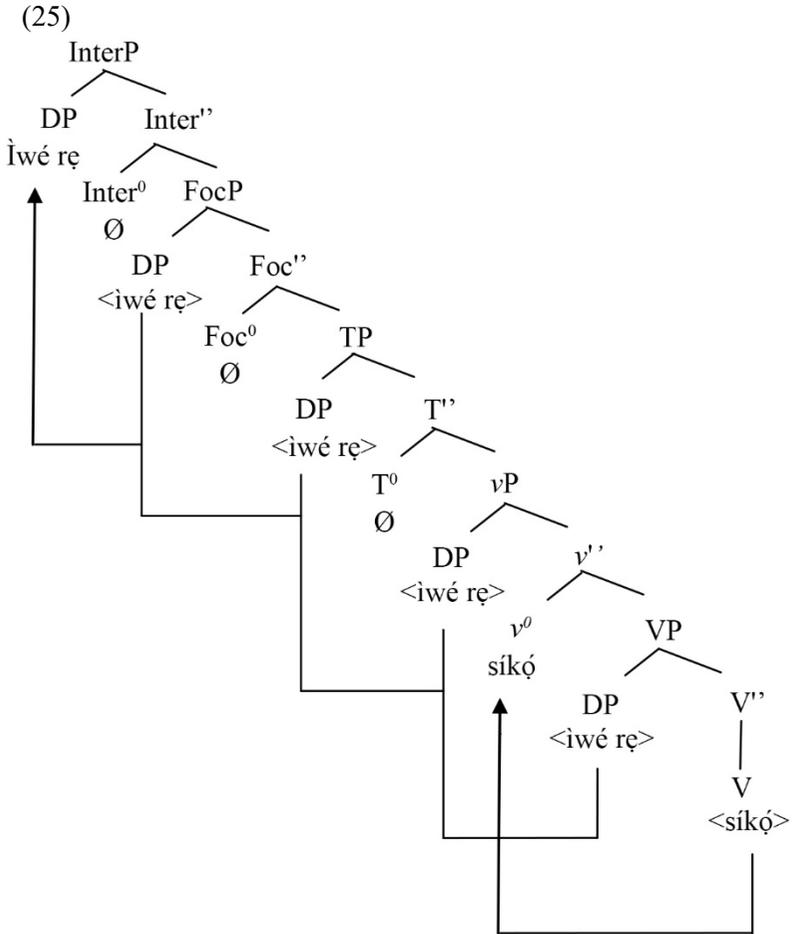
- (23) a. Ìjẹ̀ṣà/Èkìtì
 Àábá Oyè re ulú Uléèṣà
 Father Oyè go town Iléṣà
 ‘Oyè’s father went to Iléṣà.’
- b. Ifẹ̀
 Ọmọ olùkó ṣe ipò kìn-ín-ní.
 Child teacher do position first’
 ‘The teacher’s child came first.’

3.3. QV in CY Dialects

A QV is a specified [+Q] feature and is used to elicit information from an interlocutor (Munro 2012, Taiwo & Abimbola 2014, Olánrewájú 2022). CY dialects operate *síkó* either to form a content word question interrogatives (seeking the location of referents) or a rhetorical question, as respectively shown in (24) below:

- (24) a. Ifẹ̀: Ìwé re síkó?
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà: Ùwé re síkó?
 Èkìtì: Ùwé re síkó?
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Ìwé rìn síkó?
 Book your QV
 ‘Where is your book?’
- b. Ifẹ̀: Ùwọ síkó, ó ò lè gbé e?
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà: Ùwọ síkó, ó ò yè gbé e?
 Èkìtì: Ùwọ síkó, ó ò yè gbé e?
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Ùwọ síkó, òó ò yè gbé e?
 You QV you NEG can carry it
 ‘What of you, can’t you carry it?’

The QV *síkó* forms the predicate in (24a). The derivation in (24b) is a compound sentence, implying that *síkó* is never operated to form a rhetorical question in a simple clause. The tree diagram in (25) illustrates the derivation (in (24a)) above.



The derivation in (25) goes as follows: The DP *ìwé rẹ̀* ‘your book’ is externally merged with the QV *síkó* to project the VP in line with the PISH. The null performative light verb v^0 externally merges with the VP to project the v-bar. The strong vF on the performative light verb attracts the QV to adjoin to itself. The DP *ìwé rẹ̀* is attracted to the spec vP to be visible to subsequent syntactic operations. The derivation proceeds by merging the abstract T^0 with the vP to project the T-bar. The T^0 as a probe attracts the DP *ìwé rẹ̀* to the spec TP to check its [+case, EPP] feature. *Ìwé rẹ̀* is, therefore, a valued nominative case. The derivation proceeds by externally merging the abstract Foc^0 with the TP to project the Foc-bar. The Foc^0 as a potential probe attracts the DP *ìwé rẹ̀* to the spec FocP to check its [+Focus] feature. The derivation still proceeds by merging the abstract $Inter^0$ with the FocP to project the Inter-bar. The $Inter^0$ as a potential probe attracts the DP *ìwé rẹ̀* to the spec InterP to check its [+EF] through specifier and head agreement. The [+Q] feature on the abstract $Inter^0$ is too weak to trigger the overt movement of the DP *ìwé rẹ̀*. The focus projection is activated consequent upon the question-answer pair of this form of interrogative (Aboh 2007, Taiwo & Abimbola 2014). To accommodate the derivation above, Olánrewájú (2022: 166) proposes (27) below for Yorùbá and related languages in the place of Radford’s (2009) proposal repeated as (26) below for ease of reference:

- (26) A clause is interpreted as a non-echoic question if (and only if) it is a CP with an interrogative specifier i.e a specifier with an interrogative word).

(Radford 2009: 124)

- (27) A clause is interpreted as a non-echoic question if (and only if) it is an InterP with either an interrogative specifier or a QV.

(Olánrewájú 2022: 166)

4. Conclusion

CY dialects operate lexical items specified [+Q] feature among subclasses of their nouns, verbs and qualifiers to form constituent interrogatives. Just like their standard Yorùbá counterpart, a clause is typed non-echoed question *iff* a QN/QP occupies the spec-InterP or when the QV *síkó* forms its predicate. A head noun and its complement forming a QP are undetachable, therefore, the entire QP must be attracted to the clause left peripheral position in line with Wh-Attraction Condition. A rhetorical question is formed when a QN is legible to PF interface at the canonical position associated with its grammatical function. FOCs *ni* and *li* occur in free variation in CY dialects except Ifẹ̀ where they are mutually exclusive. FOCs are also optionally dropped in the dialects. As obtainable in standard Yorùbá, QNs occur exclusively in constituent interrogatives in CY dialects. Although CY dialects exhibit many similar features, they still feature some sub-dialectal variations with respect to how they form their constituent interrogatives.

References

- Aboh, E. 2007. Focused versus Non-Focused Wh Words. In E. Aboh et al. (eds.), *Focus and Grammar: The Contribution of African*

- Languages* 1–14. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Adéníyì, H. & A. Òjò. 2005. Àwọn Èka-Èdè Yorùbá. In H. Adéníyì & A. Òjò (eds.), *Ìlò Èdè Àti Àwọn Èdá Èdè Yorùbá: Yorùbá Linguistics and Language Use*. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Adetugbo, A. 1982. Towards A Yorùbá Dialectology. In A. Afolayan (ed.), *Yorùbá Language and Literature* 207–224. Ìbàdàn: Ibadan University Press.
- Ajíbóyè, J. 2005. Topics on Yorùbá Nominal Expressions. Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of British Columbia.
- Ajíbóyè, O. 2006. A Morpho-Syntactic Account of *Ni* in Mòbà Yorùbá. *Journal of West African Languages* 33.2, 23–43.
- Àkanbi, T. 2011. The Syntax and Semantics of Interrogative Verbs *Dà* and *Ñkò* in Yorùbá. *Inquiry in African Language and Literature* 8, 1–25.
- Àkanbi, T. 2016. On the Wh Question Particle [*Wo*] in Yorùbá. *European Scientific Journal* 12.17, 414–430.
- Akinkugbe, F. 1976. An Internal Classification of the Yoruboid Group (Yoruba, Isekiri, Igala). *Journal of West African Languages* 11.1–2, 1–9.
- Awóbùlúyì, O. 1978. *Essentials of Yorùbá Grammar*. Ìbàdàn: OUP Nigeria.
- Awóbùlúyì, O. 1998. Àwọn Èka-Èdè Yorùbá. Paper presented at the Conference of the Yorùbá Studies Association of Nigeria. Ìbàdàn: Pastoral Institute.
- Awóbùlúyì, O. 2013. *Eko Girama Ede Yoruba*. Osogbo: Atman Limited Osun.
- Bangbose, A. 1990. *Fonólóji Àti Gírámà Èdè Yorùbá*. Ìbàdàn: University Press PLC.
- Issah, S. 2013. Focus and Constituent Question Formation in Dagbani. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics* 2.1, 39–62.

- König, E. & P. Siemund. 2007. Speech Act Distinctions in Grammar. In S. Timothy (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description* 276–324. 2nd edition. Cambridge: CUP.
- Kroeger, P. 2004. *Analyzing Syntax: A Lexical-Functional Approach*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Munro, P. 2012. Interrogative Verbs in Takic. *UCLA Working Papers in Linguistics, Theories of Everything* 17, 274–284.
- Oláńrewájú, E. 2016. *Ìşèdá Àwọ̀n Wúnrẹ̀n Aşèbèèrè Nínú Èdè Yorùbá*. Paper presented at the Conference of the Yorùbá Studies Association of Nigeria. University of Lagos.
- Oláńrewájú, E. 2017. A Syntax of Interrogatives in Central Yorùbá Dialects as Compared with Standard Yorùbá. M.Phil Dissertation, University of Ibàdàn.
- Oláńrewájú, E. 2022. A Syntax of Focus and Interrogatives in Central Yorùbá. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Ibàdàn.
- Oláńrewájú, E. & Taiwo, O. 2020. A Minimalist Analysis of Question Forms in the Ifẹ̀ Dialect of Yorùbá. *Journal of Linguistics Association of Nigeria* Supplement IV, 137–158.
- Oláńrewájú, E. & Taiwo, O. 2021. A Minimalist Analysis of Polar Questions in Yorùbá. *Journal of Linguistics Association of Nigeria* 24.2, 234–248.
- Olúmúyiwá, O. 2006. *Àwọ̀n wúnrẹ̀n onítumò gírámà nínú àwọ̀n Èka-Èdè Àárín Gbùngbùn Yorùbá*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Adékúnlé Ajásin University.
- Ouhalla, J. 1996. Remarks on the Binding Properties of Wh-Pronouns. *Linguistic Inquiry* 27.4, 676–707.
- Oyèláràn, O. 1976. Linguistic Speculation on Yoruba History. In O. Oyèláràn (ed.), *African Languages Literature Seminar Series I* 624–651. Ife: University of Ife.
- Radford, A. 2009. *An Introduction to English Sentence Structure*.

Cambridge: CUP.

Taiwo, O. & O. Abimbola. 2014. On the Two Interrogative Verbs in Yoruba. *Research in African Languages and Linguistics* 13, 1-14.