

## More on WH- Questions in Àwòrì dialect of Yorùbá

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### Abstract

As the research works progress deep in the study of dialects, not much work has been done on Àwòrì, a dialect spoken in Lagos and Ògùn States of Nigeria. The existing works on classification of Yorùbá dialects fail to recognize Àwòrì among the dialects around it like Yewa, Kétu and Ànàgò. The exposition that Àwòrì has so many features which differentiate it from the neighbouring dialects is a feat yet to be achieved. This work is in complement of the one published in 2012. The data for the study were gathered from Ìgbesà, Òtá, Agége, Ìlogbò Erémi in both Lagos and Ògùn States. This work employs Wh-movement transformational rule in Government and Binding Theory (GB) known as move alpha rule to analyze wh-questions. It also shows the nature and the existence of wh-questions in the adjective numerals, verb phrases, conjunctions, adjective phrases, focus sentences, and negative sentences of Àwòrì dialect. The work shows that thorough analysis of syntactic elements in different dialect can be used to set it as distinct from other dialects around it. This study also maintain that each dialect deserves to be studied thoroughly as insights from it will point to issues in the standard language.

Keywords: Wh-movement, Government and Binding Theory, Àwòrì dialect, Constituent questions, Move alpha rule.

### Abstract in Àwòrì

Bí isẹ̀ iwádíí ẹ̀ ń jínlẹ̀ sí i nínú àwọn ẹ̀ka èdè ilẹ̀ Yorùbá, kò tí ì sí isẹ̀ púpọ̀ tó bẹ̀ẹ̀ lórí ẹ̀ka èdè Àwòrì – ẹ̀ka èdè kan ní ipílẹ̀ Ògùn àti Èkó ní ilẹ̀ Nàìjíríá. Àwọn isẹ̀ tó wà nílẹ̀ lórí àwọn ipínsísorí ẹ̀ka èdè Yorùbá pàápàá kan ko ẹ̀ka èdè yíi pọ̀ mọ̀ àwọn ẹ̀ka èdè tó wà ní àgbègbè rẹ̀ bíi Yewa, Ànàgò àti Kétu bí i pé ọ̀kan náà ni wọ̀n. Àkíyèsí kan pàtàkì ni pé ẹ̀ka èdè Àwòrì ní àwọn àbùdá tó pọ̀ repẹ̀tẹ̀, tó fi yàtò sí àwọn ẹ̀ka èdè àgbègbè rẹ̀. Kókó yíi tí àwọn olùsẹ̀wádíí ọ̀ tí ì sọ̀rọ̀ nípa ẹ̀ rárá jẹ̀ àlàfo kan tí ó wà nínú isẹ̀ iwádíí àwọn ẹ̀ka èdè Yorùbá. Ohun tí isẹ̀ yíi gùn lé gan–an nìyẹn, ó sì jẹ̀ àfikún sí isẹ̀ iwádíí Aina (2012). A gba àwọn dẹ̀tá tí a lò fún iwádíí yíi ní Ìgbesà, Òtá, Agége, Ìlogbò Erémi ní ipínlẹ̀ Èkó àti ipínlẹ̀ Ògùn. Isẹ̀ iwádíí yíi ẹ̀ àmúlò àwọn ọ̀fin idàrọ̀ atọ̀ka aṣẹ̀bèèrè *ta* (Wh-movement transformational rule) tí a mọ̀ sí *gbé alfa* làti fi sàtúpalè àwọn gbólóhùn atọ̀ka aṣẹ̀bèèrè wọ̀nyí. Isẹ̀ yíi sàfihàn irísí àti ihun atọ̀ka aṣẹ̀bèèrè nínú ẹ̀yan aṣònkà, àpólà isẹ̀, ihun

àsopò, àpólà èyan, àwọn gbólóhùn àtẹnumó àti gbólóhùn iyísódi ní ẹka èdè Àwóri. Ìwádíí yí fihàn pé àtúpale, jíjinlẹ, lóri àwọn ihun sínntáàsì ẹka èdè koòkan ni yóò jẹ ká moyí iyàtò tó wà láàárín ẹka èdè kan àti àwọn tó kù lágbègbè rẹ. Isẹ yí tún tẹnu mo pé ẹka èdè koòkan ló pọndandan pé ká yè é wò finní finní nítorí àwọn àrífàyo kan tàbí òmíràn nínú è yóò toka sí àwọn àbájáde kan nínú èdè Yorùbá àjùmọlo.

## **Introduction**

It is a common phenomenon in linguistics that languages across the globe decentralize from one proto or standard language into subsystems known as dialects. Yorùbá language is no exception. Also, linguists have shifted research in dialectology from mere classification to the detailed analysis of syntactic features like negation, tense and aspects, auxiliaries etc. on Yorùbá dialects. Àwóri is a dialect spoken in Egbédá, Ìseri, Ìdímù, Ìkòtún, Egbè, Èbúté Mèta, Òyìngbò, Musin of Lagos State. Also it is spoken in Adó-odò, Ìgbesà, Atan, Kòkò, Òtá, Ìtèlè, Ìyèsí, Ìjokò of Ògùn State of Nigeria. The existing works on classification of Yorùbá dialects fail to recognize Àwóri among the dialects around it like Yewa, Kétu and Ànàgó. The exposition that Àwóri has so many features which differentiate it from the neighbouring dialects is a feat yet to be achieved. Also, Àwóri dialect has not received so much syntactic analysis as it deserves. This paper present a detailed analysis of other syntactic structures observable from Àwóri dialect apart from those analyzed in Aina (2012). Àwóri is the native dialect of the researcher, the native intuition was very helpful in gathering the data. Besides, oral interview were carried out based on negative sentences, focus construction and interrogative sentences which were purposively selected for a comprehensive study. Also the 400 Ibadan Word-List was also used in gathering the lexical items in the dialect. Some of the issues in this dialect were discussed in Aina (2007, 2010, 2011 and 2012).

## **Review of Works on Yorùbá dialects and Wh-Questions**

Omamor (1982) gave a descriptive analysis of tense and aspects in Itsekiri, a dialect which was proven to have some lexical correspondences with Yorùbá. Equally, Omotáyò (1982) considers negation in Yorùbá with contrastive references to Òyó, Òkè Ògùn and Ìgbómìnà dialects of the NWY (North Western Yorùbá) groupings of Adetugbo (1982). Others in this category are Adewole (1999), Fabunmi (1998), Fabunmi (2001a), Fabunmi (2003a), (2003b), (2004) and Salawu (1998), (2005) and Taiwo (2005), Taiwo (2003a), Taiwo (2003b), Taiwo (2004a), Taiwo (2004c).

Wh-questions according to Olumuyiwa (2015) are items that start with 'wh' and it requires a content response from wide range of possibilities. Also alternative questions requires a response which relates to opinions in the interrogative structures. The wh-

question markers in Egba dialect are *le è, kí, kise, iyi/i-isí, bi/sí/líbi* and *ìgbì* according to Omolewu (2017). He maintains that explaining syntactic theories in western languages alone are not enough, unless we take excursus into African main languages and its dialects. This paper agrees and opines that many of these dialect have much to point out in the standard language.

In recent times, the issue of similarities and differences of *wh*- questions between the standard Yorùbá language and its dialects have received attention from researchers. Ojo (2022) identified *yèsé, kábi, kárùgbá and kótiíri* are items used to mark the *wh*-questions in Ìjẹ̀sà dialect of Osun State. The focus particle ‘*ni*’ that always accompanies *wh*-question markers in standard Yorùbá is lacking in Ìjẹ̀sà dialect. He also explains that instead of the resumption pronoun *o* which always occupies the subject-NP position whenever the subject less-NP is questioned in standard Yorùbá, the Ìjẹ̀sà dialect leaves the extraction site empty and lengthened the subject-NP whenever an objectless-NP is questioned. Ojo (2022) also maintains the view like others too that linguistic explanation in the foreign languages cannot rest on a firm foundation without considering some input from African languages.

Akanbi (2016) looked at a striking *wh*-question particle *wo* which many scholars did not even noticed and opines that it comprises of more than one semantic word in its occurrence before it can suitably functions as *wh*-question marker in Yorùbá language. He argues that it must combine with a prepositional phrase (PP) or a noun phrase (NP) before it moves to Spec-CP to check its *Wh*-interrogative feature for proper spell-out. Aina (2012) identified the particle *si* and it seems for now that it has the same semantic identity with this *wo*, however the claims of the particle of combining with both PP and NP before checking interrogative feature is still a subject to be investigated in Àwòrì dialect.

A very significant work among the previous studies that classify Yorùbá dialects into groups is Awóbùlúyì (1998:2-9). This work uses fairly phonological and syntactic features to classify Yorùbá dialects into five groupings: The NWY (North Western Yorùbá), NEY (North Eastern Yorùbá), CY (Central Yorùbá), SWY (South Western Yorùbá) and SEY (South Eastern Yorùbá). It is commendable that Awóbùlúyì (1998) recognizes and classifies Àwòrì among the North-western Yorùbá. This work (Awóbùlúyì (1998:2-9) admits that the dialects in the NWY group do not allow the close back rounded vowel *u* as word initials, the half open front nasal vowel *ɛn* does not occur in this group except in Oṅdó. The nasal consonant *n* does not precede oral vowels in the group; *ẹ̀ sí* and *ibu sí* are used to ask questions about ‘human’ and place respectively in Àwòrì, whereas *kéfu* and *pé* are used as complementizers. As for negation, *kò* and its variant *ò* are used by all the dialects in the sub-group. The figure 1 below shows the dialect classes of Awóbùlúyì (1998) which Taiwo (2007) reviews to accommodate the Ào dialect among the SEY groupings.

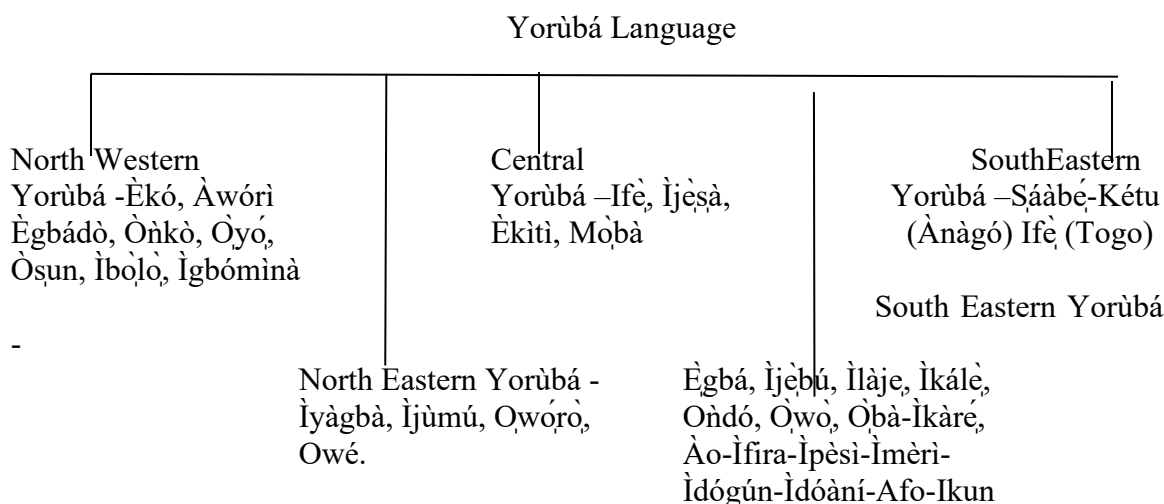


Figure 1: Dialects of Yorùbá. Taiwo O. (2007:34).

While we agree that Àwóri dialect can be classified into this NWY group, a close look at the behaviour of so many copious data in Àwóri dialect reveals that something more different are observable in the dialect. The following facts are better explanations to some claims made by Awóbùlúyì (1998) regarding Àwóri dialect in this group:

The half open front nasal vowel *ɛ̃n* which the paper claims its presence in Àwóri, as well as it is in Oṅdó dialect is not exemplified. However, Àiná (2008:4-8) has shown that such nasal vowel is rather denasalized in Àwóri. Observe the fact in these examples:

1	S. Y. Ìyɛ̃n Ìwɔ̃nyɛ̃n	Àwóri Ìyɛ̃ Ìwùnyɛ̃	‘those’ ‘those ones’
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The non-occurrence of palato-alveolar nasal consonant *n* before oral vowels in Àwóri is a result of denasalization in Àwóri. More to this, the palato-alveolar consonant *n* also interchanges with the bilabial nasal counterpart *m*’ in some environments in Àwóri.

Our data do not support the claim that *pé* is used as complementizer in Àwóri dialect except only *kéfu*. The following examples in (2a and b) are cited in Awóbùlúyì (1998) thus:

- 2 a. Ó dùn ún pé ògbóli yẹn kú.  
 It pains-him that old-man that die  
 ‘It pains him that the old man died’
- b. Ó yà mí leru pé ó wá  
 It surprise-me that he/she come  
 ‘I am surprised that he came’

It is noteworthy that this rendition must have been provided by a Lagos resident who may not understand the core variety of Àwóri. These two examples were tested from our informants across Àwóri localities and in addition to our own intuition too as a native speaker, it is confirmed that the sentences should be rendered as:

- 3a. Ó dùn un kéfu ògbóli yẹ kú.  
 It pains-him that old-man that die  
 ‘It pains him that the old man died’
- b. Ó yà mí leru kéfu ó wá  
 It surprise- me that he/she come  
 ‘I am surprised that he came’

Furthermore, there is the difference in the tone on *ún* (high) in Awóbùlúyì’s, and *un* (mid) in our own rendition. This marks a significant difference between the ‘core Àwóri’ and ‘diluted Àwóri’ speech. Also the use of *pé* is absent in (3), much as the *yẹn* is *yẹ* - as denasalization process refers above. All these suggest that an all pervasive and penetrating data are still needed to clarify any claim made. In addition, the concept of negation in Àwóri dialect goes beyond *kò*, *ò*, *kì í* as mentioned in Awóbùlúyì (1998) which the details may not be accommodated in this work.

It is observed that all the previous works on Yorùbá dialects except Delano (1958) and Awóbùlúyì (1998) fail to mention Àwóri dialect. This to our mind is inadequate, and as a result we have to beam our searchlight in focus to this important Yorùbá dialect. After all, Awóbùlúyì has offered insights that most of the issues in Yorùbá language analysis can be resolved when we take excursions into our dialects.

Our researches and that of other scholars have examined some syntactic issues such as negation, Abódeṛin (2005), the lengthened falling toned syllable, Àiná (2010), and other issues in Àwóri dialect. The fact still remains that constituent question formation in Àwóri dialect has not received the much deserved attention (at least to the best of our knowledge). However, Àiná (2012) had already outlined the occurrence of Àwóri wh-questions in some syntactic environments which in comparison with the standard Yorùbá, proved that our dialects deserve being studied in their own right. This paper complements

Àiná (2012) and shows the occurrence of wh-questions otherwise known as constituent questions in additional syntactic environments such as in adjective numerals, verb phrases, conjunctions, adjective phrases, focus sentences, and the negative sentences in Àwóri dialect.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Government and binding theory shortened as (GB) was developed by Chomsky and his associates. GB as well as earlier models of grammar accepts that any normal child is born with an inherent linguistic property needed to acquire the language used in his environments. This natural endowment is called the Universal Grammar (UG). From UG, the individual languages select peculiar rule systems and parameters which might be different from others. GB is more modular than any of the previous models. A sentence in GB can be assigned with a different simultaneous description according to a set of principles that regulate the different levels and the relationship between them. In other words, GB comprises of various autonomous subsystems or modules which interact at interface (i.e. a subsystem generates an output that serves as an input for another subsystem.) Some of the principles include these sub-theories: X-bar theory, Case theory, Theta theory, Control theory, Government theory, bounding theory and Binding theory. The term Wh-movement is the movement rule that applies in deriving wh-questions following the English spelling of the content word question markers of what, who, which etc. The rule *move alpha rule* plays a key role in the syntax of wh-questions. We shall now begin to consider in details the occurrence of content questions in syntactic environments as follows:

### **Àwóri WH- phrases and the adjective numerals**

Nearly all Yorùbá literatures such as Mustapha, Babalola and Adeboyeje (1988), Babalola (1991), Abati (1997) and others have classified the Standard Yorùbá numerals into two classes namely: The cardinal (òṅkaye) and the ordinal (òṅkapò). The cardinal being *méní* (one), *méjì* (two), *méta* (three) and so on, and the ordinal being *ikínni* (first), *ikejì* (second), *iketa* (third) and so on. The adjective numerals on the other hand are the number that modifies the subject NP in the structure which it exists. Understandably there is always a wh-phrase used to question the number of an item which a phrase or a sentence is explicating. In Àwóri dialect, there are such wh-phrases. *Éḗlú*, *mèlú* and *èkéèlú*

The *Éḗlú* wh-phrase exclusively questions only the price of a sold item or an amount of money. In other words, *Éḗlú* is strictly used for commercial purposes. Observe its form in the Àwóri sentences below:

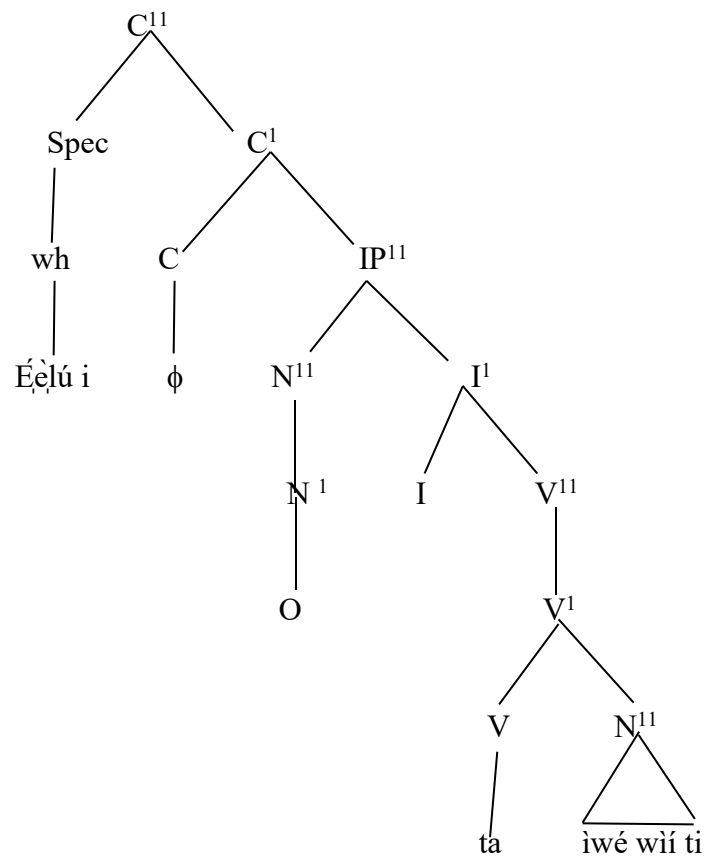
4. a. Èḗlú i ò tà iwé wí ti  
 How-much you sell book this  
 ‘How much did you sell this book?’
- b. Èḗlú i ò kó fú omoò e ti  
 How-much you give for child-LTS you  
 ‘How much did you give to your child?’

Like the other wh-phrases which can be extracted and moved to the subject NP positions, these adjective numerals can as well be extracted from the object NP position in the D-structure and move to the subject NP position in the S-structure as shown below:

5. O ta iwé wí élúúú jé  
 You sold book this how-much be  
 ‘You sold this book how much?’

But the S-structure in 4 a & b can be represented in the tree diagram in (6 & 7) as follows:

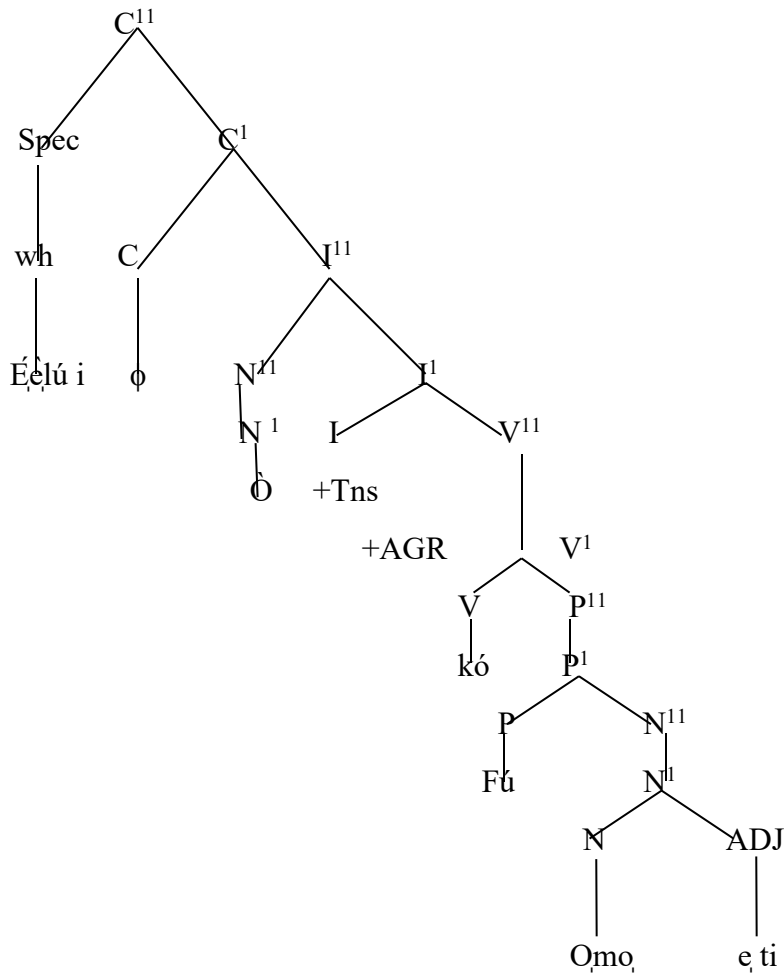
6.



**Figure 2: The tree diagram showing the S-structure of a sentence in Àwóric**



7.



**Figure 3: The tree diagram showing the S-structure of a sentence in Àwórí**

Àwórí uses *mèlù* and *èkélùú* for the cardinal and ordinal numerals respectively. The relation is such that the items which the number is to be questioned will be fronted so that the WH adjective numeral can be attached.

The under listed items in (8) and (9) show how the wh-phrases in the cardinal and ordinal sentences are marked respectively:

8. a. Iṣu m̀lú ò rà?  
Yam How-many you buy  
How-many yam did you buy?
- b. Ìwé m̀lú iyàwòò rẹ̀ è kà  
book How-many wife-LTS you LTS read  
'How educated is your wife?'
- c. Ègèdè m̀lú ò jẹ?  
Banana How-many you eat  
'How many bananas did you eat?'
9. a. Iṣu èkèlú ò gbé?  
Yam How-many you carry  
'How many yam did you carry?'
- b. Ìwé èkèlú ò mú  
book how-many you take  
'How many books did you take?'
- c. Ègèdè èkèlú ò jẹ?  
Banana how-many you eat  
'How many bananas did you eat?'

Note that the difference between the adjective numerals in class (8) and (9) lies in the number and position respectively. The interrogative in (8) is actually demanding the number of the items in the sentence whereas the numerals in (9) are demanding for the number in relation to position of turn taking and that is why scholars have classified them as cardinal and ordinal.

### **WH-constituents and the Àwóri verb phrases**

The only wh-elements that exist in the verb phrases in Àwóri dialect are the *èsí* and *kí ì* wh-elements. The relation between these wh-elements and the verb phrases is that the verb subcategorizes for the wh-phrase as the object NP complement. This calls to mind the projection principle in the GB theory which states that:

'Projections at each syntactic level are projected from the lexicon, in that they observe the subcategorization properties of lexical items.' (Chomsky 1981:29):

Hence the verbs subcategorizes for wh-phrase NP complement. Let us take note of the following examples:

10. [NP Sádé mée IP [VP [V fé<sub>i</sub> [WH-P è<sub>i</sub> sí ì jé<sub>i</sub>]]]]  
 Sádé will marry who  
 ‘Sádé will marry who?’
11. IP [NP wo [AUX mée VP [V je<sub>i</sub> [WH-P [NP kí ì jé<sub>i</sub>]]]]  
 You will eat what  
 You will eat what?’

The wh-phrase NP complement in (10 ) refers to animate while that in (11 ) subcategorises for inanimate NP complement. The subcategorisation can be represented as follows:

12. fé<sub>i</sub>: ‘want’ V; + [ ----- wh-p] animate  
 je<sub>i</sub>: ‘eat’ V; + [ ----- wh-p] inanimate

The *je<sub>i</sub>* which disappears when the content question moves from the A-position to the [Spec CP] position has another variant *wà* which behaves the same way with *je<sub>i</sub>*. These variants could be used interchangeably in the same structures.

### **Polar interrogatives and conjunctions**

The existence of wh-elements with other forms of sentence structure can be explained in terms of the polar interrogative marker which it exhibits. In Àwòrì a simple polar interrogative marker can be conjoined with a negative sentence structure with the use of *èbi* conjunctive. Consider the sentences below:

13. a. Sí Olú lo<sub>i</sub>  
 Q-m NP go  
 ‘Has Olú gone?’
- b. Olú ò lo<sub>i</sub>  
 NP neg go  
 ‘Olú did not go.’
- c. Sí Olú lo<sub>i</sub> èbi ò lo<sub>i</sub>?  
 Q-m NP go CON neg go  
 ‘Did Olú go or not?’

The conjunctive is underlined as the connective between the two sentences. However, the subject *Olu* is deleted as a transformational process that takes place between the underlying and surface structure.

### WH-phrase and focus sentences

Focus constructions are so derived when a particular grammatical word class is focused in a sentence. It is a common phenomenon in languages world over. The particular marker or indicator of focus construction in Standard Yorùbá is *ni*. However, the interrogative nouns can collocate with this focus marker to mark the interrogative focus constructions in Standard Yorùbá. These items are *ta*, *ki*, *èwo*, *ibo*, *èlò*, and *mélòò*. But the nature of the interrogative focus marker in Àwòrì dialect sets some puzzling facts.

The focus markers which exist in Àwòrì wh-phrase vary in nature. In other words, the markers used to express focusing in Àwòrì dialect differ depending on their grammatical category. The followings are interrogative focus constructions in Àwòrì:

14. a. èsí ì je ikúúje?’  
who-is that eat food  
‘Who eats the food?’
- b. kí ì mí şe é?’  
what-is that do you  
‘What is wrong with you?’
- c. ibu sí è gbé wà è?’  
where that you be located that  
‘Where are you?’
- d. isí ì mí dà móò re?’  
which-is that is wrong you  
‘Which is wrong with you?’
- e. éèlúù ñ je ré?’  
how-much that- I owe you  
‘How much am I owing you?’
- f. m̀èlú à mée kà linú eyí Adípèlé?  
How-many that-we will count inside teeth NP  
‘How many can we count in the teeth of Adípèlé (clustered teeth set)?’

The items underlined which are isolated out below for clarity purpose are the various focus markers respectively.

ì, ì, sí, ì, ò, à

The rule which guides the ordering of these markers is still a subject of research. However, it should be noted that the nature of these focus markers in such interrogative sentences is still different from what obtains in other non-interrogative focus constructions. Witness this fact in the nature of the focus marker in the non-interrogative utterances below:

15. a. i. 'iwé lí ìn rà a'  
 book is-that I buy emphasis  
 'A book was what I bought'
- ii. èmi lí ìn rà ' wé  
 I is-that buy book  
 'I was the one that bought books'
- iii. rìrà lí ìn rà wé  
 buying is-that-I buy book  
 'It is buying that I bought the books'
- b. i. Ọ̀wun lón òn lo, ata  
 them is-that grind pepper  
 'It was them who grind pepper'
- ii. àwa lá à tètè dé '  
 we is-that early arrive  
 'It was we who arrived first'
- iii. èyi lé è gbèyì  
 you is-that come-last  
 'It was they who came last'
- iv. èmi lí ìn mèmọ̀  
 I is-that drink-palmwine  
 'It was I who drank palm wine'
- v. ìwo, lò ò jégédé  
 you is-that eat-banana  
 'It was you who eat banana'

- vi.      òwu l<sub>o</sub> kókó b<sub>e</sub>rè is<sub>e</sub>  
 they that first start work  
 ‘It was he who first started work’

Again, there are various issues on the nature of Àwóri focus markers which demand explanations, but this will be too wide for this paper. The fact that can only be mentioned here is that the Àwóri Lengthened Falling Syllable (LFS) as explained in Aina (2012) exists in all the focus markers as exemplified in (15a i–iii and 15 b i–v above).

### WH-phrases and negation in Àwóri

Negation is a process or construction in grammatical and semantic analysis that typically expresses the contradiction of some or the entire sentence meaning (Crystal 1980). The study in Àwóri data shows that the distribution of negation in interrogative structure is such that the constituent must have first been negated from any of its syntactic category before the interrogative marker is attached to it. In other words, an interrogative marker could be attached to a negated sentence to derive a negative interrogative structure. The items in (16) below are the negative markers in Àwóri, and they are underlined in the structures in (17) for clarity purpose.

16.            Ò, m<sub>e</sub>è, m<sub>e</sub>i, è, e<sub>l</sub>é, i i s<sub>i</sub>

(These items are negative markers in Àwóri and are labeled as NEG)

17. a.      Olú    ò      lo<sub>o</sub>  
 Olú    NEG    go  
 “Olú did not go”
- b.      M<sub>e</sub>è    s<sub>u</sub>      ú    b<sub>e</sub>    o  
 NEG    defecate    loc    there    emph  
 “Do not defecate into that place!”
- c.      m<sub>e</sub>i    lo<sub>o</sub>      ó<sub>o</sub>      lé  
 NEG    go      Loc    home  
 ‘Do not go home yet’
- d.      è<sub>i</sub>      lo<sub>o</sub>      ò      dijà  
 NEG    go      NE    result to fight  
 “The act of not going will not result to fight”

- g. eḷèì lo ò dijà  
 NEG go NE result to fight  
 ‘The act of not going will not result to fight’
- h. i i ṣì èmi ló lù u  
 NEG I that beat him/her  
 ‘I am not the one who beats him’

However, it is observed that each of these negatives has different distribution pattern of existence in Àwòrì interrogatives. We shall now consider some of them and state our analysis of their pattern.

### The Ò in Àwòrì interrogatives

The ò in Àwòrì interrogatives goes beyond the yes/no question forms used in Bamgbose (1990). It can occur with the polar survey, echo and wh-questions. Witness the occurrence of ò negative in various kinds of question forms in (18 & 19) below:

- 18 a. Ñjì Ṣadé ò pe Bólá?  
 Q-m Ṣadé NEG call Bólá  
 ‘Did Ṣadé not invite Bólá?’
- b. Ñjì Ṣadé ò pe èì ì jé  
 ‘Q-m Ṣadé NEG invite who’  
 ‘Did Ṣadé not invite who?’
- c. Ibu sí o ò lo?  
 Place which you NEG go  
 ‘Which place did you not go?’
- d. Ó bère kéfu èsí o ò bá sòrò  
 He asked that who you NEG with talk  
 ‘He asked that who did you not talk with?’
19. a. Kí Ṣadé ò je?  
 What Ṣadé NEG eat  
 ‘What did Ṣadé not eat?’

- b. Omo sí Sádé ò pè?  
child which Sádé NEG call  
“Which child did Sádé not invite?”
- c. Eléèdè èsí Sádé ò bó?  
Pig whose Sádé NEG feed  
“Whose pig did Sádé not feed?”
- d. èsí ògá olopáá ò fú lowó?  
Who boss police NEG give money  
“Who did police boss not give money?”
- e. Ibu sí Sádé ò gbé?  
Place which Sádé NEG live  
“where did Sádé not live?”
- f. Ìgbà sí Sádé ò wá?  
Time which Sádé NEG come  
“When did Sádé not come?”
- g. Ìdí kí Sádé ò fu béléèdè?  
Reasonwhat Sádé NEG Aux feed pig  
“Why did Sádé not feed the pig?”
- h. Inú àpò sí Sádé ò kó létà sí?  
Inside pocket which Sádé NEG put letter into  
“In which pocket did Sádé not put letter into?”

The structure in (18 a) shows the occurrence of NEG in Àwóri polar interrogative, (18b) is an echo interrogative, (18c) is a direct survey question, (18d) is an indirect survey question while structures in (19 ) show the occurrence of the NEG ò markers in the different wh-constituents; (19 a,b,c,d) is an NP wh-phrasal constituent, (19 e, f, g) is an adverb wh-phrase, while (19h) is a PP wh-phrase. We hasten to add here that out of all the different wh-phrases, only in the Adjective phrase will the existing ò NEG form yield unacceptable structure in Àwóri as shown in (20):

20. Kí ì ti gbé yi Sádé ò béléèdè?  
How be Sádé NEG feed the pig  
“How will Sádé not feed the pig?”



Furthermore, the *ì i* NEG form can only function in the polar and indirect survey question as shown in (21 a & b) respectively. It cannot function in other types of Àwóri interrogatives:

21. a. S<sub>i</sub> Olú ì i sẹ̀kún?  
Q-m Olú NEG cry  
“Is Olú not crying?”
- b. Ó bèèrè kéfu Ñj<sub>i</sub> ì i bèrù?  
He asked that Q-m NEG fear  
“He asked that is he not phobic?”

Moreover, *ì i s<sub>i</sub>* NEG form in Àwóri can function in the polar, indirect survey question as demonstrated in (22), but it has to be focused before it can be accommodated in the adverb Wh-phrasal constituent as shown in (23).

23. a. Ñj<sub>i</sub> ì i s<sub>i</sub> àwa lá à gbej<sub>ó</sub>?  
Q-m NEG we that pres court troubles  
“Is it not us that court troubles?”
- b. Ó bèèrè kéfu èbi ì i s<sub>i</sub> Ọm<sub>o</sub> Aláààgbáàà ló ò wà?  
Q-m NEG child Aláààgbáàà LFS be  
“He asked that ‘Are you not the son of Aláààgbáàà?’”
24. a. Ìgbà sí ì i s<sub>i</sub> eré láà sẹ?  
WH-phrase NEG play be  
“When is it not play you make?”
- b. ès<sub>i</sub> ì i s<sub>i</sub> ọm<sub>o</sub> Ọl<sub>o</sub>ọ̀wun?  
Wh-phrase NEG child God  
“Who is not a child of God?”

‘mèè’ and ‘mèi’ negative form is nominalized before it can function in all kinds of Àwóri interrogative. Consider their occurrences in the sentences below:

25. a. S<sub>i</sub> kí n mèè lo?  
Q-m N.m I NEG go  
“Do I not go?”
- b. Ibu sí kí ọn mèè dé  
wh-p N.m they NEG reach  
“Where should they not reach?”

- c. èbi kí n mèi jewu  
 Q-m N.m I NEG eat  
 “Or do I not eat yet?”

The ‘èì’ and ‘èlèì’ NEG forms is always attached to the lexical verb, before the whole verb phrase is interrogated to form polar questions as shown in (26) a & b while these NEG forms occur in the Adverb wh-phrasal constituent after the whole verb phrase has been focused as demonstrated in (27) a & b.

26. a. Sí mo léè se èlèì lo  
 Q-m me can do not-going  
 “Can I do without going?”
- b. Njí mo léè se èlèì lo  
 Q-m can do not-going  
 “Can I do without going?”
27. a. Ìgbà sí mo léè se èìlo  
 Time-which foc me LFS do not going  
 “When can I do without going?”
- b. Ibu sí mo léè se èlèìlo  
 Where-foc me LFS do not going  
 “Where can I do without going?”

### WH-movement in relative clauses

The distribution of wh-movement and relative clauses are so interwoven. Radford (1988:480) observes by saying:

There are many other types of wh-construction (i.e. constructions in which WH-MOVEMENT operates either overtly or covertly) in natural language one of such type of wh-construction is relative clauses

It is a fact common to natural languages that those wh-phrases operate either overtly or covertly in relative clauses. The Awórí dialect has only one marker for relative clauses though in two variants. Observe the two variant items of relative clauses in the bracketed clauses in (28) below:

28. a. Mo padé ọ̀kùrì nàa [yii/lii ṣubú leru ọ̀nà] lilé-íkuúje  
 I met man the who fell in-mouth door in-the-house-food  
 ‘I met the man [who fell at the door step] in the canteen’
- b. Iwè nàa [yii/lii ò yá mi] ti soṅù  
 book the that you lent me was lost  
 ‘The book [that you lent me] was lost’
- c. Mo gbádùn-un íkuúje [yii/lii ò sè fú wa]  
 I enjoy meal that you cook for us  
 ‘I enjoyed the meal that you cooked for us.’

The Àwóri data in (28) above has only one relative clause marker of two variants and this marker can be used across all syntactic positions. It allows the different choices of either one ‘who’ or ‘that’ as a result of the difference in syntactic positions.

### Multiple WH-questions in Àwóri

The kind of structure whereby an interrogative structure contains more than one wh-phrase is attested to in Àwóri like other human languages. In this situation the different constituent wh-phrases are preposed so that emphasis will be laid on that preposed string. Fittingly Baker (1970:207–8) notes that, “in multiple wh-questions, no more than one wh-phrase can be preposed”. The following examples are highlights of multiple wh-phrases in Àwóri:

29. a. CP [NP Ó [VP [gbàgbé [WH-P ki i je [Si [WH-P ibu sí wà]]]]?  
 He forgets what to where loc. be  
 ‘He forgets what in which place?’
- b. Kí i gbàgbé sí ibu sí i wà?  
 What forget to where be  
 ‘What has he forgotten where?’
- c. Ibu sí i gbàgbé kí i jé sí?  
 Where wh-p forget what to  
 ‘Where has he forgotten what?’

The data in (29a–c) shows the different wh-phrasal constituents being preposed. The pronominal Ó in (a), occupies the subject NP position when the NP wh-constituent and Adverbial wh-phrase occupies object positions respectively. This position may serve as

the underlying structure for the derivation of (b & c). However, in (b), the NP wh-constituent is preposed to the subject NP while the Adverb wh-phrase occupies the object position of the structure and lastly in (c) the Adverb wh-phrasal constituent is preposed to the sentence initial subject position and the NP wh-constituent becomes the object of the verb.

### WH-phrases and Àwòrì quantifiers

Another lexical item that can co-occur in wh-structure is the quantifiers i.e. the item that express a notion of quantity like someone, all, everyone etc. The entire wh-phrasal constituent can occur with different quantifiers in Àwòrì. Some of them are highlighted below in (30):

30. a. Kí ẹ̀lọ̀kọ̀kàn wun ùn gbé wá?  
What each-one them bring come  
“What did each one of them bring?”
- b. Ibu sí gbogbo wungbo ò dé sí?  
Where every-one of them arrive to  
“Where did everyone of them abide with?”
- c. Omo sí gbogbowagbo ò tó  
Child which all of us rear (pst)  
“Which child did all of us groom?”
- d. Ìgbà sí ẹ̀lọ̀kọ̀kàn yí ì dé?  
When each-one you LFs arrive  
“When did each one of you arrive?”
- e. ẹ̀sí ẹ̀lọ̀kàn linú yí ì yàn  
Who someone among you LFs chooses  
“Who did someone of you choose?”

The example in (30a-e) is a brief illustration of the co-occurrence of different wh-phrasal constituents with Àwòrì quantifiers. (30 a & e) are NP-wh constituents, (b – d) are that of adverb wh-phrase which can also occur in the AP and PP wh-constituent.

## Conclusion

This study has extensively discussed the constituent questions otherwise called wh-questions in Àwòrì dialectological perspective. Àwòrì dialect is found in Lagos and Ogun states of Nigeria. Contrary to what many linguists believed that the dialect is minor, such that many works on Yorùbá dialects did not mention it among Yorùbá dialects at all, this work has been able to show the different items used to mark wh-questions and the different syntactic positions they occupy in Àwòrì dialect such as in the adjective numerals, in the VPs, focus sentences, negative structures, relative clause and multiple wh-forms. This work has contributed to knowledge by showing different syntactic structures and positions that exist in the dialect therefore marking it distinct in the group it is classified. This paper has been able to show that Àwòrì dialect contains a lot of linguistic phenomena that set it as distinct from other dialects around it and therefore recommends that more attention should be paid to syntactic structures of our dialect for the purpose of exposition and shedding more insights to syntactic issues in the standard language.

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