
WH-QUESTIONS IN ELEME

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzed WH-Questions in Eleme within the framework of Principles and Parameters Theory. The study examined the morphological structure, syntactic features, and functions of WH-Questions in Eleme. The study found that Eleme has simple, compound, and complex WH-words. The study also found that WH-Questions in Eleme are both in-situ and ex-situ. The in-situ WH-Questions are generated in their source position, while the ex-situ questions are fronted from their source position to the leftmost periphery of the Eleme clause. The study claimed that the fronted WH-Question leaves behind a trace at its source position, which is co-indexed with the moved constituent in order to establish the history of derivation. The study pointed out that in Eleme, WH-Questions cannot be fronted without focus marking and relativization. The study also showed the semantic functions of WH-Questions in the language. The study recommended that further research be done in the analysis of the left-most periphery of the clause in other Ogoni languages in order to ascertain whether the requirement for focus marking and relativization in the syntactic operation of WH-movement as evident in Eleme is a basic syntactic feature of the Ogoni group of languages.

KEYWORDS: Eleme, WH-Questions, Principles and Parameters, Left-Periphery, In-situ, Ex-situ, Subjacency, Fronting, Relativization, Focus Marking

Introduction

This paper seeks to provide a principled analysis of WH-Questions in Eleme within the framework of principles and parameters theory. Eleme is spoken in the Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria by approximately 58,000 people (Gordon 2005). It is closely related to Baan,

Gokana, Tee, and Kana. These languages form a genetic unity and Williamson and Blench (2000) classified them as Delta-Cross of Cross River within Bantoid-Cross of the East Benue-Congo branch of Benue-Congo.

Methodology

The researcher collected data from fluent native speakers of Eleme with the help of field assistants. Direct oral interview was used to elicit comparative data in instances where facts needed to be cross-checked. Secondary sources of data, such as texts and library materials, were also utilized. The data were analyzed within the framework of principles and parameters theory.

The Phenomenon of WH-Questions

Questions constitute a universal linguistic phenomenon as they are attested in all human languages, but the classification of questions may differ among analysts. Following Salawu (2007:916), questions can be classified into two categories: polar questions and non-polar questions:

“...Polar questions are questions that do have their responses based on affirmation or denial. They are commonly called yes/no questions, while the non-polar questions are information-seeking questions. The responses to such questions offer a detailed and comprehensive explanation of the issue”.

WH-Questions belong to the sub group of non-polar questions. And like the Head-Parameter, it is a major parameter that defines the setting of switches in Universal Grammar. According to Ndimele and Eferi (2003:525)

“... languages of the world are distinguished in terms of those where WH-Movement is obligatory or where WH-Phrases may remain at their base generated position.”

There has been a strong debate on the WH-Phenomenon among generative grammarians and there seems to be a consensus of opinion that the WH-Phrase found in sentence initial position in most languages is not in its source position. A number of analysts have explained the occurrence of WH-Phrases in pre-subject position in terms of WH-Movement. According to Radford (1988:466):

“... clause-initial WH-Phrase, cannot originate outside S...WH-Phrase cannot originate in their superficial position as the left most constituent of S-bar, but rather must originate inside S.”

Ndimele (1992:66) agrees that a WH-Phrase is fronted and claims that ‘there is a general belief that the home of a WH-Word is in SPEC C-Bar position corresponding to the position of the quantifier’.

It is also evident in the literature that there are languages in which WH-Phrases are not fronted in the formation of WH-Questions. Chomsky (1986b) admits that some languages have both fronted and in-situ constructions in WH-Question formation. But noted that the predominant structure marks the WH-Parameter for such languages.

A number of analysts including Essien (1990) and Emenanjo (1978) have refuted the use of the term WH-Questions in African languages and have proposed terms such as “Question Word Question (QWQ)”, Lexical Marker Question (LMQ), Content Word Question (CWQ) etc. But this paper is not interested in the nomenclature debate but simply retains the term WH-Questions in this study to refer to questions that require information about some entity and phenomenon in the same sense that the term is used in English. In what follows we describe the structure, syntactic features and semantic functions of WH-Questions in Eleme.

Structure of WH-Questions in Eleme

In Eleme, simple WH-Phrases, complex WH-Phrases and compound WH-Phrases are attested.

➤ Simple WH-Phrase

We consider the following wh-expressions as morphologically simple constituents in Eleme since they are made up of basic simple morphemes.

Examples:

1	Eleme	Gloss
	a) <i>è!é</i>	‘what’
	b) <i>nmátõ</i>	‘when’
	c) <i>nmødé</i>	‘where’
	d) <i>nmøørõ</i>	‘which’
	e) <i>jìjǎó/jǎó</i>	‘how’
	f) <i>àmee</i>	‘who’
	g) <i>mmákú</i>	‘how much is’ (as in numbers)

Let us see how simple wh-phrases can be applied in (2):

2

- a) è!é jú?
 What come?
 What happened?
- b) réke jú bé é
 RCM come PST FOC what
 ‘what happened?’
- c) ò dò nmọ́dẹ?
 You stay where?
 ‘Where are you?’
- d) nmọ́dẹ be reke ó dọ?
 Where FOC RCM you stay
 ‘Where are you?’

Simple WH-Phrases can occur in sentence final or pre-subject position as shown in the data in (2).

➤ **Complex WH-Phrases**

There are some complex interrogative morphemes in the language. They are known as complex WH-Phrases because they are made up of more than one morphological constituent. In this situation, we have one lexical morpheme and one or more bound elements. Example:

3	Elemé	Gloss
a)	Álúlá-nmátō what time	‘when’
b)	Álá-nmọ́dẹ which place	‘where’
c)	gbě̀rě-wò because what	‘why’
d)	ri-nmọ́dôrō which one	‘which’

In the analysis of the complex WH-Phrase in (3c), the word gbě̀rě ‘because’ is a free morpheme. It can occur in isolation while wò is a bound morpheme that can only function grammatically, but the combination of these two morphemes form gbě̀rě-wò which means ‘why’. Likewise, in (4a) and (4b), the morphemes álúlá/ álá are also bound morphemes, therefore there is no change in meaning between (4a) nmátō and (4b). Thus, nmode and álúlá – nmode both mean ‘where’. Again (4c) and (4D) show that the question

words *nmato* and *nmode* can be used without the bound morpheme *álúlá-* while (4e) and (4f) show that the complex forms *gbere-wo* and *gbere-e* have the same meaning 'why'.

- 4)
- a) ò dọ nmọdé?
You stay Where?
'Where are you?'
 - b) ò dọ álúlá- nmọdé
You stay exactly Where
'Where are you?'
 - c) O sí nmátõ?
You go PST When
'When did you go?'
 - d) O sí nmọdé
You go PST Where
'Where did you go?'
 - e) Ò jú gběě-wò
You come PST Why
'Why did you come?'
 - f) Ò jú gběě-é
You come PST Why
'Why did you come?'

These complex WH-phrases can vary their syntactic position as illustrated in (5a-g):

- 5)
- a) Ameę dé njá nnoni?
Who eat PST food this
'Who ate this food?'
 - b) É dó?
What fall PST
'What fell?'
 - c) Ò kpārā mi nmọdé
You find PST me Where
'Where did you find me?'
 - d) nmọdé be reke Ò kpārā mi
Where FOC RCM you find PST me
'Where did you find me?'
 - e) Ò jú gběě-wò
You come PST why
'Why did you come?'

- f) gbērē-wò be reke o ju?
Why FOC RCM you come PST
'Why did you come?'
- g) jǐǎó be o dọ jǎó
How are you stay how
'How are you?'

In sentences (5a) to (5g), the position of occurrence of the WH-word is not static. The WH-phrase occurs either at word final position or word initial position of the clause.

➤ Compound WH-Phrase

In the compound WH-Phrase more than one lexical morpheme is combined to form a word. Eleme compound WH-Phrases are exemplified here under:

Examples:

6	Eleme	Gloss
a)	gbērē - é!é because why	'why'
b)	jǐǎó - nmákú How Many jǎó-nmákú	'How many' (as in number)

In 6(a) gbērē 'because' co-occurs with é!é 'what' to derive gbērē-é!é which means 'why'. Similarly, in (6b), jǐǎó/jǎó 'how', is combined with nmákú 'many'/much' to derive 'how much' or 'how many' to question the number or frequency in a clause.

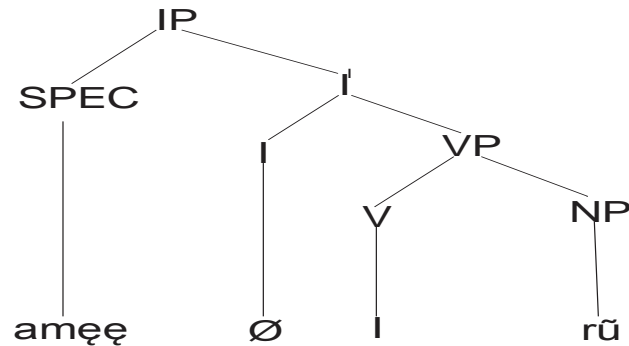
Syntactic features of WH-Questions

In this subsection, we discuss the basic syntactic features of WH-Questions in Eleme.

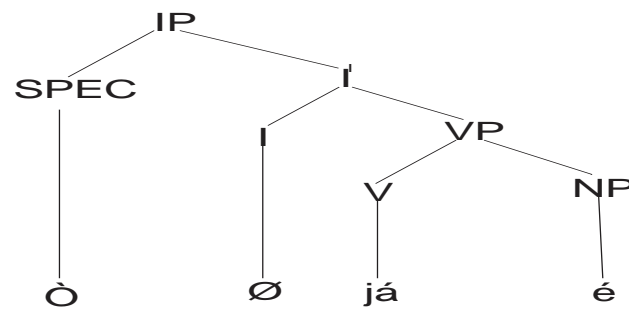
➤ Base-Generated and Fronted WH-Features

WH-Questions in Eleme in their syntactic features can be Base-generated (in-situ) or fronted WH-Questions. The Base-Generated WH-Questions are a sub-type of WH-Questions that occur within the minimal clause in which the WH-Phrase is questioned in its source position. Consider the following data:

- 7) amẹẹ í rũ
Who marry you
'Who married you?'



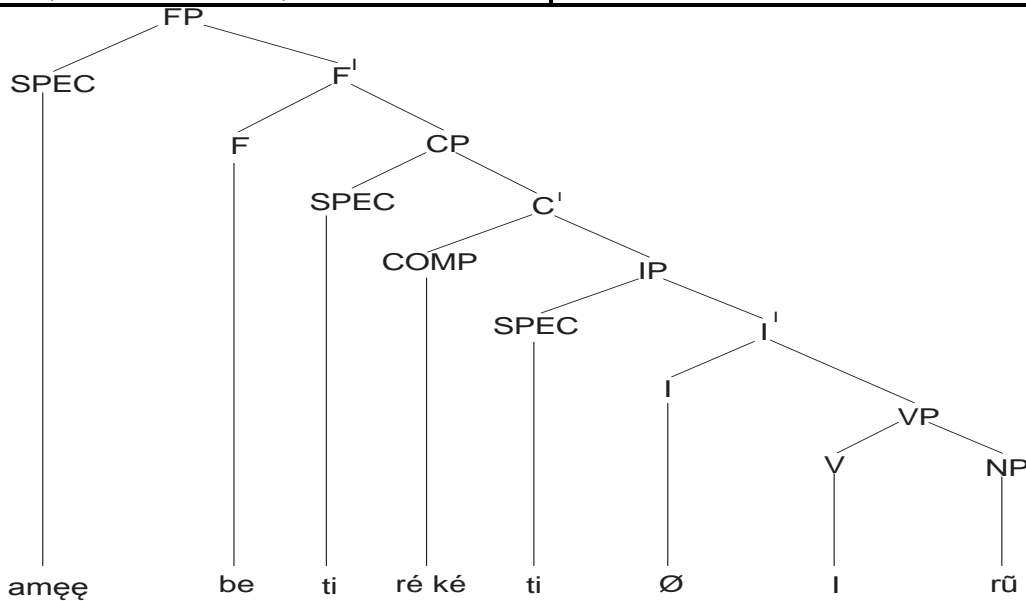
8) ò já é?
 You buy what
 'What did you buy'



The subject NP amɛɛ 'who' is questioned at source in (7) while in (8), the object NP é 'what' is also questioned in its source position. This type of WH-Question does not involve any movement rule as the questions are clearly base-generated.

The fronted WH-Questions involve movement of the WH-Phrase from the source position to the left-most periphery of the clause, consider this data:

9) amɛɛ be réké í rũ?
 Who FOC RCM marry you
 'Who married you?'



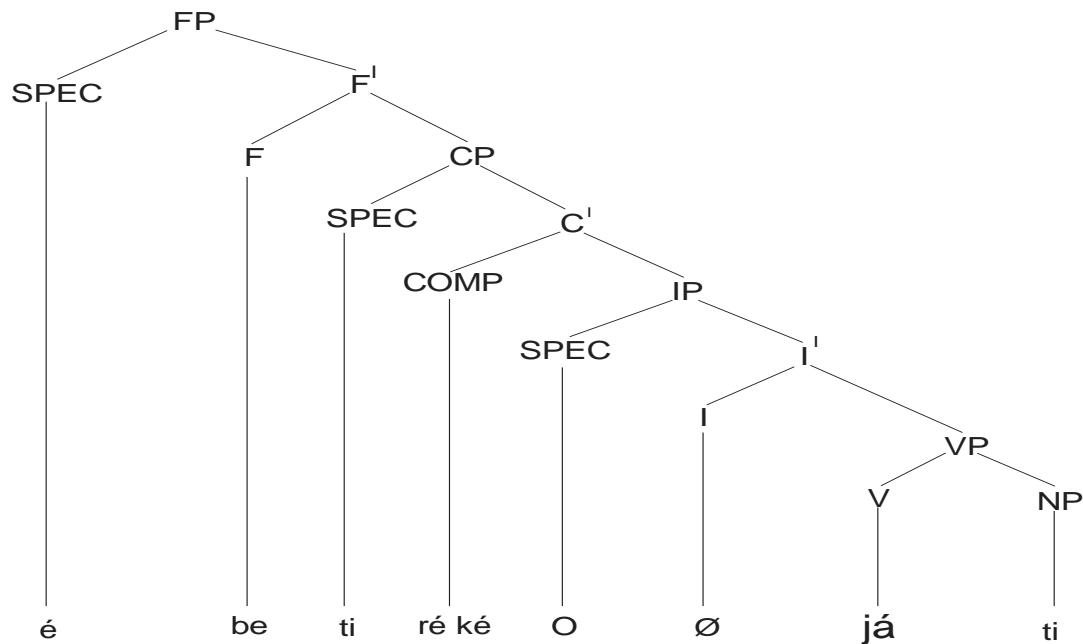
Observe that in (9) the subject NP is fronted. The focus marker be extracts amẹẹ ‘who’ the WH-Phrase in SPEC-I’ position into SPEC-C’ position which leaves behind an overt trace *a* in SPEC-C’ position. When amẹẹ ‘who’ moves from SPEC-I’ to SPEC-C’ position, a complementizer réké surfaces to introduce the next clause (i.e. the relative clause). The complementizer réké occurs as the head of the CP. The complementizer réké can alternatively occur as ré or ké respectively.

The movement of amẹẹ ‘who’ from SPEC-I’ to SPEC-C’ position is to avoid long jump which is a threat to subjacency. Subjacency states that “any application of the rule *move-α* may not cross more than one ‘bounding node’” (Ndimele 1992:41). But amẹẹ ‘who’ later moves into SPEC-F’ Position, leaving behind a null trace that is co-indexed with the moved item.

The trace in SPEC-I’ position and SPEC-C’ position assumes all the grammatical features of the preposed constituent amẹẹ ‘who’ because it was left behind by the rule *move-α*. The trace is co-indexed with the moved item, so that we can have a complete record of what has been moved and where it originated. It is interesting to note that the movement of amẹẹ ‘who’ in Eleme does not involve ‘vacuous’ movement. Rather, movement is explicit. This is a major contrast between the syntactic structure of English and Eleme. According to Ndimele (1992:65) Chomsky asserts that WH-Movement takes place except for the subject which he calls a case of ‘Vacuous’ movement.

In the following construction in (10), the object NP is fronted.

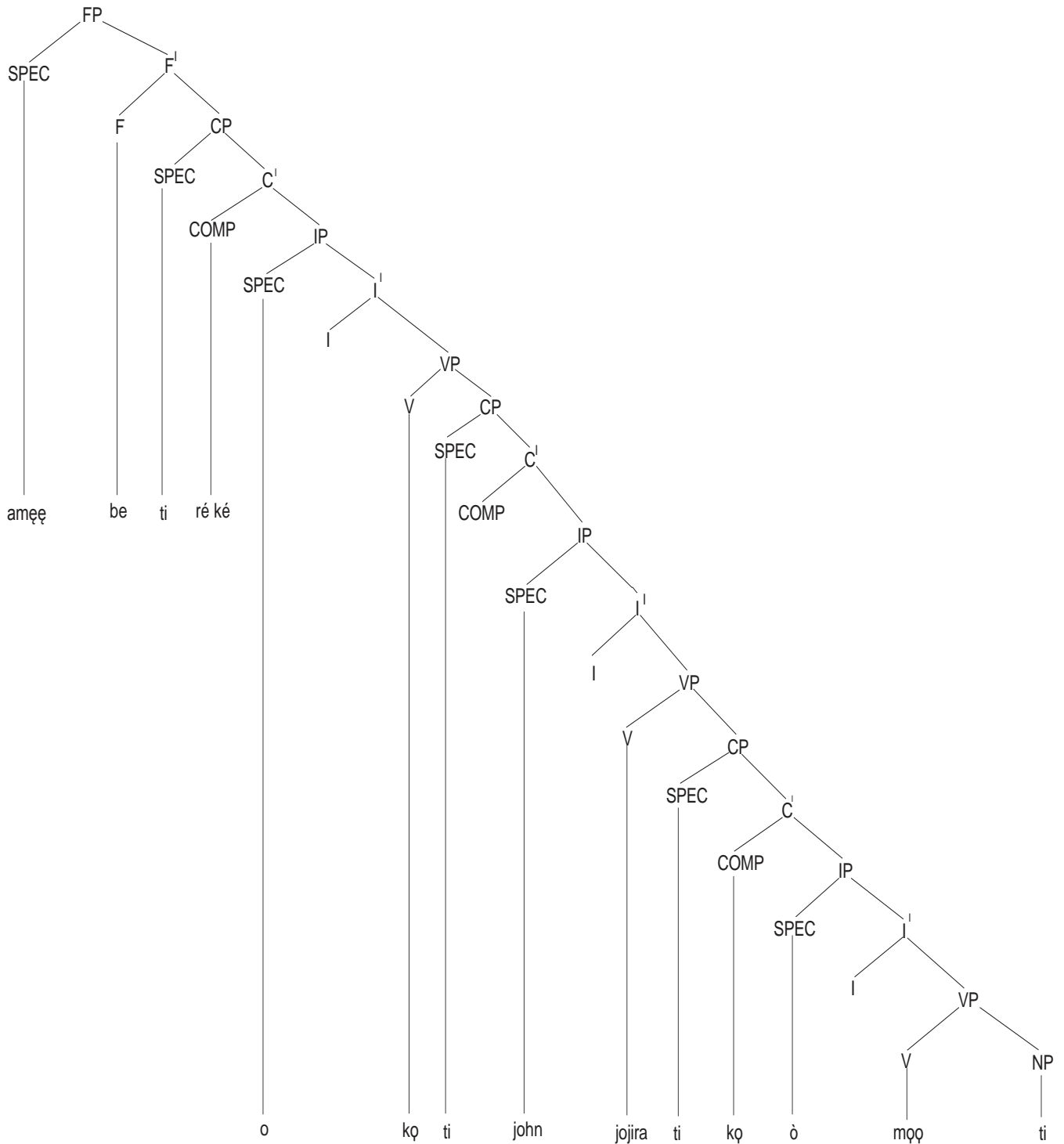
- 10) é be réké o já?
 What FOC RCM you PST buy t
 ‘What did you buy?’



The question constituent *é* ‘what’ moves from its base-generated position into sentence initial position. The first instance of movement is into SPEC-C’ position. It moves here to avoid long jump, which is a threat to subadjacency. It subsequently moves from SPEC-C’ into SPEC-F’ position in response to focus. The moved item leaves behind a trace. The trace and the moved item are also co-indexed in order to establish a link between the moved constituent and its original position.

Apart from crossing a single barrier node (one IP), a fronted WH-Phrase in Eleme can cross three or more barrier nodes without losing the logic of the question preposition, as long as movement obeys the subadjacency condition as shown in the data in 11):

- 11) *amɛɛ be réké o kɔ John jojira kɔ ɔ mɔɔ?*
 Who FOC RCM you PST say PN believe that you see
 ‘Who did you say that John believes that you saw?’



Ndimele (1992:67) asserts that ‘the minimal clause from which a WH-Phrase is extracted is the scope of the WH-Movement’. The implication of this assertion is that any WH-Phrase occupying any syntactic position within the minimal clause can be fronted. In Eleme, it is possible to find a WH-Phrase in the subject position, object position or adjunct position of the minimal clause. The entire WH-Phrase occupying a given grammatical

position in the minimal clause can be fronted from the source position. When such fronting occurs, a trace is left behind at the extraction site of the moved WH-Phrase. The trace shares the same grammatical features with the moved constituent. Thus, like the WH-Phrase, a WH-trace can be found either in the subject position, object position or adjunct position of the minimal clause.

It is observed that when a WH-Phrase moves from either the subject or object position of a minimal clause, it moves with its entire referential content and leaves behind a trace. But when a WH-Phrase moves from an adjunct position, it can either move with the entire referential content of the constituent or leave a category of the constituent stranded at the source position to co-occur with the trace and only the WH-word will be fronted.

Consider this data:

12(a) John fé mbo anyõ gběě é?
 PN PST kill goat the for what
 ‘For what did John kill the goat?’

(b) é be reké John fé mbo anyõ gběě t?
 What FOC RCM PN PST kill goat the for t
 ‘For what did John kill the goat t’

(c) gběě é be ré John fé mbo anyõ t
 For what FOC RCM PN PST Kill goat the t
 ‘For what did John kill the goat t?’

Observe that in (12a) the WH-Phrase gběě é ‘for what’ is in the source position of the minimal clause. In (12b), the WH-Word é ‘what’ is fronted to the left-most periphery of the clause without gběě ‘for’. Thus, the preposition is stranded without the NP but the construction is grammatical and acceptable. In (12c), A trace appears in the base-generated position of the NP to indicate that the NP has been fronted leaving behind a trace in the PP to indicate that it is the base-generated position of the moved WH-Phrase gběě é ‘for what’.

Whereas it is grammatical to move only a part of a WH-Phrase contained within a PP in the adjunct position; it is not possible to move only a part from a WH-Phrase contained in an NP occupying either the subject or object position of the minimal clause.

➤ **Fronting Restriction Features**

When we move a WH-Phrase, it is moved from its original position to a position not too far from its extraction site (from argument position to non-argument position).

A non-argument position is a position where a nominal is not found. When items are moved restrictions are placed on them. Another name for the restricted condition is known as subjacency condition. Hence, according to Radford (1981:227) “No constituent can be moved out of more than one containing NP or S-Node (in any single rule application)”.

Following this Ndimele (1999:211) asserts that:

“The landing site must be an argument position (i.e a position where a nominal can be found). The new position for the moved wh-word should not be too far from the position from which it was extracted”.

There are restrictions to WH-movement. When too many bounding nodes are between the starting and finishing point of each movement, subjacency is altered. In the same manner, in question words (WH-Phrases) in Eleme, the application of WH-movement obeys subjacency principles for their grammaticality. Consider the following data:

13)

- (a) ò kpãrã é?
 You find what?
 ‘What do you want?’
- (b) e bé réké ò kpãrã t’?
 What FOC RCM you find t
 ‘What did you find?’
- (c) é bé réké ò kó t’ ò kpãrã t’?
 What FOC RCM you say PST you find
 ‘What did you say that you found?’

➤ **Free Variation Features**

The speakers of Eleme have two distinct ways of forming WH-Questions in the language. The in-situ and fronted WH-Questions in the language occur in free variation. Speakers can freely use both forms as alternative forms.

We have shown in the study that the Eleme WH-Phrase can be questioned in its base-generated or source position without necessarily moving it to the

pre-subject position. But the alternative fronting of WH-Phrases that occurs in the language is a choice motivated by focus marking.

➤ **Co-occurrence Features**

Ndimele (1992:68) claims that “there is no upper limit to the number of WH-Phrases that can co-occur in a sentence”. It is possible to find two or more WH-Phrases in a single clause. Such questions are referred to in the Linguistic Literature as Multiple WH-Questions (MWHQ).

Karttunen (1978) posits that:

“The syntactic distribution of Multiple WH-Questions is the same as that of a single WH-Question. There is no justification for creating a special syntactic category for them”.

These assertions dismiss the claims of scholars like Bolinger (1978) and Hiz (1978) who observed that multiple WH-Questions were heavily loaded questions that could remain a hard topic for grammarians to tackle.

Multiple WH-Questions occur in Eleme. Let us consider this data.

14)

(a) ameḗ já é neḗ ameé
Who buy PST what give who
‘Who bought what for whom?’

(b) ameḗ já é neḗ ameé gbērē é
Who PST buy what give who for what
‘For what reason did who buy what for whom?’

Observe that in (14a), there are three WH-Phrases in a single clause, while in (14b), there are four WH-phrases in a single clause, All the WH-Phrases are in their base-generated position and there is no application of the movement rule.

Functions of WH-Questions

In Eleme, WH-Questions are used to express several semantic notions. These notions are examined in what follows:

➤ **Questioning Frequency**

This is a situation whereby the frequency of an action is questioned. These are the questions that investigate or demand to know the number of times

an action occurs. The question word used in questioning frequency is nmáko ntõ 'how many time'

Examples:

15

(a) Àkàté ákpárí ónni nmáko ntõ?
Akate has swept this place how many times?
'Akate has swept here how many times?'

(b) Bé Àkàté ákpárí ónni be nmáko ntõ?
As Akate swept this place is how many times?
'How many times has Akate swept here?'

➤ **Questioning an Action**

The action/activity of an agent can be queried in Eleme, using a question word(QW), in most cases the question word è 'what' is preferable, just as below:

16

(a) È wá nmu?
He/She drink PST water
'He/She drank water?'

(b) È ná è'é?
He/She do PST what
'What did he/she do?'

(c) è'é bé réké è ná?
What FOC RCM he/she do PST
'What did he/she do?'

The question word (QW) è'é 'what' can be used in questioning the agent's action. It can occur at the predicate in-situ position or be fronted as in the example in (16c). Furthermore, è'é 'what' replaces the physical action of the agent.

We can note that any time the main verb takes an inherent complement, the verb is replaced by na 'do' as in example (16b) and (c) while the question word(QW) è'é 'what' queried their complement as illustrated below:

17

(a) Osaroka jé jé
Osarowill dance dance
'Osaro is dancing'

- (b) Osaroná è'é?
Osarodo PST what
'Osaro did what?'
- (c) è'é bé réké Osaro ná
what FOC RCM Osaro do PST
'What did Osaro do?'

But, when the main verb of the sentence has a direct object, it is only the direct object that gets queried. Examples:

18

- (a) è buí nsa mgbígbî
He/She read PST book holy
'He/She read the bible'.
- (b) È buí è'é ?
He/She read PST what?
'What did She/He read?'
- (c) è'é bé réké è buí
what FOC RCM He/She read PST
'What did He/She read?'
- (d) è kó è ka ùsãã ẹchũ
He/She say PST He/She will wearing cloth
'He/She said he/she is dressing'
- (e) è kó è'é
He/She say PST what
'What did he/she say?'
- (f) è'é bé réké è kó
what FOC RCM he/she say PST
'What did he/she say?'

From our examples, it is established that the action or activity questioned can be dynamic or non-dynamic. The activity questioned can be dynamic when the action is matched with a physical action performed by the agent, while an activity questioned can also be non-dynamic when an utterance made by the speaker is usually queried.

➤ **Questioning time of an action:**

This question is used to investigate or demand to know the particular time (hour), week, month or year when an action occurred. The WH-Question word nmátō 'when' is used to elicit such questions. See examples below:

19

- (a) ò jú nmátõ?
You come PST when
'When did you come?'
- (b) ò másã nmátõ?
You born when?
'When were you born?'
- (c) è í rũ nmátõ?
They marry PST you when?
'When were you married?'
- (d) ò wẹ́ otọ̀nsã nmátõ
You finish PST school when
'When did you finish school?'

It is observed from the examples that the question word(QW) nmátõ 'when' is used to query the time a particular incident occurred.

➤ **Questioning an incident:**

WH-Questions can be used to question the exact incident that occurred. In this situation, the questioner demands to know what incident has taken place. Examples:

20

- (a) è'é jú?
What happen PST
'What happened?'
- (b) è'é bé réké Osaro nyiá? [-Human]
what FOC RCM Osaro look PST
'What did Osaro check?'
- (c) Osaro fé è'é? [-Human]
Osaro kill PST what
'What did Osaro kill/break?'
- (d) è'é bé réké Osaro fé [-Human]
what FOC RCM Osaro kill PST
'What did Osaro kill/break?'
- (e) Osaro fé amẹ́ [+Human]
Osaro kill who
'Who did Osaro kill?'
- (f) Amẹ́ bé réké Osaro fé [+Human]
Who FOC RCM Osaro kill PST
'Who did Osaro kill?'

➤ Questioning a Location:

WH-Questions in Eleme are used to question the location of an action. It is used to investigate the place where an incident occurred. Examples:

21

- (a) nmḡdé bé réké dé agbá anyḡ?
Where is already eat PST feast that
'Where did they hold that feast?'
- (b) nmḡdé bé réké John sí
Where is already John go PST
'Where did John go?'
- (c) òwa anyo ú nmḡdé?
Woman that die PST where
'Where did that woman die?'
- (d) ò sí nmḡdé?
You go PST where
'Where did you go?'

We can see that the location of an action is questioned. It uses the question word (QW) nmḡdé 'where'. It can occur at the subject position or predicate position.

➤ Questioning the reason for an action:

This is a situation where the reason for an action of an agent is questioned. The questioner demands to know the reason for an action as illustrated below:

22

- (a) Ò jú gběṙ-wḡ?
You come PST why
'Why did you come?'
- (b) ònwi bibirá-euwũ síbí rũ gběṙ-wḡ?
Man black-shirt hold you why
'Why did a policeman arrest you?'
- (c) ò jé jé gběṙ-wḡ?
You dance dance PST why
'Why did you dance?'
- (d) ò bá nsa rã gběṙ-wḡ?
You tear PST book my why
'Why did you tear my book?'

It is observed from the examples that the reason for the action of an agent is questioned, using the WH-Question word *gbērē-wọ* ‘why’ in the gloss of this discourse. It is obvious that in Eleme the WH-Phrase *gbērē-wọ* is the same as *gbērē-è’é* as they both gloss as ‘why’ in English.

➤ **Questioning of Identity**

Questioning of identity can be human and non-human referents. These are interrogations which demand that the questionee should identify the entity or concept that is queried. This identified entity may be [+Human]. If it is human, it is replaced by a question word like *àmẹẹ* ‘who’. On the other hand, if it is [-Human], it is replaced by *è’é* ‘what’. The queried nominal may be a subject or the complement of a verb. Look at these illustrations:

23

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) | <i>àmẹẹ</i>
who | <i>fé</i>
kill PST | <i>owá-</i>
woman | <i>á?</i>
the | [+Human] |
| | ‘Who killed the woman?’ | | | | |
| (b) | <i>è’é</i>
What | <i>fé</i>
kill PST | <i>owá-</i>
woman | <i>á?</i>
the | [-Human] |
| | ‘What killed the woman?’ | | | | |
| (c) | <i>àmẹẹ</i>
who | <i>bíré</i>
bath PST | <i>nmu</i>
water | <i>onwi anyọ?</i>
man that | [+Human] |
| | ‘Who bath that man?’ | | | | |
| (d) | <i>è’é</i>
What | <i>bíré</i>
bath PST | <i>nmu</i>
water | <i>onwi anyọ?</i>
man that | [-Human] |
| | ‘What bath that man?’ | | | | |
| (e) | <i>Osaro</i>
Osaro | <i>nyíá</i>
look PST | <i>àmẹẹ?</i>
who | | [+Human] |
| | ‘Who did Osaro check?’ | | | | |
| (f) | <i>Àmẹẹ</i>
Who | <i>bé</i>
FOC | <i>réké</i>
RCM | <i>Osaro</i>
Osaro | <i>nyíá?</i>
look PST |
| | ‘Who did Osaro check?’ | | | | |
| (g) | <i>Osaro</i>
Osaro | <i>nyíá</i>
look PST | <i>è’é?</i>
what | | [-Human] |
| | ‘What did Osaro check?’ | | | | |

We can ascertain that the questioner demands a knowledge about a phenomenon using the question word *àmẹẹ* or *è’é* which means ‘who’ or ‘what’ to query the entity or concept.

Conclusion

In this work, we have analyzed WH-Questions in Eleme. We examined the structure of WH-Questions, the syntactic features of WH-Questions, and functions of WH-Questions in Eleme within the framework of the Principles and Parameters theory.

We found that WH-Questions in Eleme are both in-situ and ex-situ. The in-situ WH-Questions are generated in their source position while the ex-situ WH-Questions are fronted from their source position to the left most-periphery of the Eleme clause. We found that a fronted WH-Phrase leaves behind a trace at its source position and the trace must be co-indexed with the moved constituent in order to establish the history of derivation. And each instance of movement must obey the subadjacency principle.

The work also found that every moved WH-Phrase in Eleme is a focus construction, as WH-Questions in Eleme cannot be fronted without focus marking. The work pointed out that focus and relativization are interconnected in Eleme as every fronted WH-clause is not only a focus construction but a relativized cleft construction.

In terms of structure, the work identified Simple WH-Questions, Complex WH-Questions, and Compound WH-Questions. The work also found that Eleme WH-movement does not allow 'long jump' as the moved WH-Phrase cannot cross more than one bounding node at a time.

The work showed that the in-situ and fronted WH-Questions occur in free variation and speakers can freely use both as alternate forms. The work showed that multiple WH-Phrases can co-occur in a single clause and proved that the syntactic distribution of the multiple WH-Questions is the same as that of a single WH-Question. It also pointed out that in a multiple sequence only one of the WH-Phrases can be fronted.

The work also showed that WH-Questions can be used to query frequency of an action or event, time of an action, location of an action, the reason for an action and the precise identity of an entity or concept

The work contributes some empirical evidence to the syntax of the pre-subject position of the Eleme clause. It clearly showed the syntactic structure of the pre-subject position of the Eleme clause as containing abstract landing sites such as SPEC-F', SPEC C-bar and COMP for moved constituents from sentence internal position. The work also claimed that WH-fronting is not possible in Eleme without focus marking.

It argued that the landing site for the fronted WH-Phrase in Eleme is the SPEC-F' instead of the SPEC-C-bar position, meaning that movement of the WH-Phrase is triggered by the focus marker be. If be is deleted from the clause structure, the WH-Phrase cannot be fronted. Thus, the pre-dominant and unmarked WH-Parameter in Eleme is the base generated WH-Question.

The work claimed that there is no 'vacuous' movement in the SPEC-I' position in the language as movement is explicit and the moved constituent leaves behind a null trace in the extraction site which is co-indexed with the fronted WH-Phrase.

Recommendations

The study recommended that further research be done in the analysis of the left most periphery of the clause in other Ogoni languages in order to ascertain whether the requirement of focus marking and relativization in the syntactic operation of WH-Movement as evident in Eleme is a basic syntactic feature of the Ogoni group of languages.

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