

# A Contrastive Analysis Of Interrogatives In Standard Yorùbá And Central Yorùbá Dialects

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## Abstract

*Interrogatives are conventionally associated with the act of requesting information. Several researches have been carried out on the syntax of standard Yorùbá (SY) and its dialects but with little attention paid to the syntax of interrogatives in CY dialects and the comparative analysis of interrogatives in the standard dialect and Central Yorùbá (CY) dialects especially under the confines of the latest theoretical requirements. This paper therefore, investigated the syntax of interrogatives in SY and the CY dialects with a view to comparing how they both form their interrogatives. Data were sourced using primary and secondary methods. These were subjected to syntactic analysis within the theoretical framework of the Minimalist Program (MP). Interrogative features setting CY dialects apart from SY were identified: CY dialect operate *yèsí/ńsí* "who" in the place of *ta* used by SY (to question human referents). Focus markers are also optionally dropped in CY dialects unlike their SY counterpart. Also, CY dialects use the question noun (QN) *kí* for both non-human referents *Kí lo rí* "What did you see?" and *maner Kí o ẹ gbó* "How did you hear?". Among the similarities identified is that both CY dialects and SY do not observe Attract the Closest Principle (ACP) when they stack QNs in their constituent interrogatives. Therefore, many of the items that in SY take their sources from its dialects.*

**Keywords:** Syntax of interrogatives, Central Yorùbá dialects, Standard Yorùbá, Dialectal variations

## 1. Introduction

According to Akmajian, et al. (1991), dialects are said to be regional, ethnic or linguistic. Quite a good number of dialectologists have worked on the classification of Yorùbá dialects, among them are: Adétúgbó (1967, 1982),

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Oyèláràn (1976), Awóbùlúyì (1998) and many others. Oyèláràn (1976) and Adétúgbò (1982) identify Ifẹ̀, Ijẹ̀ṣà and Èkìtì dialects as CY dialects. Awóbùlúyì (1998) classifies Ifẹ̀, Ijẹ̀ṣà, Èkìtì and Mòbà under CY dialects while Adéníyì and Òjó (2005) identify Ifẹ̀, Ijẹ̀ṣà, Èkìtì, Mòbà and Àkùré as CY dialects. In the field of linguistics, Central Yorùbá dialects share many common features in the areas of segment, syntactic and sequence structures, phonological rules, reduplication, pronouns, pronominal features and numeral systems (Adétúgbò, 1982; Awóbùlúyì, 1998; Olúmúyíwá, 2006 and Fábùnmi, 2012 among others). Awóbùlúyì (1998) asserts that standard Yorùbá is the conglomeration of all its dialects. Therefore, to be able to unveil many things on how the standard dialect behaves or paves a way for the increase of knowledge on it we need to shift our attention to our dialects and begin to analyse their phonological and syntactic features to be able to have detailed knowledge about them. This 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 (Olúmúyíwá, 2006; Ọláńrewájú, 2022). The syntax of interrogatives in CY dialects is yet to receive adequate attention from language researchers. Therefore, this paper discusses the similarities and variance between the standard Yorùbá and Central Yorùbá dialects.

This paper has six sections: Section one discusses the introduction. Section two discusses literature review while section three discusses the methodology adopted for the work. Sections four and five respectively discuss dissimilarities and similarities between SY and CY dialects with respect to the formation of their interrogatives while concluding remarks are drawn in section six.

### **1.2 Extant Works on Interrogatives in SY and CY dialects**

A considerable amount of research works have been carried out on the syntax of interrogatives in both SY and CY dialects. Among these are Awóbùlúyì (1978, 2013), Awóyalé (1985), Bámgbòṣé (1990), Ajíbóyè (2006), Àkànbí, (2011, 2016), Táíwò and Abím̀bòlá (2014), Ọláńrewájú (2016, 2022) and so on. Awóbùlúyì (1978) and Bámgbòṣé (1990) assert that interrogatives are used to elicit information from an interlocutor. They identify different methods of forming questions in Yorùbá. These are: use of interrogative verbs, question particles, interrogative conjunctions, interrogative modifiers,

interrogative qualifiers and preverbal question markers and so on. These are classified into content word and non-content word questions. Àkànbí (2011) identifies *dà* and *ńkọ́* as verbs performing dual roles: predicates and question markers in Yorùbá sentences. This view is in line with Munro's (2012) assumption that 'an interrogative verb is embedded with wh-feature. Àkànbí also claims that *dà* and *ńkọ́* exhibit some dissimilarities with respect to their semantics. Also, they are not mutually exclusive. Awóbùlúyì (2013) disregards *dà* and *ńkọ́* as question verbs in Yorùbá and refers to them as (interrogative) qualifiers. His arguments are based on distributional restriction placed on these items. To Táíwò and Abímbólá (2014) and Ọláńrewájú (2017, 2020, 2022) QVs are regarded as verbs in Yorùbá. Ọláògún (2016) and, Ọláògún and Aṣiwájú (2016) also take a radical departure from the traditional position on Yorùbá QNs. They claim that items like *ta*, *kí* and so on in Yorùbá content word questions never mark interrogative. Ajíbóyè (2006) discusses the syntactic behaviour of focus markers in the interrogatives of some Mọ̀bà sub-dialects. None of this afore-stated research works paid attention to the contrastive analysis of question forms in SY and CY dialects.

## 2. Methodology

Both primary and secondary methods of data collection were adopted for this study. Twenty-five native speakers aged 60 and above were purposively selected for structured oral interview based on their proficiency, 5 each from Ilé-Ifè, Ilẹ̀sà, Adó-Ékitì and Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà (which are the major areas where Central Yorùbá is spoken). The remaining 5 were selected from speakers of the standard dialect. Also, data were sourced from the relevant text, articles, journals and so on, both from libraries and internet. Data were subjected to interlinear glossing and syntactic analysis. The Phase Theory of Noam Chomsky's Minimalist Program (MP) served as the framework for the analysis,

## 3. Dissimilarities between Central Yorùba Dialects and Standard Yoruba

According to Awóbùlúyì (1998), Olúmúyìwá (2006), Ọláńrewájú (2017), standard Yorùbá also refer to as the standard dialect is the conglomeration of its dialects. Therefore, it is never impossible for the language to exhibit some linguistic features in common with its dialects. However, Central

Yorùbá dialects still have the dissimilarities identified below compared with the standard dialect with respect to how they form their interrogatives.

**a. Síkó vs Dà and Níkó (QVs)**

A QV is a verb with [+Q] feature and it is used to elicit information from an interlocutor. CY dialects operate one QV *síkó* in the place of standars Yorùbá's *dà* and *ńíkó* to form content-word questions as shown in 1a-d, also, as rhetorical questions (in 2a-d) below:

- 1 a. CY  
 Ifẹ̀: Ìwé mi síkó?  
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà/Èkìtì: Ùwé mi síkó?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Ìwé mi síkó?  
 Book me QV  
 'Where is my book?'
- b. SY  
 Ìwé mi ńíkó/dà  
 Book me QV  
 'Where is my book?'
- c. CY  
 Ifẹ̀: Yẹ̀yé rẹ̀ síkó?  
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà/Èkìtì: Èyẹ̀yé rẹ̀ síkó?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Èyẹ̀yé rìn síkó?  
 Mother his QV  
 'Where is his mother?'
- d. SY  
 Ìyá rẹ̀ ńíkó/dà  
 Mother his QV  
 'Where is his mother?'
- 2 a. CY  
 Ifẹ̀: Ìwọ síkó, ọ̀ ọ̀ lè gbé e?  
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà/Èkìtì: Ùwọ síkó, ọ̀ ọ̀ lè gbé e?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Ìwọ síkó, ọ̀ ọ̀ lè gbé e?  
 You QV you NEG can carry it

- ‘What of you, can’t you carry it?’
- b. SY  
 Ìwọ́ ńkọ́, ọ́ ò lè gbé e?  
 You QV you NEG can carry it  
 ‘What of you, can’t you carry it?’
- c. CY  
 Ifẹ̀: Ìwọ́ síkọ́, ọ́ ò lè mú un kò ọ́?  
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà/Èkìtì: Ùwọ́ síkọ́, ọ́ ọ́ lè mú un kò ọ́?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Ìwọ́ síkọ́, ọ́ ọ́ lè mú un kò ọ́?  
 You QV, you NEG can give it meet  
 him  
 ‘What of you, can’t you give him?’
- d. SY  
 Ìwọ́ ńkọ́, ọ́ ò lè fún un?  
 You QV you NEG can give him  
 ‘What of you, can’t you give him?’

*Dà* as a QV in the standard dialect is never operated in a rhetorical question as evident in the ill-formedness of 73 below:

3. \*Ìwọ́ dà, ọ́ ò lè fún un?  
 You QV you NEG can give him

**b. Focus Marker**

Another syntactic difference that distinguishes CY dialects from standard Yorùbá is that unlike standard Yorùbá, Central Yorùbá dialects optionally drop a focus marker in a constituent question.

- 4
- a. CY  
 Ifẹ̀: Yèsí ø ighán mí kí?  
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà: Yèsí ø ọ́n mí kí?  
 Èkìtì: Ìsì ø ọ́n í kí?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Ìsì ø ọ́n-ọ́n í kí?  
 QN they PROG greet  
 ‘How were they greeting?’
- b. SY

- Ta ni wón ní kí?  
 QN FOC they PROG greet  
 'Who are they greeting?'  
 c. \*Ta ø wón ní kí?  
 QN they PROG greet

The complementiser position is phonetically null in (4a) above, while it is overt in (4b). Example (4c) is ungrammatical in standard Yorùbá because of the missing focus marker. Therefore, unlike standard Yorùbá, CY dialects can drop the focus markers. This is also predicated on the types of interrogative nouns.

### c. Question Nouns

CY dialects also have some lexical structural dissimilarities with respect to how they form their constituent interrogatives using question nouns as follow:

#### i. Yèsí/Ìsì Versus Ta (Who)

CY dialect uses *yèsí/ìsì* for human referent in the place of *ta* operated by the standard dialect (Awóbulúyì, 1998; Ajónḡólò, 2005; Ajíbóyè, 2006; Oláńrewájú, 2017, 2020, 2022). *Yèsì* is operated by Ifẹ and Ìjẹṣà dialects while Èkitì and Mọ̀bà dialects use *ìsì*. It is discovered that *ìsì* is derived from *yèsì* by the processes of deletion and assimilation (Oláńrewájú, 2022). Let us consider the examples below.

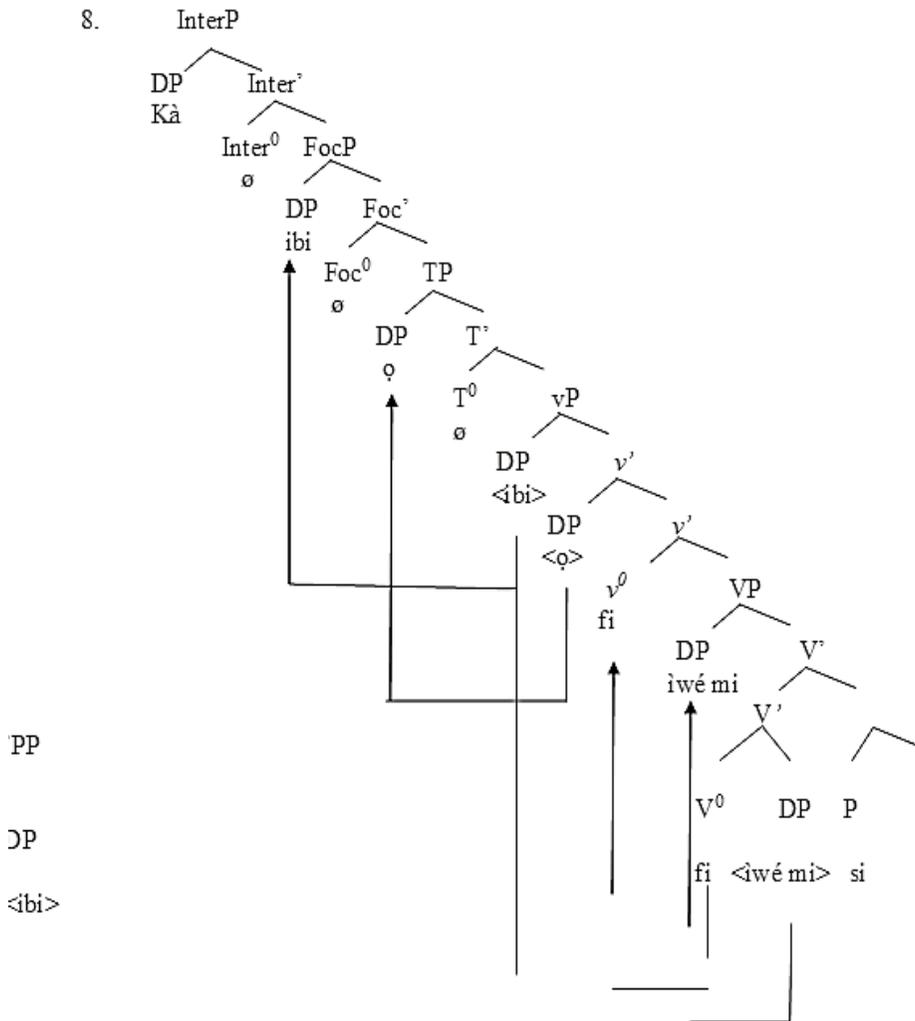
- 5 a. CY  
 Ifẹ: Yèsí ni bàbá rẹ?  
 Ìjẹṣà: Yèsí i bàbá rẹ?  
 Èkitì: Ìsì i ààbá rẹ?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Ìsì i ààbá rìn?  
 QN FOC father his  
 'Who is his father?'  
 b. SY  
 Ta ni bàbá a rẹ?  
 QN FOC MTS his  
 'Who is his father?'

#### Kabi (kà ibi) versus ibo (ibi (è)wo) (Where)





The derivation in 7a is phrase-marked as 8 below:



The derivation (in 8) above goes thus: The verb *fi* “put” merges with the DP *ìwé mi* “my book” to satisfy its c-selection requirement and consequently projects the lower V-bar. The lower V-bar merges with the PP *si ibi* to project the higher the V-bar. After this, the direct object DP *ìwé mi* “my book” is internally merged at the spec VP for (case) feature valuation. The null

performative light verb  $v^0$  externally merges with the VP to project the  $v$ -bar, while the strong  $vF$  feature on the light  $v^0$  attracts the lexical verb *mú* “take” to adjoin to itself. The second person subject pronoun  $\varnothing$  “you” is selected from the numeration and merged at the inner spec  $vP$  in line with Predicate-Internal Subject Hypothesis (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 Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC), that is, to be actively available for subsequent operations. The derivation proceeds by merging the  $T^0$  to project the T-bar. The  $T^0$  as a probe searches its c-command domain and attracts  $\varnothing$  “you” to the spec TP where its [+case, EPP] feature is checked. The derivation proceeds by merging the abstract  $Foc^0$  with the TP to project the Foc-bar. The  $Foc^0$  as a probe also attracts the DP *ibi* “place” to spec FocP to value its [+Focus] feature. The derivation proceeds by merging the abstract  $Inter^0$  with the FocP to project the Inter-bar. The QN *ka* is externally merged at the spec InterP to value the unvalued [+Q, EF] on the  $Inter^0$  through specifier and head agreement. The QN *kà* does not undergo any syntactic movement, it is rather externally merged at the spec InterP unlike *ibo* of the standard dialect whis is base-generated from the  $vP$  domain. Also, *kà* (in kabi) never occurs in-situ in Central Yorùbá dialects unlike *ibo* of standard Yorùbá (Ọláńrewájú, 2020). Let us examine (9a-c) and (9b and d) below;

- CY
- 9 a. Ifẹ̀/Ìjẹ̀ṣà: Kabi  $\varnothing$  mi bọ̀?  
 Èkìtì: Kabi  $\varnothing$  i bọ̀  
 Mọ̀bà Ọ̀tùn: Kabi ọ́ọ́ í bọ̀?  
 QN you PROG go  
 ‘Where are you coming from?’
- b. Ifẹ̀/Ìjẹ̀ṣà: \*O mi re kabi?  
 Èkìtì/ Mọ̀bà Ọ̀tùn: \*Ọ́Ọ́ í re kabi?  
 You PROG go QN
- SY
- c. O ní lọ sí ibo?  
 You PROG go to QN  
 ‘Where are you going?’
- d. Ibo ni o ní lọ?  
 QN FOC you PROG go

‘Where are you going?’

The derivation (in 9b) above is ill-formed because *kà* is never base-generated within the vP domain. Another important difference between CY and the standard dialect is that CY dialects use the QN *kà* to make a request in the place of of the QV *dà* operated by the standard dialect as shown below:

- CY
- 10 a. Ifẹ̀: Kà rí yèyè rẹ̀?  
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà/ Èkìtì: Kà rí èyèyè rẹ̀?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Kà rí èyèyè rìn?  
 : QN see mother his  
 ‘Where is his mother?’
- SY
- b. Ìyá rẹ̀ dà?  
 Mother his QV  
 ‘Where is his mother?’
- CY
- 11 a. Ifẹ̀: Kà rí owó rẹ̀?  
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà: Kà rí oó rẹ̀?  
 Èkìtì: Kà rí eó rẹ̀?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Kà rí eó rìn?  
 : QN see money his  
 ‘Where is his money?’
- SY
- b. Owó mi dà  
 Money me QV  
 ‘Where is my money?’

**iii. Kí (What and How)**

The usage of the QN *kí* constitutes another significant difference between CY dialects and the standard dialect. Unlike the standard dialect which uses the QN *kí* “what” to ask questions after non-human referents only, CY dialects operate *kí* to ask questions after non-human referents and also about how something is done or how something happened (how).

- CY
- 12 a. Ifẹ̀: Kí ni ighán mú ghá?  
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà: Kí i án mú ghá?

Èkìtì/Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Kí án mú ghá  
 QN FOC they take come  
 'What did they bring'

SY

b. Kí ni o mú wá?  
 QN FOC you bring come  
 'What did you bring?'

13 a. Ifẹ̀: Kí ni o ẹ̀?  
 Ịjẹ̀ṣà: Kí li o ẹ̀?  
 Èkìtì/Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Kí ì ẹ̀?  
 QN FOC you do  
 'What did you do?'

SY

b. Kí ni o ẹ̀?  
 QN FOC you do  
 'What did you do?'

In examples 12 and 13 above, the QN *kí* is used for non-human referent and it is base-generated from the vP domain before undergoing syntactic movement to the clause left peripheral position. The examples below are not featured in the standard dialect. Only CY dialects use *kí* to question "how" while the standard dialect uses *báwo* (*bí èwo*).

14 a. Ifẹ̀: Kí ni o ẹ̀ dún?  
 Ịjẹ̀ṣà: Kí li o ẹ̀ dún?  
 Èkìtì: Kí è ẹ̀ dún?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Kí èé ẹ̀ dún?  
 QN FOC you do sound  
 'How did it sound?'

SY

b. Báwo ni o ẹ̀ dún?  
 QN FOC you do sound  
 'How did it sound?'

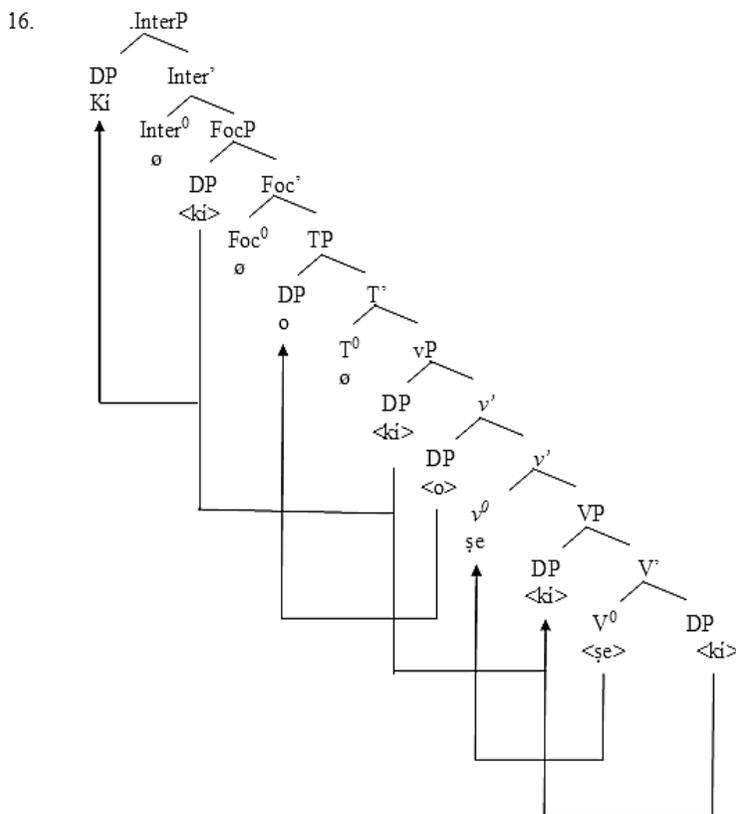
15 a. Ifẹ̀: Kí ni o ẹ̀ ẹ̀ é?  
 Ịjẹ̀ṣà: Kí li o ẹ̀ ẹ̀ é?  
 Èkìtì: Kí o ẹ̀ ẹ̀ é?

Òtùn Mòbà: Kí òó şe şe é?  
 QN FOC you do do it  
 'How did you do it?'

SY

b. Báwo ni o şe şe é?  
 QN FOC you do do it  
 'How did you do it?'

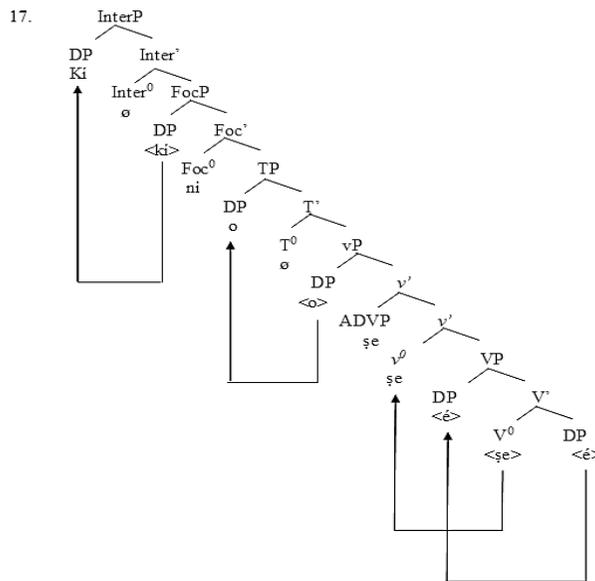
Examples 14a and 15a (in Ifè) dialects are phrase-marked as 16 and 17 below for better illustrations and clearer understanding.



In 16 above, the QN originates from the *vP* domain. The derivation goes thus: The lexical verb *şe* “do” merges with *kí* “what” to project the V-bar *şe kí* “do what” in line with c-selection requirement of the verb. After this, the QN *kí*

“what” is copied to the spec VP by the *Operation Copy and Delete* so as to check its case feature through specifier and head agreement. The derivation proceeds by merging the null performative verb  $v^0$  with the verb phrase (VP) to project the  $v$ -bar, while the strong  $vF$  feature on the light  $v^0$  attracts the lexical verb  $rà$  “buy” to adjoin to itself. The second person singular subject pronoun  $o$  is externally merged at the inner spec  $vP$  in line with the PISH. The QN  $kí$  is attracted to the outer spec  $vP$ , an escape hatch from the PIC. This invariably makes it visible to further operations in the course of the derivation. The derivation proceeds by externally merging the abstract  $T^0$  with the  $vP$  to project the T-bar. The  $T^0$  as a probe attracts the subject pronoun  $o$  to the spec TP to value its unvalued [+case, EPP] feature. The abstract  $Foc^0$  merges with the TP to project the Foc-bar. The  $Foc^0$  as a potential probe searches its c-command domain and attracts the QN (an active goal) to the spec FocP to have its unvalued [+Foc] feature valued. Also, the derivation proceeds by externally merging the abstract  $Inter^0$  with the FocP to project the Inter-bar. The  $Inter^0$  as a potential goal attracts the QN  $kí$  to the spec InterP to value its [+Q, EF].

In 17 below, the QN,  $kí$  does not originate from within the  $vP$  domain unlike we have (in 17) above.





- b. Ilé wo ni o ní gbé?  
House QM FOC you PROG live  
'Which house do you live?'
- c. Ifẹ̀: Kíláásì kelòó ni ọ ghà?  
Ìjẹ̀sà: Kíláásì kelòó li ọ ghà?  
Èkìtì: Kíláásì kelòó ọ ghà?  
Òtùn Mọ̀bà: Kíláásì kelòó ni ọ̀ọ ghà?  
: Class QM FOC you be  
'What class are you?'
- SY
- d. Kíláásì kelòó ni o wà  
Class QM FOC you be  
'What class are you?'

The [+Q] feature on the interrogative qualifier *sí/wo* percolates through the entire DP *ilé e sí* "which house" in 18a, *Ilé wo* in 18b and *kíláásì kelòó* "what class" in 18c and d above (Read Ajíbóyè, 2005 on feature percolation).

#### e. Yes/No question markers (Àjẹ́ versus Ñjẹ́)

The native speakers of Adó-Èkìtì and Ìlógbò-Èkìtì use *şé*, and *àjẹ́* in the place of *ñjẹ́* operated by the standard dialect and some other areas where CY dialects are spoken as shown in the examples below:

- 19 a. Èkìtì: Àjẹ́ ọ kàn gbọ́?  
Ifẹ̀: Ñjẹ́/Şé ọ tiẹ gbọ́?  
Ìjẹ̀sà: Ñjẹ́/Şé ọ tiẹ gbọ́?  
Òtùn Mọ̀bà: Şé ọ tiẹ gbọ́?  
YNQM you really hear  
'Did you really hear?'
- SY
- b. Şé o tiẹ gbọ́?  
YNQM you really hear  
'Did you really hear?'

It was discovered that Ifẹ̀ and Ìjẹ̀sà dialects operate *ñjẹ́* and *şé* alongside the standard dialects, paheerps, this is factored by their proximity to some other

dialects (Ọyó, Ìbàdàn and Ọsun) classified under North-west Yorùbá (Adétúgbò, 1982; Awóbùlúyì, 1998; Adeniyi and Ọjó, 2005).

### 5. Similarities between Central Yorùbá Dialects and Standard Yorùbá

Standard Yorùbá is the conglomeration of all its dialects, therefore, it is pertinent they share all share some similarities (Awóbùlúyì, 1998; Olúmúyiwá, 2006; Olánrewájú, 2017, 2022). It is discovered that CY dialects exhibit the following similarities with standard Yorùbá with respect to how they form their questions.

#### a. Interrogative Verbs Strategy

Both the interrogative verbs: *ńkọ́* of standard Yorùbá and *síkọ́* of the CY dialects can also be used rhetorically. In this context, they mean “what of”. For example:

- |    |    |              |                                    |
|----|----|--------------|------------------------------------|
|    |    | CY           |                                    |
| 20 | a. | Ifẹ̀:        | Ìwọ síkọ́, o ò lè hun un?          |
|    |    | Ìjẹ̀ṣà:      | Ùwọ síkọ́, o ò lè hun un?          |
|    |    | Èkiti:       | Ùwọ síkọ́, o ò lè hun un?          |
|    |    | Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: | Ìwọ síkọ́, ọ̀ọ́ ọ̀ lè hun un?      |
|    |    |              | You QV you NEG can give him        |
|    |    |              | ‘What of you, can’t you give him?’ |
|    |    | SY           |                                    |
|    | b. |              | Ìwọ ńkọ́, o kò lè fún un           |
|    |    |              | You QV, you NEG can give him       |
|    |    |              | ‘What of you, can’t you give him?’ |

Apart from *ńkọ́*, the standard dialect also operates *dà* as a QV. All these identified QVs both in CY dialects and the standard dialect have high restriction on their distribution (Awóbùlúyì, 1978; Táíwò and Abímbọ́lá 2014; Olánrewájú, 2017), for instance they do not collocate with modifiers as shown below:

- |    |    |              |                    |
|----|----|--------------|--------------------|
|    |    | CY           |                    |
| 21 | a. | Ifẹ̀:        | Gbogbo rian síkọ́? |
|    |    | Ìjẹ̀ṣà:      | Gbogbo rian síkọ́? |
|    |    | Èkiti:       | Kete rian síkọ́?   |
|    |    | Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: | Kete rian síkọ́?   |



- c. Ifẹ̀: \*Yèsí ki o ḱí ri ẹ̀í?  
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà: \*Yèsí ki o ḱí ri ẹ̀í?  
 Èkiti: \*Ìsí ki o ḱí li ẹ̀yí?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: \*Ìsí ki o ḱí li ẹ̀yí?  
 QN REL you greet FOC this  
 SY
- d. \*Ta tí o ḱí ni ẹ̀yí?  
 QN REL you greet FOC this  
 CY
- e. Ifẹ̀/Ìjẹ̀ṣà: Yèsí o ḱí?  
 Èkiti: Ìsí o ḱí?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Ìsí òó ḱí?  
 QN you greet  
 ‘Who did you greet?’  
 SY
- f. Ta ni o ḱí?  
 QN REL you greet FOC he call you  
 ‘Who did you greet?’

The examples in 22c and d are unacceptable in both standard Yorùba and CY dialects unlike 22e and f .

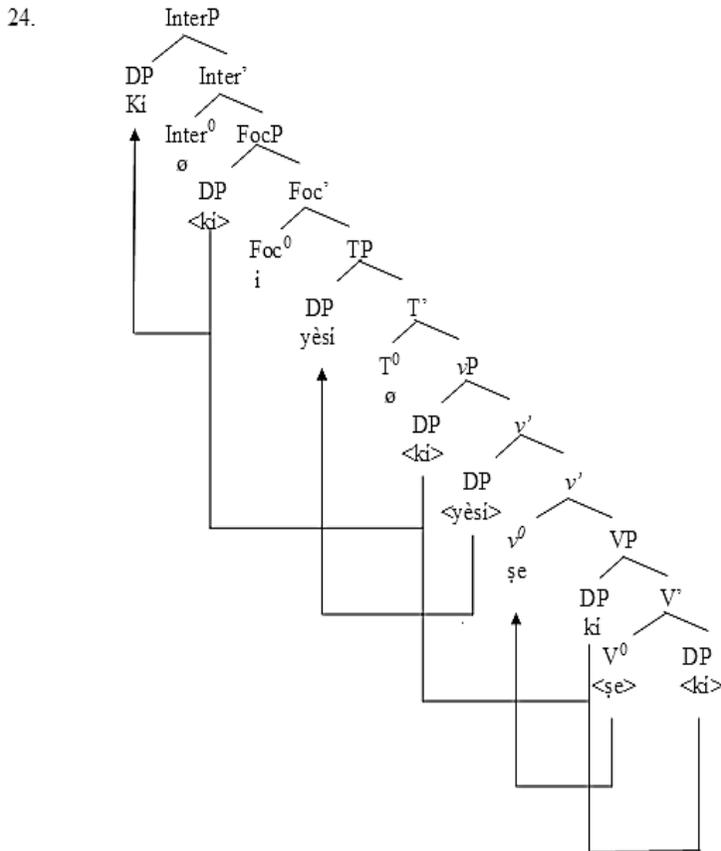
### c. Multiple QNs and Attract the Closest Principle

Both CY dialects and the standard dialect do not observe the Attract the Closest Principle (ACP) also known as Superiority Condition in the previous models of generative grammar when QNs are stacked in their constituent interrogatives (Ndimele, 1992; Radford, 2009). In 23 below, the QN in the *vP* domain (ḱí) can be attracted to the clause left periphery, and consequently violates the ACP.

23. a. CY  
 Ifẹ̀: Ḱí ni yèsí ẹ̀?  
 Ìjẹ̀ṣà: Ḱí i yèsí ẹ̀?  
 Èkiti: Ḱí i ìsí ẹ̀?  
 Ọ̀tùn Mọ̀bà: Ḱí ni ìsí ẹ̀?  
 QN FOC QN do  
 ‘Who did what?’

- SY  
 b. Kí n i ta ni şe?  
 QN FOC QN FOC do  
 'Who did what?'

The implication borne out of 23 above is that CY dialects and the standard dialect can conflate QNs to form rhetorical questions. Also, copying a QN to the clause left periphery is mainly determined by the actual QN a speaker intends focus. The example in 23a is represented in the tree diagram below:



The derivation above goes thus: The lexical verb *şe* “do” merges with the QN *kí* to form the V-bar in line with c-selection requirement of the verb. The QN

*kí* is copied to the spec VP by *Operation Copy and Delete* for (case) feature valuation. The derivation proceeds by merging the abstract performative light *v<sup>0</sup>* with the VP to project the *v-bar*, while the strong *vF* on the light *v<sup>0</sup>* attracts the lexical verb to adjoin to itself. Then, the QN *yèsí* internally merges as the inner specifier of the light *vP* in line with the PISH, while the object QN *kí* is copied to the outer spec *vP* so as to be licensed from the PIC. This makes it visible to subsequent syntactic operations. The derivation proceeds by merging the abstract *T<sup>0</sup>* with the *vP* to project the *T-bar*. The *T<sup>0</sup>* as a probe attracts the subject QN *yèsí* to the spec TP to value its unvalued [+EPP, case] feature. After this, the abstract *Foc<sup>0</sup>* merges with the TP to project the *Foc-bar*. The *Foc<sup>0</sup>* as a potential probe searches its c-command domain and attracts *kí* to the the spec *FocP* to value its unvalued [+focus] feature. Finally, the abstract *Inter<sup>0</sup>* merges with the *FocP* to project the *Inter-bar*. The *Inter<sup>0</sup>* probes the QN *kí* to the spec *InterP* to value its unvalued [+Q, EF].

**Table 1. Question Items in Standard Yorùbá and Central Yorùbá Dialects**

Concept	SY	CY	Gloss
Human/Person	Ta	yèsí/yè/ísí	Who
Non-human	kí	kí	What
Location	ibo	kabi/ ibi sí	where
Enumerative	mélòó	mélòó	how many
Price	eló	èlò	how much
Time	[gbà wo	ìgbà sí/ùgbà sí	When
Qualifier	kelòó	Kelòó	what number
Qualifier	wo	Sí	Which
QV	dà/ńkọ́	síkọ́	Where
YNQM	njẹ, sẹ	njẹ, àjẹ, sẹ	are/do

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper has been able to discuss the similarities and dissimilarities between CY dialects and standard Yorùbá with respect to how they form their interrogatives. The fact that CY dialects exhibit some similarities with the standard dialect shows that they are dialects of a language (Yorùbá), and it is pertinent that these dialects should have things they share in common amongst themselves with the standard dialect. Apart from this, it follows that many of the items operated in the standard dialect take their sources

from its dialects (CY dialects). Therefore, exploring the syntactic structures of standard dialects enabled us unveil many things about the standard dialects. This equally have both immediate and long-term benefits for Yorùbá studies, especially on things that every dialect can teach us about the structure of the standard dialect.

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