Readings in African Dialectology and Applied Linguistics

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Introduction

This book covers a wide range of topics on African Dialectology and Applied Linguistics. It draws extensive essays from scholars on linguistics issues like Dialect-Syntax, Dialectology, Applied Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Syntax, Phonology and Literary Criticism. The book is divided into four sections, section one contains eight chapters that focus on issues on Dialect-Syntax.

Chapter One is a comparative study of yes/no questions in Àwórì, Ìgbómìnà, Ìkálè, Mòbà and Owé Dialects of Yorùbá. The author, Oládiípò Ajíbóyè examines the yes-no interrogatives in Yorùbá and in some selected dialects and finds out that there are more similarities than differences among these dialects in terms of their syntactic distribution and semantic connotations. As to their syntax, he asserts that the yes-no questions are divided into three, namely those yes-no questions with their interrogative particles in sentence initial, sentence medial and sentence final positions. Despite significant differences at the level of pronunciation, he proposes a unified structure for all the three and account for those differences through movement which in most cases is head driven.

Chapter Two, written by Ayeomoni Omoniyi, also carries out a comparative study of Ondo and Ikale dialects of the Yoruba language with a view to knowing the areas of convergences and divergences between the two dialects. The study is based on 50 sentences from each of the dialects. His analysis based on the perspective of Halliday Systemic Function Grammar (SFC) with a view to identifying the prominent lexemes and syntactic structures of the sentences. He uses simple statistics based on percentages to calculate the number of lexemes and structures that are similar and different. He discovers that the two dialects have basically the same lexemes at both subject and predicator levels. This shows that the speakers of the two dialects often make use of the same nominal and verbal items in their speeches. Besides, the two dialects share basically the same syntactic components: subjects, predicator, complement, and Adjunct in all the sentences examined, but the Adjuncts are rarely used in the dialects. The dialects are however found to be mainly different in the area of auxiliary verbs usage.

Reginah Oforiwah Caesar in Chapter Three examines certain morphological and syntactic properties of Dangme adjectives. She reveals that adjectives in Dangme can function attributively and sometimes predicatively. In dealing with categories of adjectives, she realizes that adjectives in Dangme help differentiate one nominal from the other. Some can function as nominal where the subject is omitted. Plural adjectives are

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Chapter One

A Comparative study of Yes-no Questions in Àwórì, Ìgbómìnà, Ìkálẹ̀, Mọ̀bà and Owé dialects of Yorùbá[1]

Ọládiípọ̀ Ajíbóyè

Abstract

Like many languages of the world, one of the question formations in Yorùbá takes its name from the kind of response that the hearer gives to the questioner which can either be affirmative or negative; hence the name, *Ìbéèrè "bẹ́ẹ̀-ni bẹ́ẹ̀-kọ́"* 'yes-no questions'. This paper takes a look at the Yes-no questions in five selected dialects of Yorùbá, namely, Àwórì, Ìkálẹ̀, Ìgbómìnà, Ìkálẹ̀, Mọ̀bà and Owé dialects and compare them with Standard Yorùbá; with particular focus on their morpho-syntax and semantics. As to their morphology, it is observed that the number and distribution of the yes-no interrogative particles vary from one dialect to another with Standard Yorùbá and Ìgbómìnà attesting all the interrogative particles. With respect to their syntactic distribution, the author establishes the three syntactic positions where they are found across dialects, namely, sentential initial, medial and final positions; claiming that each of the yes-no question type has the structure of a Complementizer Phrase (henceforth, CP) and proposes two analyses namely, base generated versus derivation through movement. On the base generated, it is proposed that each interrogative type is generated *in situ;* giving three types of structures; (a) yes-no questions with the interrogative particles in sentence initial position, (b), yes-no questions with the interrogative particles in sentence medial position, and (c), yes-no questions with the interrogative particles in sentence final position. On the account of its inadequacies, the base generated analysis is discarded. Adopting a version of the generative transformational Minimalist Program account, the author proposes a unified structure where all yes-no interrogative particles are in sentence initial position at LF, with the interrogative particle occupying C position. This C takes the IP as its complement. It further argues that the derived structure at the interface of LF and PF can be accounted for through Shortest Move operation. This analysis provides for multiple CP layers to accommodate separate heads for each interrogative particle type, as well as providing a landing site for a

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moved head or phrase as the case may be, before reaching the point of "Spell Out" (Chomsky 1995). On the semantics of the interrogative particles, it is demonstrated that they carry additional meanings which include confirmatory, emphatic, affirmative or negative, an expression of doubt or a signal to a rhetorical question that requires no response from the hearer.

1   Introduction

One principal way by which speakers of a language ask questions in Yorùbá is the one that is after ascertaining what the speaker is not sure of and s/he has the desire of having a correct knowledge from the speaker. The response to such question can be positive/affirmative *bẹ́ẹ̀ ni*, *hẹn* (yes) or negative *bẹ́ẹ̀ kọ́/hẹ́n-ẹ̀n* (no) and which in most cases have specific interrogative particles (contra Ward 1958: 117); hence the name "Yes-no" type of question. In Yorùbá, this type of question is referred to as *ìbéèrè bẹ́ẹ̀ ni-bẹ́ẹ̀ kọ́* 'yes-no question'.[2] In this paper, the author examines the various ways the yes-no questions are formed in Àwórì, Ìkálẹ̀, Ìgbómìnà, Ìkálẹ̀, Mọ̀bà and Owé dialects with focus on the interrogative particles, their morphology and distribution in those dialects. Beyond a descriptive account, the author goes further to provide a theoretical account of this type of yes-no question formation, using the minimalist program of Chomsky (1995).

2   Yes-no Questions: forms and distribution

It has been observed that languages differ with respect to how they invoke yes-no questions. For example, English does not have dedicated morphemes for asking yes-no questions. What it does, is to employ the existing functional elements such as *will, can, do* etc. Depending on what theoretical framework one employs, such elements are displaced in order to derive the yes-no question. In the old transformational Grammar, this simply involves Subject-Auxiliary Inversion, whereas in X-bar theory, it involves some kind of head movement i.e. that of the auxiliary. However, Yorùbá is not like

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[2] Yusuf (1999:39) goes further to show that, although, this question type is claimed to have a "yes" or "no" response; that is just a reduced form of a full sentence response. Consider:

(i)   a. Ṣé o yege nínú ìdánwò Yorùbá?   'Did you pass your
                                                                    examination in Yorùbá?
         b-i   Rárá   'No'
         b-ii   Mi ò yege.   'I did not pass.'

English as it does not have auxiliaries of the English type that can be inverted to perform the task of forming yes-no question. Quite the contrary, it has dedicated morphemes for asking yes-no questions that are found in different locations within the sentence. In what follows, we examine the formation of this question type in selected dialects and Standard Yorùbá and show, that, despite their seeming differences, all the dialects of study demonstrate similar patterns of asking questions; as such, they can be accounted for in the same way. We begin the presentation of our data with Standard Yorùbá.

As mentioned in the immediate preceding paragraph, yes-no questions in Yorùbá is quite different from what is obtained in English, as there are dedicated morphemes either called clause initiators (Bamgbose 1966), question tags or yes-no interrogative particles.

In the cross-dialectal study that we conducted and compared with Standard Yorùbá, observe that yes-no questions fall into two categories, namely, verbal clause and non-verbal clause. By verbal clause, we mean a situation whereby a yes-no question has a full sentence, whereas, non-verbal clause are yes-no questions that involve the nominal expression which can be a single noun, a noun and its modifiers or a prepositional phrase. The verbal clause "yes-no" question as expected, is more widely attested while non-verbal clause "yes-no" question occurs in restricted contexts. First, we begin with the yes-no questions in verbal clause. It is observed that, Standard Yorùbá and Ìgbómìnà have the highest number of interrogative particles for this type of question formation. The examples in (2) show a full paradigm for the former. The basic declarative sentence in (1) serves as the input for all the various forms of yes-no questions with the interrogative particles bolded.

(1)   Yáràduà dé   'Yáràduà arrived.'

(2)   a.   i.   Ṣé Yáràduà dé? 'Did Yáràduà arrive?'
              ii.   Ǹjẹ́ Yáràduà dé? 'Did Yáràduà arrive?'
              iii.   Àbí Yáràduà dé? 'Did Yáràduà arrive?'
              iv.   Ṣèbí Yáràduà dé? 'Isn't that Yáràduà arrive?

        b   i.   Yáràduà ha dé? 'Did Yáràduà arrive?'

        c.   i.   Yáràduà dé bí? 'Did Yáràduà arrive?'
              ii.   Yáràduà dé ni? 'Did Yáràduà arrive?'
              iii.   Yáràduà dé, àbí? 'Did Yáràduà arrive?'

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d. Yáràduà **ha** dé **bí**? 'Did Yáràduà come?'

As revealed in (2), there are seven interrogative particles[3] for yes-no question formation in the standard variety, and they divide into four in terms of their distribution, with four (*sé, ǹjẹ́, àbí, sèbí*) occurring sentence initial and three (*bí, ni, àbí*) occurring at sentence final positions respectively, while only one, namely, *ha*, occurs in sentence medial position; immediately after the tense marker non future HTS or future *yóò/á/máa*. The fourth type is a combination of two of those interrogative particles.[4]

There are few remarks to make concerning the data in (2). As already shown, the fact that there are six interrogative particles to express one and the same idea is somehow puzzling, as it is not clear why a language can be so generous as to have so many interrogative particles to express just one and same formation.[5] This observation immediately raises a number of questions: (i) Is there any conditioning factor on when to use one over and above the other? (ii) Do these interrogative particles have additional functions they perform apart from being an interrogative particle? (iii) What informs the possible combination of these interrogative particles as reflected in (1d)? (iv) Which of these interrogative particles can combine and what conditions such combination? The other point of note is the use of *(t)àbí* as a yes-no interrogative particle, which occurs at both sentence initial and sentence final positions.

The other yes-no question type reported in the literature, which is also found in dialects of study, is the non-verbal clause interrogation, which simply comprises of the interrogative particle and the nominal expression (NP, PP). As reported in Bamgbose (1966: 51-52), only the interrogative particle *sé* can form this non-verbal clause question.

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[3] Awobuluyi (1978: 123) identifies only three, namely, *sé, ǹjẹ́* and *bí* and shows no semantic distinction among them. In Bamgbose (1966: 54, 1990186-187), there is the item *dọn/dan* which could have been regarded as the eight particle, but it appears this item is from Ègbá dialect meaning *ni* in Standard Yorùbá.

[4] Note that there is overlap in the case of *àbí*; as it occurs both sentence initial and sentence final positions. While Bamgbose (1967:41) calls these question tags, particles, that are found in introduced clauses, Awobuluyi (1978: 111) calls them sentential adverbs of the yes-no question.

[5] Although, a language like English, too, has more than one grammatical particle to derive its yes-no questions; the difference is that English yes-no interrogative particles are auxiliaries, each of which has its primary function.

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(2)	a-i.	Ṣé Adé? a-ii		*Ǹjẹ́ Adé	'Is it Ade'
	b-i.	Ṣé ní Ìbàdàn?	b-ii	*Ǹjẹ ní Ìbàdàn	'Is it at Ibadan'

We now turn to the selected dialects for presentation and discussion of the formation of yes-no questions in those dialects beginning with Àwórì.

In Àwórì, all sentence initial interrogative particles are attested, the sentence medial is not attested, whereas only ẹ̀bí and lá are attested out of the three sentence final interrogative particles.

(3)	a.	Ẹ̀bí Yáràduà dé? 'Is it true that Yáràduà arrive?'
	b.	Yáràduà dé lá? 'Did Yáràduà arrive?'
	c.	Yáràduà dé, ẹ̀bí? 'Did Yáràduà arrive?'

The case of Ìkálẹ̀ is similar in many ways with what is obtained in Standard Yorùbá: it establishes ṣé, ǹjẹ́ and àbí in the exact contexts and forms as that of Standard Yorùbá. On the sentence final bí, the form is bé but it still retains its syntactic position. The two items that are not reported are the sentence medial ha and sentence final ni.

(4)   Olú wá **bé.**

The case of Ìgbómìnà is more of Standard Yorùbá than any other dialect. Apart from ha which is realized as fẹ́ẹ and which is most commonly used in place of others, it appears all other interrogative particles are not only attested but are found in the same domain. The case of ha versus fẹ́ẹ is shown below:

(5)	a.	Ọ̀ **fẹ́ẹ** jẹun	**Ṣé/Ǹjẹ́** o jẹun	Did you eat?
	b.	Oúnjẹ **fẹ́ẹ** ti délẹ̀	**Ṣé/Ǹjẹ́** ounjẹ ti délẹ̀	Is food ready?
	c.	Sọ́ ọ **fẹ́ẹ** kí mi lónìí	Ṣó o ha kí mi lónìí	Did you greet me today?
	d.	Àbọ́ ọ mọ̀ yí ń wí	Àbí o mọ nǹkan tí ó ń sọ	Do you understand what he is saying?

Thus, in places where ǹjẹ́, ṣé, or ha show up in Standard Yorùbá, we have fẹ́ẹ in Ìgbómìnà.

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As for Mọbà, the available data indicate that, the dialect is close to having a full paradigm like Standard Yorùbá. The only interrogative particle that is absent is *ǹjẹ́*.[6] So, wherever *ǹjẹ́* is realized in Standard Yorùbá, *sé* is used in Mọbà. The other thing that is necessary to mention is the difference in the consonant of the interrogative particle in sentence medial; whereas it is /h/ in Standard Yorùbá, it is realized as /j/ "y" in Mọbà, other than this, the distribution is the same.

(6)   **Ǹjẹ́/Ṣé** Yáràduà dé?   SY
        Sé Yáràduà dé?   MB

Finally, coming to Owé, the story is not much different; all the interrogative particles present in SY are also present in the dialect in the same contexts (cf. Medubi & Yusuff 2005). However, there is one thing to note. This is in respect of the sentence final *bí* and *ni*. In Owé, instead of "bí", the particle is realized as "á", and in place of "ni", we have "un".

(7)   a.   Ǹjẹ́ Bùnmi se ìrẹsì **bí**   SY
               Ǹjẹ́ Bùnmi hé rẹ̀si **á**   OW
               Did Bunmi cook rice?
        b.   Ṣé Bùnmi wá **ni**   SY
               Ṣé Bùnmi ghá **un**   OW
               "Did Bunmi come?"

This much describes the data of yes-no question formation in the dialects of study. The summary of the discussions above in terms of forms and distribution of interrogative particles in those speech forms is given as table (1).

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[6] Note that Mọbà does not have voiceless palato-alveolar affricate /ʃ/ "ṣ". Therefore, for every occurrence of this segment in SY, it is the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ "s" that shows up.

Table 1: Distribution of the Yes-no interrogative particles across the dialects

Distribution	Standard Yorùbá	Àwórì	Ìkálὲ	Ìgbómìnà	Mὸbà	Owé
Sentence Initial	ṣé, ǹjẹ́ àbí, ṣèbí	ṣé, àbí	ṣé, ǹjẹ́ àbí	ǹjẹ́, ṣé, àbí ṣèbí	ṣé, àbí, ṣèbí	ṣé, ǹjẹ́, àbí ṣèbí
Sentence Medial	ha		Bé	fẹ́	yá	
Sentence Final	bí, ni, àbí	lá(à)		ni, àbí	ni, àbí	há, àbí, un

Putting all the dialects together, one can see some striking similarities and differences. For example, while Ìkálὲ lacks sentence final interrogative particles, Owé and Àwórìlack sentence medial interrogative particles. Of all the sentence initial interrogative particles, *ǹjẹ́* has the least occurrence as both Mὸbà and Àwórì do not attest it. In fact, we notice that Ìgbómìnà has the influence of Standard Yorùbá as recorded down from some of the language consultants. One other striking thing to note is the form of the sentence medial interrogative particle in the dialects where it is present. This element is *ha* in Standard Yorùbá, *bé* in Ìkálὲ, *fẹ́ẹ* in Ìgbómìnà and *yá* in Mὸbà. As we can see, there is nothing that the three elements all share in common: while Mὸbà and Ìgbómìnà share the H tone on the vowel, Standard Yorùbá and Mὸbà share the segmental feature of [a]. Finally, Owé surprisingly uses high toned *há* as a sentence final interrogative particle whereas Standard Yorùbá and Mὸbà use M-toned *ha* and H-toned *yá* as sentence medial interrogative particles respectively. In addition, Ìkálὲ does not have the equivalent of Standard Yorùbá *ni*,

Next is the interrogative particle, *(t)àbí*. It appears this element has more than one function in the language and in all the dialects. It is the same element that is found in conjunction, (8a) and in content question, (8b).

(8) a.   Nínú kí Adé lọ oko **(t)àbí** kí ó lọ ọjà.
It is either Ade went to farm or he went to the market

     b.   Adé lọ oko **(t)àbí** ó sùn?
Is it the case that Ade went to farm or he is asleep?

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On its semantics, as it is rightly noted in Ogunbowale (1969: 105), questions derived with *(t)àbí* has at least three connotations: (a) it may mean simply "yes or no?", (b) or it may convey a confirmatory meaning: "is it not so?", or (c) it may mean, "is there anything to the contrary?" As we can see, the answer to (8b) cannot simply be "yes" or "no"; rather, we expect a full sentence as an answer. One assumption is that there are three lexical items having the same segmental and tonal features in the form of *àbí* but functioning differently; one functioning as a conjunction, the second as a yes-no interrogative particle and the third as a kind of Wh-word. This assumption can be narrowed down to just two: conjunction and interrogative particle. On the latter, the kind of interrogative particle that comes up again depends on the syntactic context and the type of structure. If it occurs at word initial or word final of a simple sentence, its function will be that of a question with "yes-no" response. If, however, it occurs between two compound sentences, its functions will be both as a conjunction as well as a kind of wh-word in a question that requires a full response. The other conjecture is to assume that *àbí* is one and same lexical item that demonstrates ambiguity between those possible meanings, and one can only appeal to contexts in order to determine which meaning is intended.

Thus far, we have concentrated on yes-no interrogatives that involve verbal clause. What remains to be discussed are the yes-no interrogatives that involve non-verbal clause. As earlier mentioned, a non-verbal clause includes a noun, a noun and its modifiers or a prepositional phrase. This case is reported only in Bamgbose (1966) but which our findings also support. According to Bamgbose, only *ṣé* occurs in non-verbal clause. However, in our own findings, we observe that *tàbí, ni* and *bí* also occur in non-verbal clause.

(9) a   Ṣé Mùsùlùmí   'Is it a Muslim?'
     b. Mùsùlùmí ni   'Is it a Muslim?'
     c. (T)àbí Mùsùlùmí 'Is it a Muslim?'
     d. Èmi bí   'Is it I?'

The answer to each of the question in (9) is either "yes" or "no". Finally, the table below shows the distinctions in the distribution of these interrogatives in verbal and non-verbal clauses.

Table 3: verbal and non-verbal clause distinction among the yes-no interrogative particles

Particle	Verbal clause	Non-verbal clause
ṣé	√	√
ǹjẹ́	√	x
(t)àbí	√	√
ha	√	x
ni	√	√
bí	√	√
ṣèbí	√	x

With this, we conclude our discussion on the form and distribution of interrogatives and move to their semantics.

3   The semantics of Yes-no question in Standard Yorùbá

In the preceding section, we have raised a number of questions relating to the semantics of the interrogative particles that are found in yes-no questions. Some of the questions are repeated here for ease of reference. (i) Is there any conditioning factor on when to use one over and above the other? (ii) Do these interrogative particles have additional functions they perform apart from being interrogative particles? (iii) What informs the possible combination of these interrogative particles as reflected in (1d)? (iv) Which of these interrogative particles can combine and what conditions such combination? We address some of those questions herein as they relate to the meaning of those interrogative particles in the questions so formed with each of them. According to our finding, the role played by semantics in such multiple uses of interrogative particles is very significant. There appears to be five types of interrogative particles looking at them from a semantic point of view. These are confirmatory, expression of doubt, affirmative or negative, emphasis and rhetorical. The interesting thing, however, is that some of the interrogative particles overlap in expressing these semantic notions. We take a brief look at each of them in turns.

3.1   Confirmatory

Confirmatory is an affirmative of the speaker's opinion. This is meant to inquire from the hearer, if he has anything contrary to his own opinion; as expressed in the question set before him. Usually, such confirmatory opinion which can be positive or negative is usually expressed by the use of ṣé, ni, àbí, ṣèbí.

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(10) a. Ṣé Adé ti dé? 'Ade has returned, is it not so?'
b. Ṣèbí Adé kò tíì jẹun? 'Ade has not eaten, isn't it?
c. Adé ti dé ni? Ade has returned, is it not so?'
d. Mo fún Wálé ní owó, àbí? 'I gave Wale the money, is it not so?

In all of this, the expected answer is "yes". Note, however, that in the same manner, the expected answer can be "no", but it cannot be either, "yes" or "no".

3.2 Expression of doubt

Of all the interrogative particles, only *ha* and *ǹjẹ́* are said to be capable of expression doubtful mind of the speaker in relation to his question. According to Rowlands (1969: 37),'Doubtful questions are expressed by putting *ǹjẹ́* at the beginning of the sentence or *bí* at the end'.

(11) a. Iṣu pọ̀ lọ́jà bí? 'Is yam plentiful in the market?'
b. Ǹjẹ́ iṣu pọ̀ lọ́jà? 'Is yam plentiful in the market?'

The expected answer from the hearer is that of doubt or uncertainty.

3.3 Between affirmative and negative

There is yet another possible interpretation of the sense of affirmative or negation. Put another way, when a speaker asks a question the answer of which can be either way; yes or no, we refer to this state as *alternative response*. One way by which this is manifested is through the use of *ha...bí*. According to Ward (1952: 118), one expects the opposite of the question in the matter of affirmation or negation.

(12) a. Èyí **ha** dára tó **bí**? Is this good enough?
b. Èyí kò **ha** dára tó **bí**? Is this good enough?

The expected answer for (12a) will be, "no"; that is, *Kò dára* 'It is not good', whereas, for (12b), the expected answer is, "yes", i.e. *Ó dára* 'It is good'.

Apart from, *ha...bí*, *ǹjẹ́* and *ṣé* are other interrogative particles that give alternative response of affirmative or negative (Ward 1952: 117). Comparing *ǹjẹ́* with its counterpart, *ṣé*, Ward claims that with *ṣé*, it seems

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that the speaker expects an affirmative/negative answer, though the negative is more plausible.

3.4 Emphatic

Sometimes, yes-no questions are asked to lay certain emphasis on the whole information being sought for. The only instance reported in the literature is the one involving *ha*. For example, Ward (1952: 118) claims that when *ha* is used, it signals emphasis. The way *ha* performs this function is by co-occurring with another interrogative particle.

(13) a. Èyí kò dára tó **bí**?   'Isn't this good enough'   *non-emphatic*

b. Èyí kò **ha** dára tó **bí**?   'Isn't this good enough' *emphatic*

(Adapted from Ward 1952: 118)

Apart from *ha*, Ogunbowale (1970: 103) also reports that *ṣé* is not only the strongest particle for asking questions; it is used before a noun when the noun is to be emphasized. This suggests that all interrogatives involving *ṣé* are emphatic.

3.5 Rhetorical

Rhetorical questions by definition are questions which ordinarily do not require or demand an answer. The yes-no question that conveys this is the one involving the interrogative *ṣèbi/ṣebí* (Bamgbose 1966: 52).

(14) Ṣèbí ìwọ ni mo rí ní Ojúẹlẹ́gba?   'It is you I saw at Ojuelegba, isn't it?'

However, we are of the opinion that this type of question can also be non-rhetorical, in which case, the answer can be affirmative or negative.

To recap, the table below shows the summary of the discussion relating to the semantics of the yes-no questions.

Table 2: Summary of the semantic collocation of yes-no interrogatives

Emphatic	Confirmatory: Affirmative	Alternative: Affirmative or negative	Doubtful	Rhetorical
...ha... şé...	şé... ...ni (t)àbí	(t)àbí ...ha...bí ǹjẹ́... şé...	ǹjẹ́.... ...bí	şèbí...

In what follows, we provide a syntactic analysis of yes-no questions using the examples from Standard Yoruba.

4 Base generated versus movement analysis

The surface form of a structure which is spelled-out at the PF in the Minimalist Program may be accounted for in one of two ways; either as base generated; in which case; the syntactic structure or form at the LF and the PF is the same or through movement of certain syntactic element at the interface between LF and PF; in which case, the LF and PF representation are different and, such difference is accounted for via movement. Section 4.1 considers the first option and proposes three different structures based on the three yes-no question types, while section 4.2 proposes one structure and account for the different surface forms of those interrogative particles through movement. Although, this study is on selected dialects, we restrict our analysis to data from Standard Yorùbá simply, because it has the full paradigm; as such, there is nothing that we claim for Standard Yorùbá that does not fall in line with facts in all of the remaining speech varieties.

4.1 Base generation of yes-no question

We assume that all questions are projections of I(nflection), which are complement of C(omplementizer). We begin with yes-no question sentences that have their interrogative particles at the sentence initial position. Based on the structure that we assume, we propose a CP for each of the structures in (15a-c) with the Spec, CP null in (15a) and (15c) and the interrogative particle occupying the C position.

(15a) *Basic Structure for Yes-no Questions with Q-particle in sentence initial position*

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```
                    CP
            ╱────────╲
           Ø          C'
                  ╱──────╲
                 C         IP
                 │      ╱──────╲
               ⎧ ṣέ ⎫  DP        I'
               ⎨ ǹjέ ⎬ ╱╲     ╱──────╲
               ⎩ àbí ⎭ Ẹ̀bùn  I        VP
                        │      │     ╱──────╲
                             ún        V'
                                    ╱──────╲
                                   V         DP
                                   │        ╱╲
                                   jẹ       iṣu
```
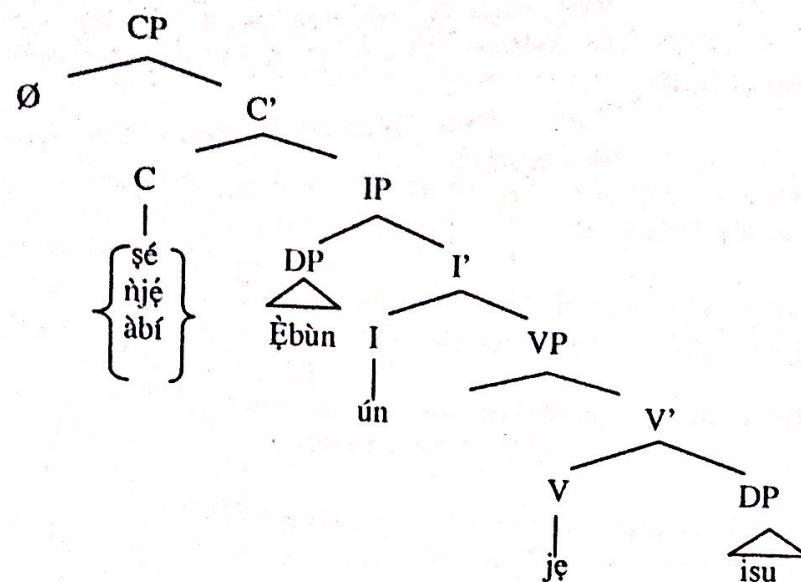
The case of yes-no questions which have their interrogative particles located inside the main clause in (15b) is quite different as the CP is contained inside the IP. Consequent upon this, we propose the structure in (15b). Note that the CP which contains the interrogative particle is the complement of I.

(15b)   *Basic Structure for Yes-no Questions with Q-particle in sentence medial position*

```
              IP
          ╱────────╲
        DP           I'
       ╱╲        ╱──────╲
     Ẹ̀bùn      I          CP
               │       ╱──────╲
              ún        C'
                     ╱──────╲
                    C         VP
                    │      ╱──────╲
                   ha        V'
                          ╱──────╲
                         V         DP
                         │        ╱╲
                         jẹ       iṣu
```

15
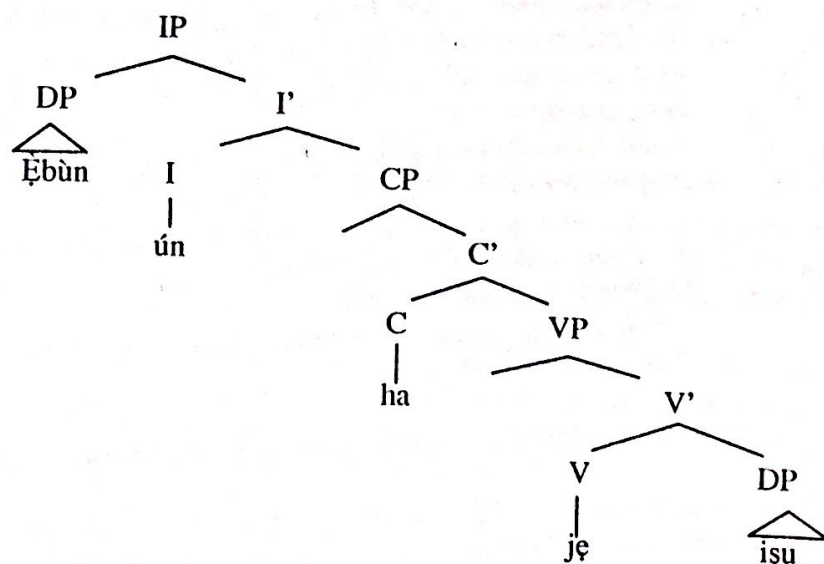
Finally, with yes-no questions whose interrogative particles in the sentence final position, we propose a CP, the head of which follows its IP complement. This is the only way we account for the surface linear order.

(15c) *Basic Structure for Yes-no Questions with Q-particle in sentence final position*
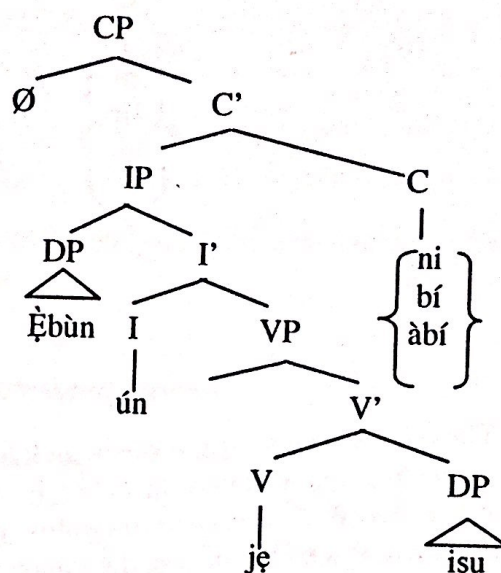
However, the proposed structure in (15c) raises a number of questions. If we have CP with head final, how do we account for other phrases in the language; such as: VP, IP, etc., which are head initial. It appears there is no motivation for such a structure. Still on the head final C account in (15c), there is no way we can account for how we have the same C as head initial in (15a&b).

Apart from the problems raised by the base generated analysis with respect to disparity of the C position, we are faced with the issue of simplicity. An analysis that provides a simple account and structure is favoured over and above an analysis with a complex structure. We are faced with the option of looking for an alternative analysis that is simpler, more natural and unified. We find this in the movement analysis as entrenched in the Minimalist Program.

4.2 Yes-no question: a movement analysis

In an analysis that invokes movement within the framework of Minimalist Program, the assumption is that the syntactic structure of a yes-no question is a kind of derivation that involves some movement. In the Minimalist

Program, there are three economy principles of such derivation. These are *Shortest Move*, *Greed* and *Procrastinate*. I define each of the principles in what follows:

Shortest Move: This is a principle of grammar requiring that a constituent should move the shortest distance possible in any single movement operation. (Radford 1997: 528)
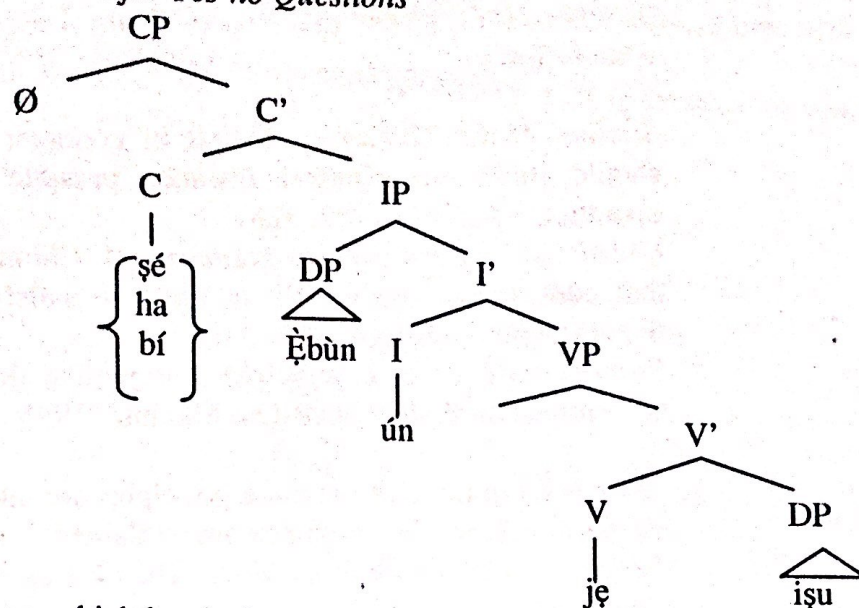
Greed: It is a principle of grammar (cf. Chomsky 1995b) which specifies that constituents move only in order to satisfy their own morphological requirements. (Radford 1997: 510)

Procrastinate: It is a principle that prefers derivations that hold off on movements until after Spell-Out Marantz (1995: 357)

There is no doubt that the three principles are interwoven and the ways they are set to account for language are explained thus. First, when movement is allowed, it must be *Shortest Move*. The idea of "shortest move" is to ensure economy in a derivation; as such, long distance movement is not desirable and should be used as a *last resort*. Irrespective of what moves, what is important is that the moved entity must not skip a legitimate landing site. Precisely, if a head moves, it must land at the next higher head site. Similarly, when a phrase moves, the landing site must be a Specifier position of the next higher phrase. However, there are times when in the course of a derivation, this idea of Shortest move cannot be implemented. One instance is when the shortest landing site is already filled. Second, if there is to be any movement, it should be delayed as much as possible in the spirit of *Procrastinate*. There are yet two other terms that are closely related to the above principles: "Convergence" and "Crash". When a derivation *converges*, it derives a structure that can be interpreted at PF i.e. at the level of pronunciation. By contrast, a derived structure that cannot be interpreted at the level of pronunciation is said to have *crashed*. With these principles and the constraints, we only move a syntactic element; when failure to do so will make a derivation to *crash*.

From the foregoing, it is assumed that all yes-no interrogative particles in Yorùbá are in the sentence initial position at the starting point, namely, at the LF. There are two possible movements, covert and overt. A covert movement can only take place at the LF whereas overt movement is manifested at the PF. Recall that, movement in the Minimalist Program involves copying an entity leaving a trace behind. Note also that the two of them (the copied and its trace) form a chain; with the copied element serving as the head of the chain (Chomsky 1995). The structure in (16) serves as representation of all yes-no question types in the language.

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(16)   *Basic Structure for Yes-no Questions*

```
                              CP
                        ┌──────┴──────┐
                        Ø            C'
                                 ┌────┴────┐
                                 C         IP
                                 │     ┌────┴────┐
                              ┌ şé ┐   DP        I'
                              │ ha │   △     ┌────┴────┐
                              └ bí ┘   Èbùn   I        VP
                                            │      ┌────┴────┐
                                            ún              V'
                                                        ┌────┴────┐
                                                        V        DP
                                                        │        △
                                                        jẹ       işu
```

A yes-no question, which has its interrogative particle in the sentence initial position at PF involves a covert A-bar movement. This is why this type of yes-no questions are base generated.

For the second type, which involves the occurrence of the interrogative particle after the subject noun at the point of Spell-out, there is the need to introduce another CP layer above the base structure in (16) above. That step yields the structure in (17). There are two movements that are required in order to derive a structure that will converge. Following strictly the principles guiding Head and Phrasal movement, I propose that the DP moves first from the Spec IP to Spec CP_1 and from there, it moves to Spec, CP_2. This is followed by the movement of the HTS (which marks non-future tense) from I to C_2 position. Observe that, apart from the need to derive the surface linear order, which necessitates this movement; the movement is also desirable in the spirit of checking theory (Chomsky 1995).

(17) *Basic Structure for Yes-no Questions with Q-particle in medial initial position*
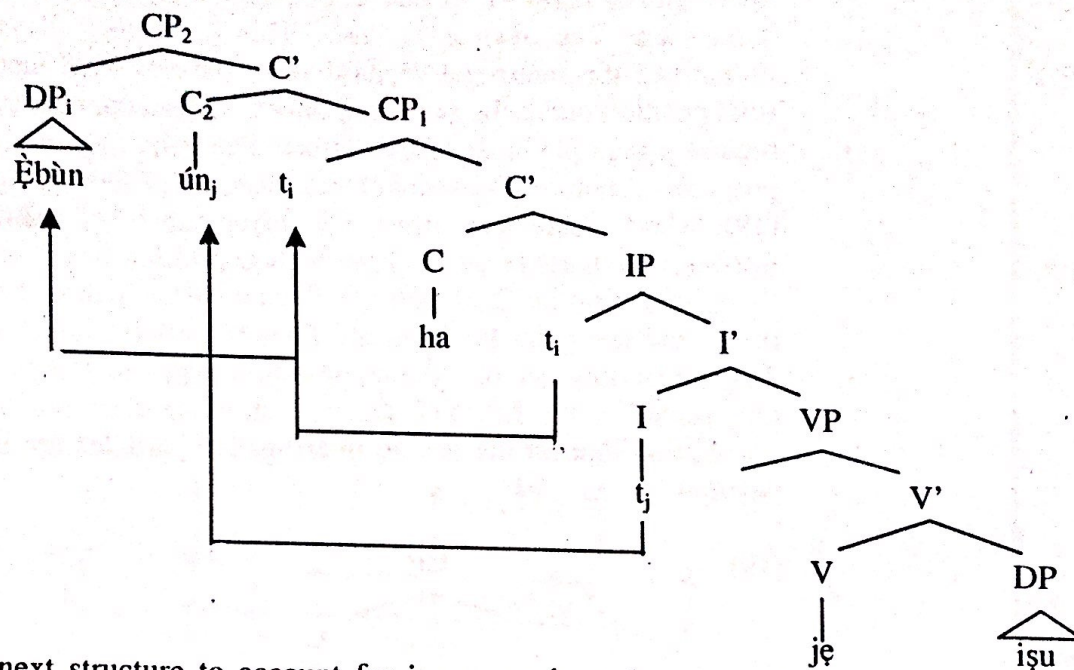
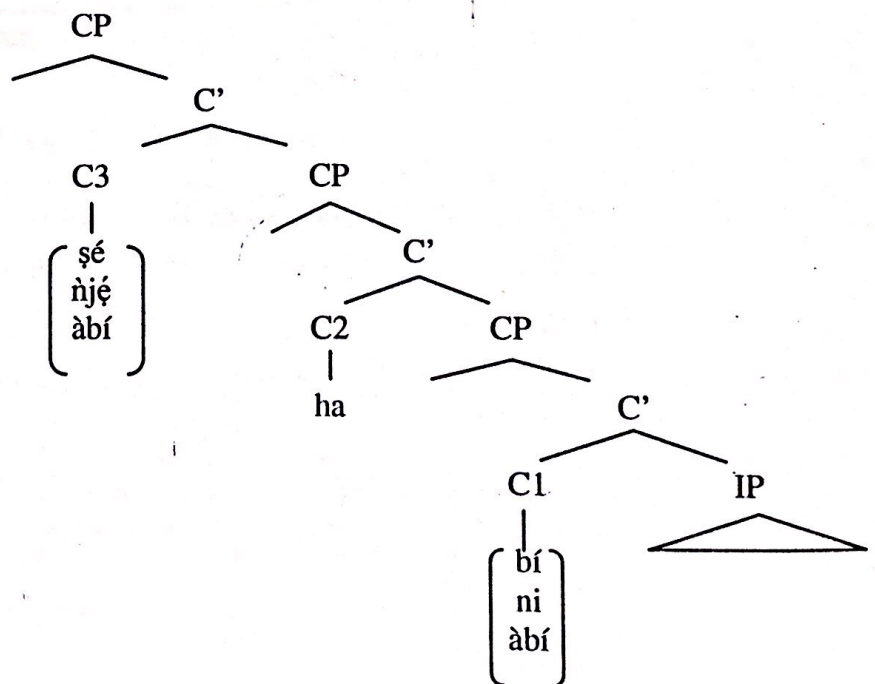The next structure to account for is cases where the yes-no interrogative particles are found in sentence final position. Assuming the same basic structure in (16), the whole IP moves to Spec CP. The structure in (18) illustrates this.
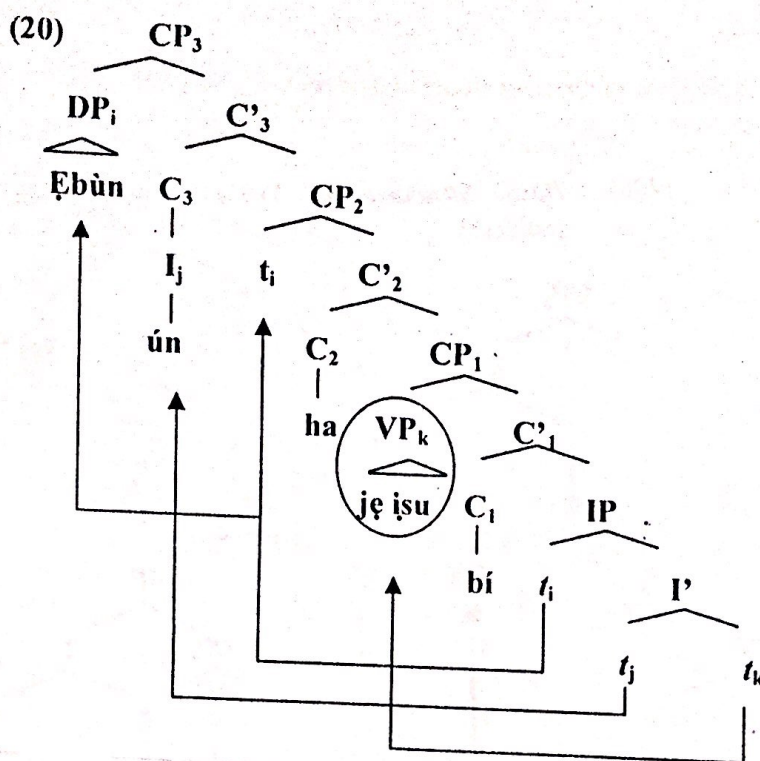
(18)

19
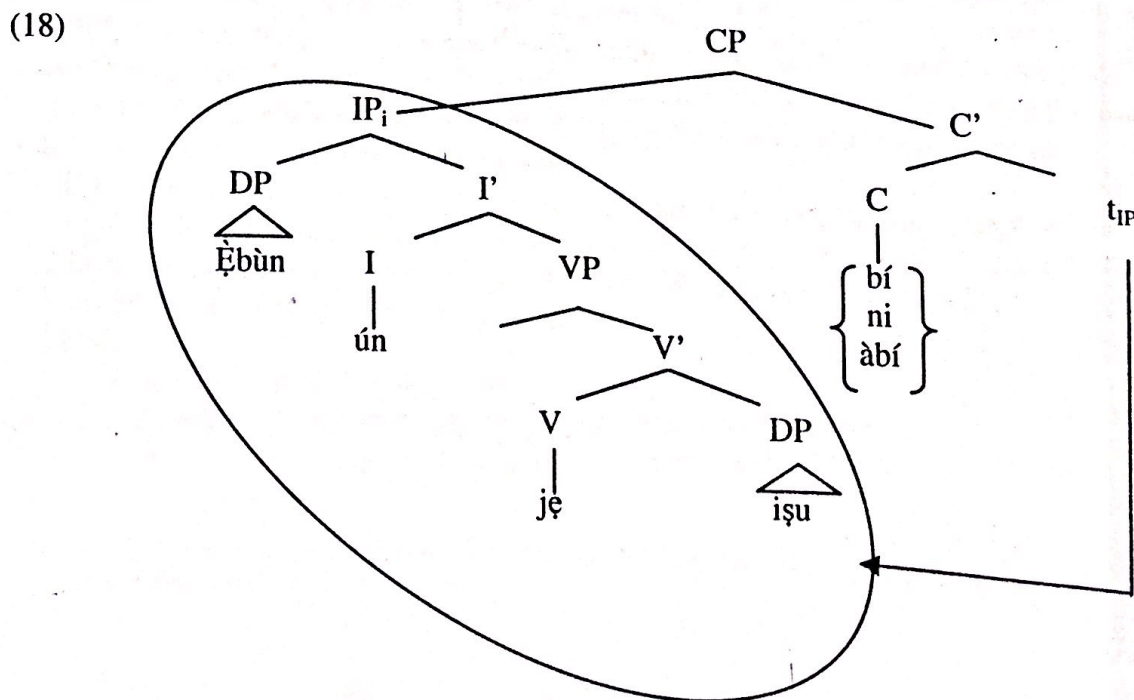
As earlier shown, there are cases, where by, two of the interrogative particles appear in the same interrogative sentence as in (2d). The question that remains to be answered is whether or not the idea of having all the interrogative particles in one C position is capable of accounting for this latter case. The answer is "no". This is because it is not possible to pronounce the interrogative particle in the sentence medial and sentence final position under the same and only C. To account for such examples will require a multiple layer of CP. This in fact calls for a revision of the earlier proposed structure. Consequent upon this, we propose the a new structure in (19) where there are three CP layer; each of which harbours the interrogative particle set in order of their position in the sentence: in C3 are the sentence initial Q-particles, followed by the sentence medial Q-particle in C2 and lastly are the sentence final Q-particles which occupy C1. Note that, depending on the yes-no question type; the three Cs need not be represented at the LF. Yet, the new structure does not nullify our earlier assumption that all the yes-no interrogative particles are in sentence initial position.

(19)

```
                    CP
                   /  \
                      C'
                     /  \
                   C3    CP
                   |    /  \
                 ┌ şé ┐   C'
                 │ ǹjẹ́│  /  \
                 └ àbí┘ C2    CP
                       |     /  \
                       ha    C'
                            /  \
                          C1    IP
                          |    /△\
                        ┌ bí ┐
                        │ ni │
                        └ àbí┘
```

With the structure in (19), we account for cases that require filling both C2 and C1 positions.

(20)

CP$_3$

DP$_i$　　　C'$_3$

Ẹbùn　C$_3$　　CP$_2$

I$_j$　　t$_i$　　C'$_2$

ún　　C$_2$　　CP$_1$

ha　VP$_k$　　C'$_1$

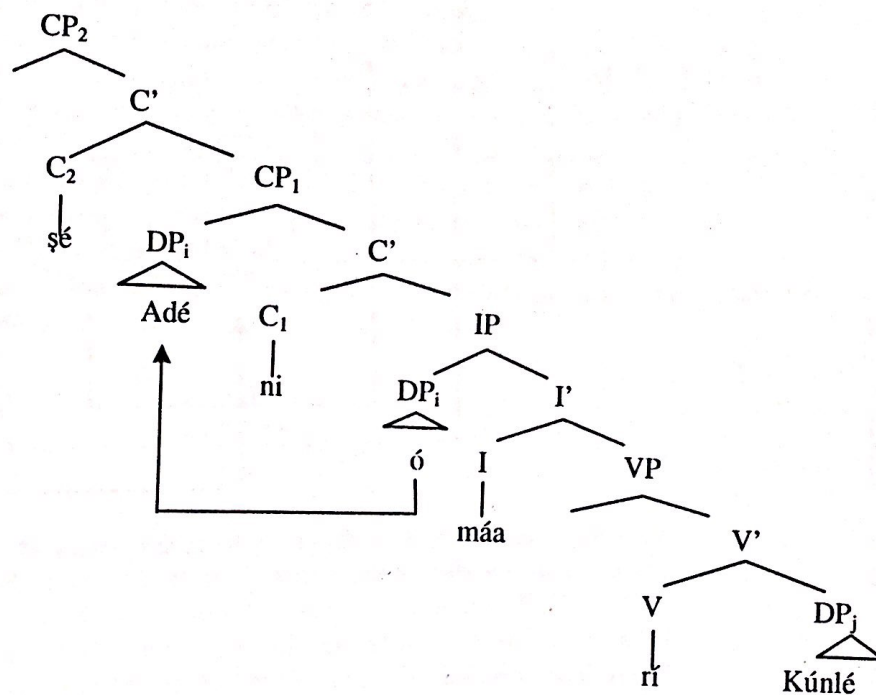jẹ ișu　C$_1$　　IP

bí　t$_i$

I'

t$_j$　　t$_k$

As illustrated in the tree diagram, there are series of movements that take place before we derive the structure at the PF. First, the whole IP moves to Spec, CP1. The next is the head movement which involves movement of the HTS from I to C3. Note that the movement skips C2 because it has been filled. The principle that underlies movement is such that the landing site must be empty. It is this principle that forces the DP to move first out of Spec, IP (that already moved to Spec, CP1) to Spec, CP2 and from there to Spec, CP3 which is its final landing site.

What remains to be accounted for are cases involving complex structures as reflected in (22). As we can see, just as we want to have information about the subject noun in form of yes-no question (21b), so also, we can do for the object noun (21c).

(21)　a.　Adé ni ó máa rí Kúnlé
　　　b.　Ṣé Adé ni ó máa rí Kúnlé
　　　c.　Ṣé Kúnlé ni Adé máa rí

In the same way, we propose (23) for both questions involving enquiries about subject and object respectively.

(23a)   *Basic Structure for Yes-no Questions in complex structure:*
         (subject)

```
                        CP₂
                         |
                         C'
                ┌────────┴────────┐
               C₂                CP₁
                |          ┌───────┴───────┐
               ṣé         DPᵢ             C'
                         △           ┌────┴────┐
                        Adé         C₁        IP
                                     |     ┌───┴───┐
                                    ni    DPᵢ      I'
                                         △    ┌────┴────┐
                                         ó    I        VP
                                              |     ┌───┴───┐
                                             máa           V'
                                                      ┌────┴────┐
                                                     V         DPⱼ
                                                     |         △
                                                     rí       Kúnlé
```

(23b) *Basic Structure for Yes-no Questions in complex structure: (object)*
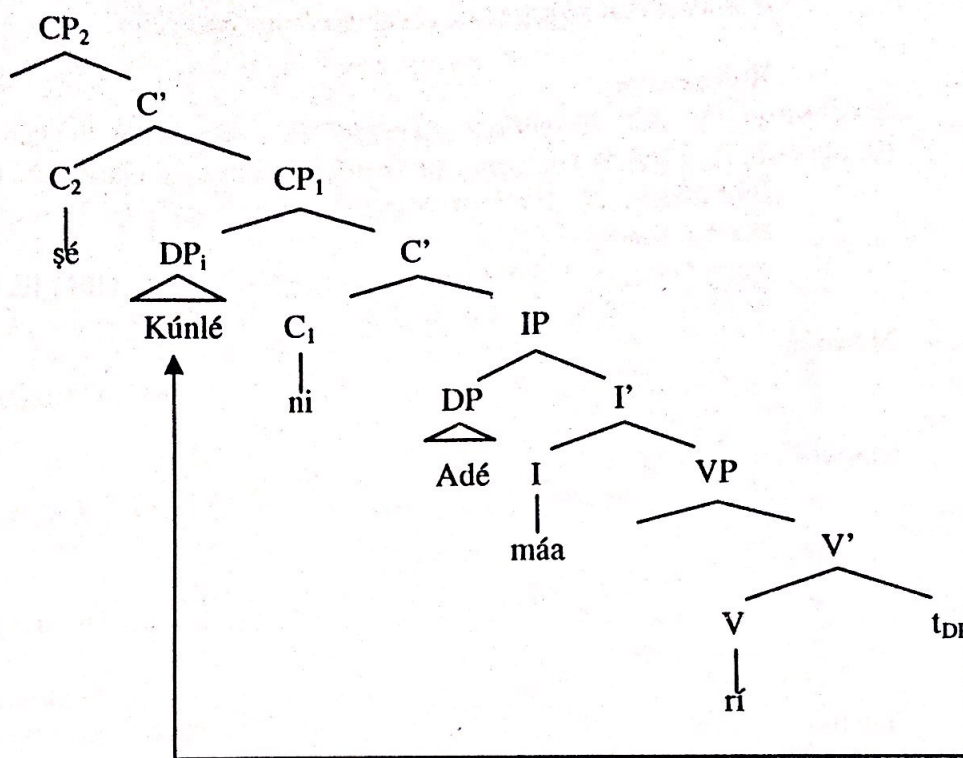
The yes-no questions with sentence medial/final interrogative particles involves the same process.

5   Conclusion

We have examined the yes-no interrogatives in Yorùbá and in some selected dialects and found out that there are more similarities than differences among these dialects in terms of their syntactic distribution and semantic connotations. As to their syntax, it is demonstrated that the yes-no questions divide into three, namely those yes-no questions with their interrogative particles in sentence initial, sentence medial and sentence final positions. Despite significant differences at the level of pronunciation, we proposed a unified structure for all the three and account for those differences through movement; which in most cases is head driven. As to their semantics, we claim that the in addition to being a question tag, each interrogative particle carries additional meaning which may be confirmatory, emphatic,

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affirmative or negative, an expression of doubt or a signal to a rhetorical question that requires no response from the hearer.

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