

A Minimalist Analysis of Constituent Question Forms in Yorùbá

This paper considers the syntax of question nouns, question verbs, and interrogative qualifiers in Yorùbá.

A number of issues need to be addressed in the paper, the core of which I outline below. My decision is that the contribution the papers makes to our understanding of the syntax of constituent questions within the Minimalist framework is insignificant, hence it should not be accepted.

1. The paper is not well written. There are too many typos and unclear paragraphs.
2. The author mentions “explanatory adequacy” in the text. It is not clear what purpose it serves. If it is being used in the generative syntax sense, I don’t see its place in the paper.
3. The author states that “the two QVs in Yorùbá have high restriction on their distribution”. It is not clear what this statement means. A discussion of the statement would be useful.
4. The author claims that the DP externally merges with the QV in accordance with the predicate-internal subject hypothesis. One wonders what theta role is assigned the DP and whether the specifier of the VP is a theta position. Also, why must the DP move to Spec, ν P for an “external argument” role? What drives this movement?
5. The relevant literature on *wh*-questions and the split-CP hypothesis have not been adequately engaged in the paper. For example, one would expect a discussion of the Yorùbá focus and *wh*-question facts within the context of Aboh (2004, 2007), Rizzi (1997, 2001), and Stepanov (1998), among others.
6. The derivation in (22) places “Ka” in Spec, InterP, a suggestion that it is base-generated in the left periphery stranding “ibi”. To begin with, why is InterP invoked here? What is the author’s justification for an analysis in which a QN is base-generated in the left periphery? Why doesn’t “ka” move together with “ibi” from an adjunct position in the TP domain? Also, why is the adjunct PP the sister of an intermediate projection and not a maximal projection? If the PP is a VP adjunct, it should be the sister of another VP and not a V’. Again, why does the internal argument have to move to Spec, VP for case licensing?
7. The derivation in (36) has two intermediate ν ’ projections. It is not clear why the author makes this rather odd architectural decision. Spec, ν P is a theta position for external arguments and not internal arguments. The internal argument should not raise to that position. Again, InterP should not be invoked here.
8. Might the “interrogative qualifiers” be analogous to Q particles in the sense of Cable (2007, 2010) and Sulemana (2019)? These works should be considered in exploring the syntax of the “interrogative qualifiers”. It will also be useful to see a detailed syntactic

analysis of the “interrogative qualifiers”. Could a unified analysis be proposed for the questions involving the QNs and the “interrogative modifiers”?

References

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