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A Minimalist Inquiry into Interrogative *Wh*-Movement in English and Urhobo

Mede, Avwarosuọghẹnẹ Emmanuel
Department of English,
Delta State College of Education, Mosogar,

Emama Ogheneakpobor Emmanuel
Department of English & Literary Studies,
Delta State University, Abraka

Abstract

This paper investigates the motivation for interrogative wh-movement in English and Urhobo, the latter a South Western Edoid Nigerian language. The adopted theoretical framework is the minimalist program (MP) of generative grammar. Primary data is selected from English wh-interrogative sentences and their Urhobo translation equivalent. The translation equivalence is based on the grammaticality judgment of coordinate bilingual speakers of English and Urhobo. Two research questions guide the analysis: (i) What triggers the movement of the wh-word/phrase (WH-) or its translation equivalent from the VP-internal position to the specifier position of an adjoined complementiser phrase (Spec-CP), and (ii) why is this movement licensed or allowed when WH- is already assigned an interrogative interpretation at the VP-internal position? The data analysis suggests that in wh-optional languages such as English and Urhobo, the trigger or motivation for wh-movement is the presence of a strong illocutionary force question affix [+IF$_Q$], which imposes both an interrogative interpretation (at LF) and movement of WH- to Spec-CP (at PF).

Keywords: bilingualism, complementiser, equivalence, minimalist, *wh*-interrogation.

Introduction

Driven by globalisation, English's utility value is increasing globally in divergent sociolinguistic contexts. The acquisition and learning of language has become the primary language policy in the Kachruvian outer and expanding circles[1]. The overarching influence of the language is evident in the critical indices of globalisation: ICT, economy, science, and cultural hybridity. Arising from the preceding, it is no surprise that English is a constant in the literature of sociolinguistics, contact linguistics, and cross-linguistic studies. At the macro-level, investigations of the variegations between English and other language systems have been investigated from the perspective of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, stylistics, pedagogy, and cross-cultural communication[2].

[1]Emama, E.O. "The utility value of Urhobo, English, and Pidgin in selected rural Urhobo Communities". Abraka Humanities Review. (2017) 7 (3), 42 - 50
[2]Emama, E.O. "The influence of affixation on the international intelligibility of aspects SNE lexicosemantics"Abraka Humanities Review (2018).8 (1), 201-214

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Significant investigative resources have also been invested in identifying micro-level differences between English and other languages in the subsystems of syntax, semantics, pragmatics[3], and morphology[4]. The challenge of intelligibility induced by the influence of the substrate languages and the pedagogical challenges of acquiring the target language, usually English, has also spawned many research endeavours in the Niger Delta region[5]. In the context of Africa, particularly the Niger Delta, a further motivation for comparative cross-linguistic studies is the marked linguistic distance between English and the region's indigenous languages. The degree of linguistic isomorphism between English and the disparate substrate languages of the region is especially relevant to understanding the micro, cross-typological variegations between the substrates and target language germane to achieving competence in English. This paper investigates the motivation for interrogative *wh*-movement in English and Urhobo, a South Western Edoid Nigerian language. The issue of the trigger for interrogative *wh*-movement has been a subject of investigation in minimalist syntax because, according to the minimalist Economy Principle (in particular, the *Last Resort*/LR condition on movement), the movement of constituents/features must be motivated by a formal reason; that is, the need to satisfy some morphological or syntactic condition without which the derived structure would be ungrammatical or *crash* at LF.

There are two basic types of questions or interrogative structures: those to which *yes* or *no* (or their translation equivalent) is a legitimate answer, e.g. 'did you see anyone?', and those which cannot be responded to logically with *yes* or *no* (or their translation equivalent); e.g. 'who/m did you see?' The first type is conventionally referred to as *yes-no* questions, while the second type is known as *wh*-questions (because in English, the question-word or 'operator' is usually a *wh*-item; e.g. *wh*o/m, *wh*ose, *wh*ich, *wh*at, *wh*y, and so on). Cross-linguistically, the derivation of *wh*-questions involves two basic strategies: *wh*-in-situ, where the *wh*-item or its translation equivalent (henceforth WH-) remains at its canonical or base-generated position (e.g. 1), and *wh*-fronting, where WH-moves to the specifier position of an adjoined complementiser phrase (e.g. 2).

1. (a) Efe was doing *what*?
[$_{TP}$ [$_{Spec\text{-}TP}$ Efe [$_{T}$ was [$_{V}$ doing [$_{WH}$-*what*]]]]]
(b) Efe ne ruẹ *idie*?
[$_{TP}$ [$_{Spec\text{-}TP}$ Efe [$_{T}$ ne [$_{V}$ ruẹ [$_{WH}$-*idie*]]]]]
2. (a) *What* was Efe doing?
[$_{CP}$ [$_{Spec\text{-}CP}$*What*$_1$ [$_{C}$ was$_2$ [$_{TP}$ [$_{Spec\text{-}TP}$ Efe [$_{T}t_2$ [$_{V}$ doing [$_{WH}$-t_1]]]]]]]]
(a) *'Die* Efe ne ruẹ?
[$_{CP}$ [$_{Spec\text{-}CP}$ *'Die*$_1$ [$_{TP}$ [$_{Spec\text{-}TP}$ Efe [$_{T}$*ne* [$_{V}$ ruẹ [$_{WH}$-t_1]]]]]]]

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[3] Emama, E.O. "Folklore, cohesion, and meaning in Ojaide's Agbogidi". KIU Journal of Humanities(2020).5 (3), 191-198
[4]Amuzu, E.K. "Socio-pragmatics of conversational code-switching in Ghana". Ghana Journal of Linguistics. (2012). 1(2)1-22
Hiroshi, Y. "International Intelligibility in World Englishes: Focusing on Idiomatic Expressions "Intercultural Communication Studies. (2008) Japan: Chukyo University.
[5] Mowarin, M & Mede, A.E (2023). "A Minimalist Investigation of Ambiguity in English and Urhobo Negative Sentences" Ethiope Journal of English, Literature, and Cultural Studies.(2023) 1 (1)

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Only the *wh*-in-situ strategy is licensed or permitted in some languages, while both strategies are licensed in others (such as English and Urhobo). (For a full discussion of *wh*-in-situ and *wh*-fronted languages, (see Cheng, 1991; Ouhalla, 1996; and Aoun & Li, 1993.)[6] *Wh*-questions may target an external argument, that is, a constituent which functions as the specifier of a tense phrase, e.g. (3); an internal argument, e.g. (4); or an adjunct, e.g. (5).

3. (a) *Who* was praising you?
   (b) *Ono* (yi) ne jiru we?
4. (a) *Who*were you praising?
   (b) *Ono* wo ne jirẹ?
5. (a) *When* will Efeleave?
   (b) *Ọkevọ* Efe cha vwọ yanran?

In English (3a) and Urhobo (3b) *wh*-questions, which target the Spec-TP constituent, there is no overt movement of the *wh*-constituent or movement of the tensed auxiliary (T-to-C movement). As shown in (6) and (7)—which are the schematic representations of (3a) and (3b), respectively—WH- appears to be base-generated at Spec-TP.

6. *Who* was praising you?
[$_{\text{Spec-TP}}$*Who* [$_{\text{T}}$ was [$_{\text{V}}$ praising [$_{\text{N}}$ you]]]]
7. *Ono* ne jiru we?
[$_{\text{Spec-TP}}$*Ono* [$_{\text{T}}$ ne [$_{\text{V}}$ jiru [$_{\text{N}}$ we]]]]

On the other hand, in English and Urhobo *wh*-questions which target a VP-internal argument, e.g. (4a/b) or an adjunct (5a/b), the VP-internal argument or adjunct may undergo overt movement, as shown in (8) and (9), which are the structural representations of (4a) and (4b), respectively.

8. *Who*were you praising?
[$_{\text{Spec-CP}}$*Who*$_1$ [$_{\text{C}}$ were$_2$ [$_{\text{Spec-TP}}$ you [$_{\text{T}}t_2$ [$_{\text{V}}$ praising [$_{\text{WH-}}t_1$]]]]]]
9. *Ono* wo ne jirẹ?
[$_{\text{Spec-CP}}$*Ono*$_1$ [$_{\text{Spec-TP}}$ wo [$_{\text{T}}$ ne [$_{\text{V}}$ jirẹ [$_{\text{WH-}}t_1$]]]]]

The focus of this paper is on those *wh*-questions whose derivation in English and Urhobo involves overt *wh*-movement; that is, the type of *wh*-interrogation that seeks an internal argument or an adjunct as a response.

Materials and Method

The data for the analysis consists of English sentences that instantiate *wh*-questions and the Urhobo *translation equivalent* of the English *wh*-questions. The translation equivalence is based on the grammaticality judgment of

[6] Cheng, L. On the Typology of Wh-Questions.PhD Dissertation.(1991) MIT, Cambridge Massachusetts.
Ouhalla, J. 'Remarks on the Binding Properties of Wh-Pronouns.' Linguistic Inquiry, (1996).27: 676–707.
Aoun, J. & Li, A. (1993). 'Squibs and Discussion.' Linguistic Inquiry, 24: 365–372.34-44

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coordinate bilingual speakers of English and Urhobo; that is, language users who are 'able to harness the advantages of the two languages by using them fluently while separating their grammars'[7]. The analysis is guided by two research questions: (i) What motivates or triggers movement of the *wh*-constituent or its translation equivalent (WH-) from the VP-internal position to the specifier position of an adjoined complementiser phrase (Spec-CP)? and (ii) why is this movement licensed or allowed when WH- is already assigned an interrogative interpretation at the VP-internal position?

Theoretical Framework

The adopted theoretical framework—the minimalist program (MP) of generative grammar—seeks to account for the tacit knowledge that enables the native speaker to generate, produce, and interpret an infinite number of novel utterances. The choice of MP as the research paradigm is informed by two considerations. The first is that MP seeks to account for reason/s languages having the properties they do; thus, it provides a platform for giving a principled explanation for the behaviour of *all* languages. The second consideration is that MP incorporates technical innovations derived from exploring minimalist questions. Two such innovations are *the economy of derivation* and *the economy of representation.* Concerning the economy of derivation, MP delineates only two basic operations: 'merge' and 'move'. *Merge* is an operation which (successively) joins or merges pairs of constituents into larger structures. (Thus, unlike earlier models such as X-bar, which permit both unary and binary branching, MP allows only binary branching.) On the other hand, move is concerned with transformations or movements motivated by some formal reason, such as the need to match interpretable with uninterpretable features. Concerning the economy of representation, MP dispenses with the distinction between deep structure and surface structure in favour of a more explicitly *derivational* approach; in other words, MP has no preconceived phrasal structure.

In MP, language processing is viewed as a complex interaction between two complementary systems: speech and thought systems. While the formation of utterances is the primary function of the *speech system* (articulatory and perceptive organs), the interpretation of utterances is the function of the *thought system* (mind/brain). Chomsky[8] suggests that language is an optimal

[7]Osakwe, M. Corpora and Bilingual Translation in Achebe and Soyinka's Creative Usages. In: R. Xiao (Ed.) Proceedings of the International Symposium on Using Corpora in Contrastive and Translation Studies, 27–29 July 2010 Proceedings. http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/projects.

[8] Chomsky, A. N. 'Problems of Projection.' Lingua,(2013).130: 33–49. www.sciencedirect.com.
Chomsky, A. N..'On Phases.' In: Otero, Carlos, Robert Freidin and Marie-Luisa Zubizarreta (eds.), Foundational Issues in Linguistic Theory: Essays in Honour of Jean-Roger Vergnaud. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press;(2008) 133–166.
Chomsky, A. N. 'Approaching UG from Below.' In: Gärtner, Hans-Martin and UliSauerland (eds.), Interfaces + Recursion = Language? Chomsky's Minimalism and the View from Syntax-Semantics. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter; (2007). 133–166.
Chomsky, A. N. 'Three Factors in Language Design.' In: Linguistic Inquiry, (2005a)36: 1–22.

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(that is, a perfectly designed) system that links *sound* and *meaning*. The system comprises a lexicon(a list of all the lexical items in the language, together with their phonetic, semantic and grammatical properties) and syntax—the computational component which consists of the principles of universal grammar (UG) and parameterised rules. The lexicon and syntax constitute the generative component. Lexical items selected from the lexicon are combined (by a series of merger and movement operations in the syntax) to form syntactic structures. The derived syntactic structures are then fed into two different components: PF, which processes the phonetic features by mapping or converting the structures into *phonetic form* (PF) representations, and LF, which processes the grammatical and semantic features of the derived syntactic structures by converting them into *logical form* (LF) representations. While the former specifies the pronunciation of the derived structures, the latter specifies their linguistic interpretation.

Review of Related Literature

On the issue of the trigger or motivation for interrogative *wh*-movement, Chomsky[9] suggests that in *wh*-questions, the complementiser (C) 'may have an operator feature and that this feature is a morphological property of such operators as *wh*-. For an appropriate C, the operators raise for feature checking to the checking domain of C' (*i.e.* Spec-CP) to satisfy the operators' scopal properties. In other words, the trigger for *wh*-movement is located on a target, namely the operator feature on C: While a strong operator (*i.e. wh*-) feature on C triggers overt *wh*-movement, a weak operator can only trigger covert movement.

In *Minimalist Inquiry*, Chomsky[10] modifies his earlier[11]proposal; he argues that in *wh*-structures, 'the *wh*-phrase has an uninterpretable feature [*wh*-] and an interpretable feature [Q], which matches the uninterpretable probe [Q] of a complementiser'. In other words, the probe [Q] on C seeks a *wh*-phrase as its goal to check and delete the uninterpretable features on both the probe and the goal, leaving only the interpretable [+Q] feature on the goal in place. Thus, Chomsky (2004) attributes *wh*-movement to an Extended Projection Principle

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Chomsky, A. N. 'On Phases'. In C.P. Otero et.al. (Eds) (2006). Foundational Issues in Linguistic Theory.(2005b)Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
Chomsky, A. N 'Beyond Explanatory Adequacy.' In: Belletti, Andriana (ed.), Structures and Beyond: The Cartography of Syntactic Structures. Oxford: Oxford University Press.(2004), 104.–131.
Chomsky, A. N. (. On Nature and Language. Cambridge, 2002)MA: Cambridge University Press.
Chomsky, A. N. Derivation by Phase. MIT Occasional Papers in Linguistics, (1999),18. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Chomsky, A. N. "Minimalist Inquiries: The Framework" MIT Occasional Papers in Linguistics, (1998),15. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Chomsky, A. N. "The Minimalist Program. Cambridge" (1995).MA: The MIT Press
[9] Op cit
[10] Chomsky, A. N. 'Beyond Explanatory Adequacy.' In: Belletti, Andriana (ed.), Structures and Beyond: The Cartography of Syntactic Structures. Oxford: Oxford University Press;(2004), (104.–131.
[11] Chomsky, A. N. The Minimalist Program. Cambridge, (1995).MA: The MIT Press

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(EPP) feature at C, which requires Spec-CP to be filled by WH-. Finally, in 'Three Factors in Language Design', Chomsky (2005a) attributes *wh*-movement to an *edge feature* (EF) at C, which requires C to be extended in a complementiser phrase (CP) projection containing a specifier on the edge of CP.

Radford (122)[12] adds that in languages such as English, a clause is interpreted as a non-echoic question if (and only if) it is a CP with an interrogative specifier (*i.e.* a specifier containing an interrogative word)'. An echoic question does not (strictly speaking) seek information but expresses incredulity, surprise, and disappointment. Radford's (2006) claim implies that the edge feature (EF) on interrogative C attracts an interrogative *wh*-expression to Spec-CP so that the clause can be given a non-echoic interrogative interpretation. Once the *wh*-expression arrives at Spec-CP, the EF requirement is satisfied and thus deleted. His[13]suggestion that English *wh*- in-situ structures are inherently echoic is open to debate. Consider the dialogue below.

Speaker A: 'I'm sorry I didn't hear you clearly… *John was doing **what***? Reading?'
Speaker B: Not reading. Smoking.
Speaker A: 'Good heavens! ***What** was John doing*? Smoking? You saw John smoking?'

With the appropriate intonation, the italicised *wh*- in-situ structure '*John was doing **what***?' may be assigned a non-echoic or interrogative interpretation; conversely, the *wh*- fronted structure '***What** was John doing*?' may be assigned an echoic (that is, a non-interrogative) interpretation. Suppose our reasoning is along the right lines. In that case, the type of interpretation (echoic versus non-echoic) assigned to a *wh*-question is not a consequence of the structural location of WH- (in-situ or fronted) but rather, and ultimately, a consequence of the context of communication. Therefore, his[14] argument that English interrogative *wh*- in-situ structures are inherently echoic is not tenable.

Moreover, by limiting the motivation for interrogative *wh*-movement to an assumed idiosyncratic feature of English—namely, the need to derive a non-echoic interpretation—Radford's[15] suggestion falls short of a cross-linguistic explanation for interrogative *wh*-movement. A third objection that may be urged against his[16] position is that in *wh*- in-situ languages (*i.e.* those languages which do not license interrogative *wh*-movement), it must be the case that, for cognitive and pragmatic reasons, *wh*-expressions (which in such cases are invariably in-situ) are assigned not only echoic but also non-echoic interrogative interpretation.

Since, as argued here, WH- can be assigned a non-echoic interrogative interpretation at the VP-internal position, why should an edge feature/EF (as proposed by Chomsky[17]) exist at C to trigger the movement of WH- or its

[12] Radford, A. Minimalist Syntax Revisited. (2006). http://courses.essex.ac.uk./1g/1g514.
[13] Opcit
[14] Opcit
[15] Opcit
[16] Opcit
[17] Chomsky, A. N. 'Three Factors in Language Design.' In: Linguistic Inquiry, (2005a) (36) 1–22.

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translation equivalent from the VP-internal position to Spec-CP? Since the in-situ *wh*-constituent is already typed interrogative, subsequent movement to Spec-CP would be superfluous and, to that extent, a violation of the minimalist Last Resort (LR) condition on movement, which bans superfluous steps in the derivation of syntactic structures. Given the preceding, we may legitimately pose the following questions:

(i) What triggers the movement of the *wh*-expression or its translation equivalent (WH-) from the VP-internal position to the specifier position of an adjoined complementiser phrase (Spec-CP)?
(ii) Why is this movement licensed or allowed when WH- is already assigned an *interrogative* interpretation at the VP-internal position?

Data Presentation and Analysis

To answer these two questions, namely (i) What triggers movement of the *wh*-expression or its translation equivalent (WH-) from the VP-internal position to the specifier position of an adjoined complementiser phrase (Spec-CP), and (ii) Why this movement is licensed or allowed when WH- is already assigned an *interrogative* interpretation at the VP-internal position, consider the data (10)–(13) below:

10. (a) In Situ: Efe was reading *what*?
[$_{\text{Spec-TP}}$ Efe [$_{\text{T}}$ was [$_{\text{V}}$ reading [$_{\text{WH-}}$*what*]]]]
(b) In Situ: Efě né sẹ (*i*)*dîe*?
*Lit.*Efe was reading *what*?
[$_{\text{Spec-TP}}$ Efě [$_{\text{T}}$ né [$_{\text{V}}$ sẹ [$_{\text{WH-}}$ (*i*)*die*]]]]
11. (a) *Wh*-Fronting: *What* was Efe reading?
[$_{\text{Spec-CP}}$*What*$_2$ [$_{\text{T}}$ was$_1$ [$_{\text{Spec-TP}}$ Efe [$_{\text{T}}t_1$ [$_{\text{V}}$ reading [$_{\text{WH-}}$ t_2]]]]]]
(b) *Wh*-Fronting: *Dîe* Efě né se?
Lit. **What* Efe was reading?
i.e. '*What* was Efe reading?'
[$_{\text{Spec-CP}}$*Dîe*$_1$ [$_{\text{Spec-TP}}$ Efě [$_{\text{T}}$ né [$_{\text{V}}$ se [$_{\text{WH-}}$ t_1]]]]]
12. (a) In Situ: You will drive *whose car*?
[$_{\text{Spec-TP}}$ You [$_{\text{T}}$ will [$_{\text{V}}$ drive [$_{\text{DP}}$[$_{\text{D}}$*whose* [$_{\text{N}}$ *car*]]]]]]
(b) In Situ: Wọ chá guẹ Ẹse *imoto ónò*?
Lit. *You will drive *car whose*?
i.e. 'You will drive *whose car*?'
[$_{\text{Spec-TP}}$ Wọ [$_{\text{T}}$ chá [$_{\text{V}}$ guẹ [$_{\text{NP}}$[$_{\text{N}}$*imoto* [$_{\text{D}}$ *ónò*]]]]]]]
13. (a) *Wh*-Fronting: *Whose car* will you drive?
[$_{\text{CP}}$*Whose car*$_2$ [$_{\text{C}}$ will$_1$] [$_{\text{TP}}$ you [$_{\text{T}}$ t_1] [$_{\text{V}}$ drive [$_{\text{DP}}t_2$]]]]
(b) *Wh*-Fronting: *Imoto ónò* wọ chá gua?
Lit. **Car whose* you will drive?
i.e. '*Whose car* will you drive?'
[$_{\text{CP}}$*Imoto ónò*$_1$ [$_{\text{TP}}$ wọ [$_{\text{T}}$ chá [$_{\text{V}}$ gua [$_{\text{NP}}t_1$]]]]]

In each of the sentences (10)–(13), the 'a' expression is English while the 'b' sentence is the Urhobo translation equivalent; (10) and (12) are *wh*-in-situ sentences whose corresponding *wh*-fronted structures are (11) and (13),

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respectively. In (10) and (11), WH- (*i.e.* the *wh*-constituent) is a lexical unit ('*what*'/'*dîe*'), while in (12) and (13), WH- is a determiner phrase (DP) '*whose car*' or a noun phrase (NP) '*imoto ónò*'.

The structural representations of the English *wh*-in situ (10a) and *wh*-fronted (11a) structures are shown below as (14) and (15), respectively.

14. Efe was reading *what*?
    [$_{Spec\text{-}TP}$ Efe [$_{T}$ was [$_{V}$ reading [$_{WH\text{-}}$*what*]]]]
15. *What* was Efe reading?
    [$_{Spec\text{-}CP}$*What*$_1$ [$_{T}$ was$_2$ [$_{Spec\text{-}TP}$ Efe [$_{T}$*t*$_2$ [$_{V}$ reading [$_{WH\text{-}}$ *t*$_1$]]]]]]

Similarly, the Urhobo (translation equivalent) *wh*-in-situ (10b) and *wh*-fronted(11b) structures are shown structurally as (16) and (17), respectively.

16. Efĕ né sẹ (*i*)*dîe*?
*Lit.*Efe was reading *what*?
    [$_{Spec\text{-}TP}$ Efĕ [$_{T}$ né [$_{V}$ sẹ [$_{WH\text{-}}$ (*i*)*die*]]]]
17. *Dîe* Efĕ né se?
    Lit. What Efe was reading?
i.e. '*What* was Efe reading?'
    [$_{Spec\text{-}CP}$*Dîe*$_1$ [$_{Spec\text{-}TP}$ Efĕ [$_{T}$ né [$_{V}$ se [$_{WH\text{-}}$ *t*$_1$]]]]]

WH- is base-generated at the VP-internal position in the English *wh*-interrogative in-situ structure (14) in the Urhobo translation equivalent (16). In both languages, WH- moves from its VP-internal position to the specifier position of an adjoined complementiser phrase (Spec-CP) to derive the *wh*-fronted structure (*e.g*. (15) and (17), respectively). Also, in both languages, where WH- is a determiner phrase (DP) or a noun phrase (NP), the entire DP or NP is fronted to Spec-CP as a consequence of the *chain uniformity condition* which Chomsky(253)[18] states as follows:

Chain Uniformity Condition

'A chain is [only well-formed if every copy in it is] uniform with regard to phrase structure status. 'To illustrate, consider the in-situ *wh*-structure (12a), which has the structural representation (18) below:

18. You will drive *whose car*?
    [$_{Spec\text{-}TP}$ You [$_{T}$ will [$_{V}$ drive [$_{DP}$ [$_{D}$ *whose* [$_{N}$ *car*]]]]]]
Moving only the determiner (D) '*whose*'(rather than the DP '*whose money*') to Spec-CP leads to ungrammaticality, as (18a) shows.
18a. * *Whose* will you drive *car*?
    [$_{CP}$*Whose*$_2$ [$_{C}$ will$_1$] [$_{TP}$ you [$_{T}$ *t*$_1$] [$_{V}$ drive [$_{DP}$ [$_{D}$*t*$_2$ [$_{N}$ *car*]]]]]

The derived expression (18a) crashes (*i.e.* fails to converge) at logical form (LF) because it violates the Chain Uniformity Condition. The violation is this: The moved D constituent '*whose*' is (at the landing site) a maximal projection because it is the largest expression headed by the word '*whose*' at Spec-CP;

[18] Chomsky, A. N. The Minimalist Program. Cambridge, (1995). MA: The MIT Press

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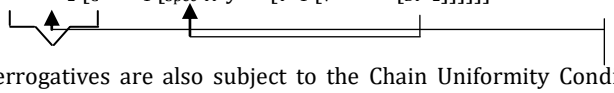
conversely, the null copy $t_2$at the extraction site is a minimal projection because it is the endocentric head of the DP, '*whose money*'. Thus, the derived *wh*-chain violates the chain uniformity condition by having a maximal projection at its head and a minimal projection at its foot. For the derived *wh*-fronted structure to converge at LF, the entire DP must be fronted, as shown in (18b):

18b. *Whose car* will you drive?

[$_{CP}$*Whose car*$_2$ [$_C$ will$_1$ [$_{Spec\text{-}TP}$ you [$_T$ t_1 [$_V$ drive [$_{DP}$$t_2$]]]]]]



Urhobo *wh*-interrogatives are also subject to the Chain Uniformity Condition like their English counterpart. To illustrate, the Urhobo translation equivalent of the English in-situ structure (18) is (19):

19. Wọ chá guẹ *imoto ónò*?

Lit. *You will drive *car whose*?

i.e. 'You will drive *whose car*?'

[$_{Spec\text{-}TP}$ Wọ [$_T$ chá [$_V$ guẹ [$_{NP}$[$_N$ *imoto* [$_D$ *ónò*]]]]]]

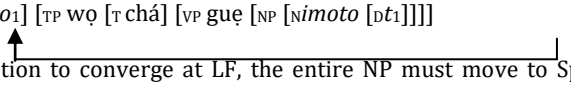
As shown in (19a), moving only the post-determiner (D) '*ónò*' (= ENGLISH '*whose*') to Spec-CP results in ungrammaticality:

(19a) * *Ónò* wọ chá guẹ *imoto*?

* *Lit*. *Whose* you will drive *car*?

* *i.e.* '*Whose* will you drive *car*?'

[$_{CP}$*Ono*$_1$] [$_{TP}$ wọ [$_T$ chá] [$_{VP}$ guẹ [$_{NP}$ [$_N$*imoto* [$_D$$t_1$]]]]



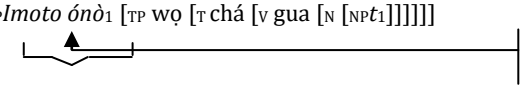
For the derivation to converge at LF, the entire NP must move to Spec-CP in conformity with the Chain Uniformity Condition, as shown in (19b):

19b. *Imoto ónò* wọ chá gua?

Lit. **Car whose* you will drive?

i.e. '*Whose car* will you drive?'

[$_{CP}$*Imoto ónò*$_1$ [$_{TP}$ wọ [$_T$ chá [$_V$ gua [$_N$ [$_{NP}$$t_1$]]]]]]



Motivation for *Wh*-Movement

As shown in the data analysis (14)–(17), the derivation of a *wh*-fronted interrogative in English and Urhobo involves the movement of WH- (*i.e.* a *wh*-word or phrase)from its base-generated VP-internal position to Spec-CP. In English, as shown in (15), there is an additional operation, namely, T-to-C movement (*i.e.* movement of the tensed auxiliary, *e.g.* '*was*', from the tense/T node to the complementizer/C position). According to Radford[19] (14–16), this movement is triggered by the presence of a *tense feature* [TNS] at interrogative C. With the auxiliary extracted from T to C, the requirement for C to bear tense is satisfied, and the tense feature is deleted. Since—as shown in (17)—Urhobo does not license T-to-C movement, it must be the case that interrogative C in Urhobo does not carry a tense feature; hence, there is no motivation for the auxiliary, e.g. 'né' in (17), to move to that position. Since interrogative C is

[19]Radford, A. "Syntactic Theory and the Structure of English: A Minimalist Approach"(2002).Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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functionally redundant in Urhobo interrogatives, it is not instantiated in the structure of Urhobo *wh*-questions.

From the data analysis (14)–(17), it is obvious that the derivation of *wh*-fronted interrogative structures in English and Urhobo involves the movement of WH- from the VP-internal position to Spec-CP. In the *Review of Related Literature*, we noted that Chomsky (2005) suggests that an Edge Feature (EF) at C is the mechanism which drives the movement of WH- to Spec-CP; according to him, the complementiser (C) carries an edge feature (EF) which requires C to be extended in a CP projection containing a specifier on its edge. We also noted Radford's (2006, p. 122) explanation that in languages such as English, 'a clause is interpreted as a non-echoic question if (and only if) it is a CP with an interrogative specifier (*i.e.* a specifier containing an interrogative word)'.

Regarding Radford's[20] explanation of the trigger for interrogative *wh*-movement, we argued (in 1.3) that *wh*- in-situ structures can often be assigned a non-echoic interrogative interpretation. We further suggested that in *wh*-in-situ languages (*i.e.* those languages which do not license *wh*-movement), it must be the case that, for cognitive and pragmatic reasons, the *wh*-word/phrase (which in such cases is invariably in-situ) is assigned both echoic and non-echoic interrogative interpretations. Given the previous observations, we question Chomsky's (2005) *edge feature*/EF trigger for interrogative *wh*-movement: Since the *wh*-in-situ structure is already assigned an interrogative interpretation, no Edge Feature (EF) should exist any longer at C to trigger *wh*-movement because the existence of EF would be unnecessary and, to that extent, a violation of the LR condition on movement. Moreover, as we noted, interrogative C is functionally redundant in Urhobo *wh*-interrogatives; consequently, it needs to be instantiated in the structure of Urhobo *wh*-questions. Since interrogative C is absent in Urhobo interrogatives, there is no suitable location for an Edge Feature (EF) to trigger *wh*-movement. Furthermore, since (as shown in the data analysis) *wh*-movement occurs in Urhobo *wh*-questions, there must be an alternative explanation (other than the EF trigger) for *wh*-movement.

Given the data analysis, we infer that the **lexicon** consists not only of phonologically overt affixes and lexical items together with their morphological properties but also of abstract *illocutionary force* (IF)affixes*,* which determine both the structural ordering of constituents as well as the illocutionary interpretation assigned to the derived structure (*e.g*. as a statement, question, command, and so on). For instance, the non-italicised expressions in (18) may be (a) declarative or (b) interrogative, and those in (19) may be (a) interrogative or (b) imperative, depending on intonation.

18. (a) They will give Efe money. (*Their generosity is public knowledge*)
    (b) They will give Efe money? (*I don't believe it*)
19. (a) Will you keep quiet? (*If you won't, then you can't come with us*)
    (b) Will you keep quiet (*right now*!)

[20] Radford, A. Minimalist Syntax Revisited. (2006). http://courses.essex.ac.uk./1g/1g514.

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Since both *wh*-in-situ and *wh*-fronted structures may be assigned an interrogative interpretation at LF, it must be the case that there are two types of illocutionary force question affixes [IF_Q]: a *weak* [$–IF_Q$] question affix which imposes an interrogative interpretation at LF but which (by being weak) cannot trigger overt movement at PF; and a *strong* [$+IF_Q$] affix which imposes both an interrogative interpretation at LF and overt movement (in languages where interrogative *wh*-movement is licensed) at PF. We argue further that both affixes (*i.e.* [$–IF_Q$] and [$+IF_Q$]) are located on WH- (*i.e.* the *wh*-word/phrase). In *wh*-optional languages like English and Urhobo, if [$–IF_Q$] is selected, WH- remains in situ because [$–IF_Q$] cannot move WH- from the VP-internal position to Spec-CP. On the other hand, where [$+IF_Q$] is selected, WH- is forced from its VP-internal position to Spec-CP.

Conclusion

In this paper, we set out to proffer answers to the following research questions: (i) What triggers the movement of the *wh*-expression or its translation equivalent (WH-) from the VP-internal position to the specifier position of an adjoined complementiser phrase (Spec-CP), and (ii) Why is this movement licensed when WH- is already assigned an *interrogative* interpretation at the VP-internal position? From the analysis of the data, the trigger or motivation for interrogative *wh*-movement is the presence of a strong illocutionary force [$+IF_Q$] affix, which imposes both an interrogative interpretation (at LF) and movement of WH- to Spec-CP (at PF) in *wh*-optional languages (*i.e.* those languages which license *wh*-movement) such as English and Urhobo.

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