

Review: *Kedu* Interrogatives in Igbo

Overview:

This paper analyzes one type of wh-question construction in Igbo that looks like a relative clause. Specifically, the paper argues for a Rizzi-style exploded CP analysis of this construction, which has been analyzed multiple times in the past.

Recommendation: Reject

Discussion:

The analysis is mostly asserted, rather than argued for and it is unclear what the contribution of the paper is. That is, the author does not provide any reason why the proposed analysis is any better than any previous analyses. There does not seem to be any novel data that motivate the proposed analysis over the other ones. I agree that the proposed analysis “works”, but so do the other ones.

One major problem is the structure of the paper and the information provided. The paper begins with examples (1-2) that don’t seem to be relevant. The author should tell and show the reader right from the beginning, what construction is being analyzed in Igbo.

From page 3, it is just unclear what the basic properties of the *kedu* construction are, versus the in-situ construction. Can both operate over long distances? Are they island sensitive? The data is just not clearly described. For example, in (5b), the author glosses “onye” as both “who” (an interrogative expression) and “person” (an ordinary noun). Which is it? In (6a), “èbeē” is “place”. but in (6b), “ebe” is “where”. I assume that there is supposed to be a movement relationship indicated in (6b). If so, why does the vowel length change? The author indicates that the *kedu* construction is really some type of relative clause. But no examples of ordinary relative clauses are given. (In what ways do *kedu* clauses look like RCs?) The author assumes that the *kedu* construction is derived by movement, but no evidence is provided. The analysis is couched in Rizzian terms, but no information is given about the positions of Topic and Focus with respect to the *kedu* construction, for example. According to the analysis in (26), the focused(?) item moves into the complement position of “du”, which is highly non-standard. What data or conceptual concerns motivate this? The reader cannot evaluate the proposed analysis.

The data in (22-24) is very interesting. How does the “where” meaning arise? The author notes that in previous literature, “[t]here is hardly any discussion of this property of KI...” (p. 10). But the author doesn’t really discuss it much either. How does the proposed analysis account for the data in (22-24)? This is not discussed.

(There are also a number of unexplained typing conventions, but I can’t tell which are typos and which are intended. For example, in (5) and (6), words are struckthrough. I assumed that this was to indicate movement from that position. But, in (16b) and (17b), there are angled brackets around words. What do the angled brackets mean?)

I don’t understand what a “wh-suppletive” is supposed to be. (Maybe this term is used in the Igbo linguistics literature.)