

KÈDU INTERROGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN IGBO

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Abstract

Kèdu interrogative construction is the alternative strategy deployed in Igbo to achieve constituent questions. Hence, all possible content word questions types have a corresponding *kèdu* question. However, *kèdu* questions have not been adequately described with regards to its morphological and c-selectional properties within the complementiser phrase (CP) domain. This study, therefore, investigates the morphosyntax of *kèdu* constructions, based on the split complementiser phrase of the Minimalist Program, with a view to determining its morphological structure, c-selectional properties and syntactic distribution. Primary data were collected using observation and native speaker knowledge of the language, while secondary data were gathered from existing relevant literature. The study argues that *kèdu* has [+Q] force and [+Foc] focus features. The former lacks EPP while the latter has EPP feature which requires its specifier to be filled overtly. The study shows that it is not only the suppletives of question words that undergo displacement to the left periphery in *kèdu* constructions, rather, other types of DPs including personal pronouns are potential attractees as long as they are marked [+Foc] or questioned. The study demonstrated that *kèdu* interrogative is a manifestation of the native speaker-hearer's alternative means of achieving content word questions in Igbo.

Keywords: *Kèdu interrogative, Igbo, suppletives of question words, Split complementiser Phrase; Content word question*

1.0 Introduction

Interrogative constructions are those constructions used to express questions so as to elicit answers in natural speech. They mark one of the force types expressed by sentences across languages. Research on this phenomenon has occupied a central place in generative grammar especially in the last three decades (see Watanabe (2001: 203). Existing studies show that interrogatives are not similarly achieved across languages due to some parametric differences. In content word questions (CWQ) for instance, a question-phrase may occur in different positions. Hence, the distinction between *wh-in-situ* and *wh-ex-situ* languages (see Aboh 2007: 287). In the former, *wh*-words remain in their base position, but in the latter, they are displaced to the complementiser phrase (CP) domain. Consider data (1a-b) below.

(1) a. John wonders [*what*_i Mary bought *t*_i].

b. *Zhangsan xiang-zhidao [Lisi mai-le shenme]*

Zhangsan wonder Lisi bought what

‘Zhangsan wonders what Lisi bought.’

Watanabe (2001:203).

In English as in (1a), the *wh*-phrase is displaced to the CP domain in overt syntax. Movement is indicated by the indexed trace. In Japanese, however, the *wh*-phrase *shenme* remains in-situ.

In Igbo, the morpho-syntax of Igbo interrogatives have attracted the interest of scholars such as Goldsmith (1981), Uwalaka (1991), Obiamalu (2007), Mbah (2011), Nwankwegu (2015), Nweya (2018a) and (2019). Some of the issues addressed include the structure of question morphemes, the functions of tone in Interrogative constructions; and in-situ vs ex-situ alternations in CWQ among others. In these studies, the two most studied types of

interrogative constructions are yes/no or polar question¹ and CWQs. Consider the data below:

- (2) a. **O** **ri-ē-la** **nrī**
 3SG eat-PST-PRF food
 ‘S/he has eaten.’
 (Nweya 2018a: 155)
- b. **Ò** **ri-ē-la** **nrī?**
 Q.3SG eat-PST-PRF food
 ‘Has s/he eaten?’
 (Nweya 2018a: 155)
- c. **Ùgò** **ò** **ri-ē-la** **nrī?**
 Ugo Q eat-PST-PRF food
 ‘Has Ugo eaten?’
- d. **Ị** **hụ-rụ** **Obinnà**
 2SG see-PST Obinna
 ‘You saw Obinna.’
- e. **Ì** **hụ-rụ** **ònye?**
 2SG.Q see-PST who
 ‘Who did you see?’
 (Uwalaka 1991: 186)
- f. **Ònye** **kà** **Ị** **hụ-rụ**
 who+ FOC 2SG see-PST
 ‘Who did you see?’
 (Nweya 2018a: 164)

¹ Although there are other types of questions such as tag questions and non-discourse initiating questions, this study does not dwell on these since they do not provide information about *kèdu* interrogatives.

- g. **Kèdu** ²**onye** **i** **hùrù**
 kèdu who 2sg see-PST
 ‘Who did you see?’

In the data above, (2a) is a declarative sentence while (2b & c) are its yes/no interrogative counterparts. There are two processes that are involved in the derivation of Igbo yes/no questions: the insertion of a pronominal element and the use of obligatory low tone (see also Mbah 2011:186-190, Nwankwegu 2015: 141-229, Nweya 2018a:155-165). The main difference between (2a) and (2b) is that the subject in (2a) bears a high tone (HT) while that of (3b) bears a low tone (LT). In (2c), however, the LT question morpheme is borne by the pronominal element that surfaces when the subject is a referential expression (see also Uwalaka, 1995:188 and Nwankwegu, 2015:231).

In contrast to yes/no interrogatives, CWQs involve question words which may occur in-situ as in (2e) or ex-situ as in (2f)³. In the former, the content word occupies its base position, however, the phrase is displaced to the left periphery in (2e). In both cases, it is assumed that low tone is the bearer of the interrogative feature which interprets the sentence as a question. Nevertheless, CWQ such as (2e & f) could be achieved using *kèdu*-interrogative as in (2g) where the question morpheme, *kèdu*, consistently occurs sentence initial and never sentence final. All CWQ are achievable using *kèdu*-constructions.

Extant studies have discussed some of the key issues associated with Igbo wh-constructions such as the nature of wh-phrases themselves, the trigger for the displacement of wh-phrase to the left periphery, the role of the complementisers in wh-questions, as well as subject and non-subject extraction (see Uwalaka 1991, Mbah 2011, Nwankwegu 2015, Nweya 2018a, Nweya 2019 and

² Kèdu is influenced by vowel harmony and/or dialectal variation. It could be realized as *kèdu* or *kèdu*. Some speakers use them alternately while some stick to one form based on their dialect.

³ The declarative form is presented as (2d)

Amaechi and Georgi 2019). However, only scant attention has been given to *kèdu* interrogatives especially as it relates to its morphosyntactic structure. This study, therefore, described *kèdu*-constructions in the light of Rizzi's split complementiser phrase hypothesis, with a view to determining their morphological, syntactic and derivational properties.

Igbo is a West Benue-Congo Igboid language (Blench, 2019) spoken in the South-eastern and some parts of South-south Nigeria with an estimated population of about 35 million speakers (Emenanjo et al. 2011:2). The language has a number of dialects with varying degrees of intelligibility (Nwaozuzu, 2008: 3). It has three distinctive tones- low (*è*), high (*é*) and a downstep (*ē*) that indicate lexical and grammatical distinctions (Emenanjo, 2015: 107). The language distinguishes between [ATR] vowels (i, u, o, e) and [RTR] vowels (ĩ, u, ọ, a); within a phonological word, ATR-harmony applies (Mbah and Mbah, 2010: 102-103, Nweya, 2015: 153; Akinbo, Ozburn, Nweya and Pulleyblank 2023: 294). The word formation process is driven by verbal morphology (see Uwalaka, 1988; Emenanjo, 2015; Nweya 2018b). The language is a syntactic plural marking language (Nweya 2016) while inflectional properties such as tense, aspect, negation and applicative are expressed with verbal affixes (Nweya 2013, 2018b 2019, 2020, 2021; Nweya and Solomon-Etefia 2013). Like many African languages, it operates serial verb constructions (Nweya & Ejinwa 2024).

2.0 Literature Review

Studies on *kèdu* interrogatives have discussed some of its structural features. Mbah (1989:50), for instance, observes that *kèdu* is a basic Igbo free relative (always in a topicalised position) with other relative clauses (fully realised when *kèdu* is demoted) as its suppletive. No account of it is adequate without the identification of *wh*-forms because it combines with *wh*-relatives in certain constructions. The table below is a summary of *wh*-words and their

relative alternatives in the standard Igbo (see also Nwankwegu 2015:117).

(3)	Question words	Question/relative form
a	Ònye (who)	onye (person)
b	Gini (what)	ihe (thing)
c	Èbeē (where)	ebe (place)
d	m̀gbe ole (when)	m̀gbe (time)
e	etu olē (how)	etu/kà (manner)
f	Òle (how many)	òle (quantity)

The relative forms can combine with *kèdu* to form a *kèdu* interrogative variant of wh-questions. Hence, Mbah's (2011) postulation that *kèdu* comfortably applies concurrently with the wh-nouns which the wh-relatives often refer to as in (4).

(4)	<i>kèdu</i>	onye (who)	unu	chòrò
		ebe (where)	2PL	want
		ǹkè which)		
		m̀gbè (when)		
		ihe (what)		

‘Who/where/which/when/what do you want?’

(Mbah 2011:189)

In (4), *kèdu* combines with wh-forms to produce wh-phrases. However, this account of *kèdu* constructions does not consider the fact that non wh-suppletives can also be attracted to *kèdu* as in the examples below.

(5)	<i>Kèdu</i>	onye	kere	mmadu	<i>kèdu</i>	Chi	kere	mmadu
		<i>kèdu</i>	person	created	human	<i>kèdu</i>	God	created human
		Who created man?’				Which God created man?’		

Example (5) above shows that wh-suppletives are not the only target of *kèdu* constructions. R-expressions could be targeted as well. When this happens, the semantic reading may differ. These issues are discussed in detail in sub-section 5.

Considering that all the wh-question possibilities in Igbo are available to *kèdu* –interrogatives, Nwankwegu (2015: 121-124) classifies them into *kèdu*-argument, *kèdu*-adjunct, *kèdu*-predicate, *kèdu*-manner; *kèdu*-frequency, *kèdu*-price/rate, *kèdu*-type and *kèdu*-process. Some of these are exemplified below.

(6) a. **Ì hụ-rụ ònye?** (wh-argument)
 2sg see-PST who
 ‘Who did you see?’

b. **Kèdu onye ì hụ-rụ ònye?** (*Kèdu*-argument)
 kèdu person 2sg see-PST who
 ‘Who did you see/what person did you see?’
 Nwankwegu (2015: 121)

(7) a. **Ezè gà-rà èbeē?** (wh-adjunct (locative))
 Eze go-PST where
 Where did Eze go?

b. **Kèdu ebe Eze gà-rà èbeē?** (*Kèdu*-adjunct (locative))
 kèdu place Eze go-PST place
 Where did Eze go/To what place did Eze go?
 (Nwankwegu 2015: 121)

(8) a. **Ì bià-rà m̀gbe ole**
 2sg come-PST time which
 ‘When did you come?’

b. **kèdu m̀gbè ì bià-rà**
 kèdu time 2SG come-PST
 When did you come?’

(9) a. **Nkịta mè-rè Nweke g̀nị?**
 dog do-PST Nweke what
 ‘What did a dog do to Nweke?’

- b. **Kèdu** **ihe** **nkịta** **mè-rè** **Nweke?**
 kèdu thing dog do-PST Nweke
 ‘What did a dog do to Nweke?’
 (Nwankwegu 2015: 122)

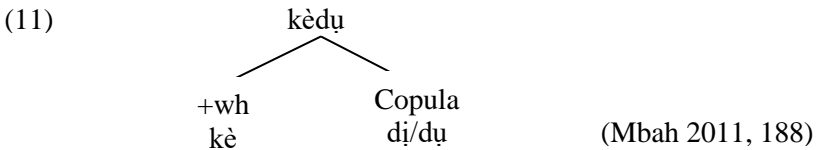
The example above is a representation of *kèdu*-interrogatives as highlighted by Nwankwegu (2015). The first observation about the data is that *kèdu* does not manifest in the sentence final position. Rather, it is base generated in the left periphery of the clause. Apart from Uwalaka 1991:189-190) who argues for a movement analysis of *kèdu*, there seems to be a convergence on this observation among analysts (see Goldsmith 1981, Mbah 2011 Nwankwegu 2015 and Nweya 2018b). These studies postulate that *kèdu* differs from other types of wh-elements in direct wh-interrogative, in that it has a fixed position in a matrix clause and does not seem to be amenable to the kind of syntactic processes undergone by the others. Secondly, the option of leaving a wh-suppletive targeted by *kèdu* in-situ is not possible except in a multiple wh-interrogative construction (Nwankwegu 2015), and lastly, there is no overt complementiser intervention between the wh-element attracted to *kèdu* and the root clause. Nwankwegu agrees with other studies that *kèdu* is base generated. However, he aligns with Uwalaka’s (1991) claim that though *kèdu* itself does not move, its presence triggers the movement of other relevant elements. Consequently, he postulates that *kèdu* is an empty semantic element that serves only to give wh-interrogative force to the sentence. In other words, it is not a wh-proform because it does not substitute for any item in the base form.

This study observes that although complementisers do not intervene between *kèdu* and a wh-suppletive, it is possible for *kèdu* to co-occur with complementisers in order to achieve a *kèdu* question. Consider the sentence below.

- (10) **kèdu** **kà** **Àda** **mè-rè?**
 Kèdu COMP Ada do-PRES
 ‘How is Ada faring?’

Notice that no *wh*-element or referential DP co-occur with *kèdu* in the sentence above. This type of *kèdu* constructions is hardly discussed in existing literature.

With regards to the morphological structure of *kèdu*, two analyses have been put forward to argue that *kèdu* consists of two morphemes. The first is Mbah (1989) which analyses *kèdu* as having the features [+wh +copular] as shown below:



According to Mbah, *kèdu* is a basic Igbo free relative having other relative clauses (i.e. *onye* ‘person’, *ebe* ‘place’, *nke* (particulariser), *mgbe* ‘time’ etc.) as its suppletives. These features enable it to merge with the *wh*-relatives just as the copular verb does in cleft constructions. Consider the sentences below.

(12) a. **Kè dụ onye unu chọrọ?** ‘Who do you want?’
 Q Q person 2pl want

b. **Ọnye bụ onye unu chọrọ?** ‘Who is the person you want?’
 Q be person 2pl want

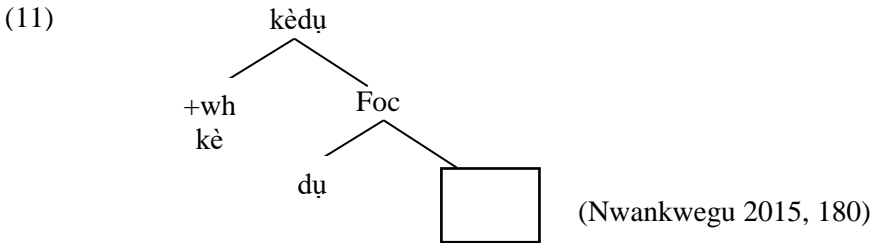
c. **Kè dụ ihe i chọrọ?** ‘Who do you want?’
 Q Q thing 1sg want

d. **Gịni bụ ihe i chọrọ?** ‘Who do you want?’
 Q be thing 1sg want

In these examples, *ke* has the same distribution as *gịni* ‘what’ which is a *wh*-element while *dụ* has the same distribution as the copular verb, *bụ* ‘BE’. However, this analysis is not without problem if we consider expressions where *ke* is used without *dụ* as in the following expressions.

- (11) a. **Ke du onye unu choro?** ‘Who do you want?’
 Q Q person 2pl want
- b. **Kee onye unu choro?** ‘Who do you want?’
 Q person 2pl want

The example above is common in Onitsha dialect and often used in areas with mixed dialect speakers like Enugu and Awka. It shows that *du* could be dropped without rendering the expression ungrammatical. In a related discussion, Nwankwegu (2015) characterises *kèdu* as having the features [+wh, +Foc, +Q]. He schematises it as shown below:



The schema shows the position of the wh-feature and the Foc-feature, while the box represents the complement position and the landing site of internally merged DPs. Nwankwegu (2015: 180) further explains that during computation, *kèdu* is selected with a corresponding focus marked wh-phrase for the targeted argument of adjunct. The strong Foc-feature of *kèdu* attracts the internal constituent of the targeted wh-phrase to its complement position instead of its spec since the spec is already filled. In this way, the c-selection requirement of *kèdu* is satisfied. Nwankwegu’s analysis is not quite different from Mbah’s as they both argue that *ke* and *du* are two free morphemes. The analysis raises some questions about *kèdu* such as (i) On what basis is *kèdu* analysable as two morphemes *ke* and *du*? (ii) What is the source of the interrogative force borne by *kèdu*? (iii) What is the nature of the landing site of the attracted DP?

This study argues that the assumption that *kèdu* consists of two free morphemes is not based on direct morphological evidence. Although *kè* and *du* conform to the structure of Igbo morphemes, especially as monosyllabic morphemes like *de* ‘write’, *di* ‘husband’, *ji* ‘yam’ etc.; it is difficult to determine their meaning as different morphological units. Independently, they both have no questions related meaning. Consider the examples below:

- | | | | | |
|------|--------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| (12) | kè/ke | ‘share’ | ke | ‘tie |
| | dụ | ‘pinch’ | dù | ‘survive’ |

In these contexts, the two morphemes only bear verb associated meanings in contrast to other question words like *onye* ‘who’, *gini* ‘what’ which bear inherent interrogative reading.

However, there is evidence from other related Benue Congo languages where they occur as question morphemes and express a wh-meaning Armstrong and Jungrathmeyr (1980: 7)

- | | | | |
|------|--------|--------|--------|
| (13) | Nupe | ke; ki | ‘what’ |
| | Gwari | kĩí | mem |
| | Yoruba | ki | |
| | Twi | dén | ‘what’ |
| | Lelemi | dè | |

The example shows that these are Protoforms of *ke* and *du* and they express wh-meaning in other Benue-Congo languages. Based on this observation, this study arrives at two plausible assumptions – First, that *kèdu* is borrowed with its interrogative reading from other Benue-Congo languages as two free morphemes *ke* and *du* but they lost their independent status and merged to form a single question word after being subjected to the syllabic structure of other wh-words. Recall that there is no monosyllabic question word in Igbo. Secondly, *kèdu* is a morpheme that cannot be further analysed without destroying its meaning. Separating *kè* and *du* as free morphemes creates problems at the morphological level because there is no context where they occur as free morphemes in Igbo.

With regards to the landing site of the attracted DP, allowing focused wh-elements or DPs attracted to *kèdu* to occupy its complement position will block *kèdu* from selecting the relevant TP from occupying its complement position and result in ungrammaticality. Rather, they are attracted to the specifier of the FocP where other focused phrases are hosted within the CP area (see data (11) above).

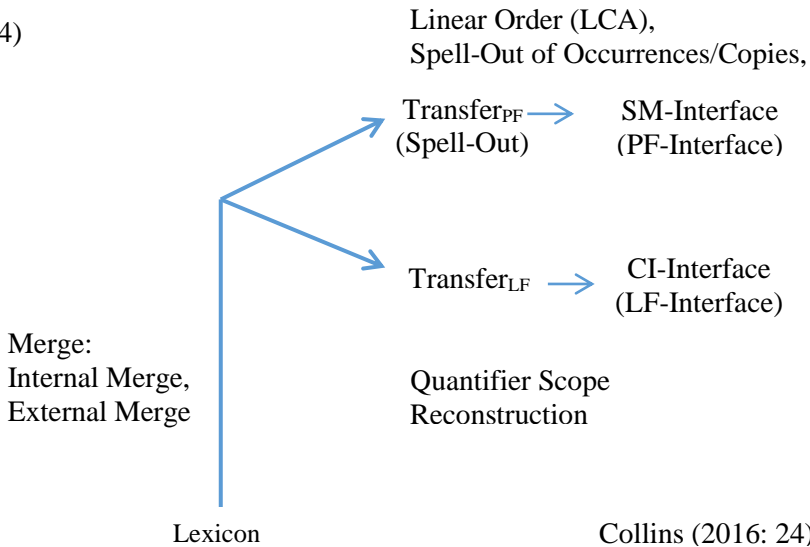
4.0 Methodology

Data for this study were gathered from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through observation and native speaker knowledge of the language. Data gathered from the native speaker knowledge were subjected to validation by other native speakers. Secondary sources included extant grammar and literary texts. The variety of Igbo used for the study is the standard variety often used in formal domains. Data were subjected to interlinear glossing and syntactic analysis based on the principles and operations of Chomsky's (1993) Minimalist Program with insight from Rizzi's (1997) Split Complementiser Phrase (CP) hypothesis. The tone marking convention adopted is that where low and down-step tones are marked while high tones are left unmarked.

5.0 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for the analysis is the Minimalist Program (MP) advanced by Chomsky (1993, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2008, 2013 and 2015) and works by other linguists such as Kayne (1994); Collins and Stabler (2016); and Collins and Kayne (2023). Chomsky (1993:168) assumes that the performance system of language falls into two types, PF and LF which are the interface levels. The language determines the set of pairs drawn from the PF and LF levels. The program has two basic components of language: a lexicon and a computational system with their idiosyncratic properties as shown in the schema below.

(14)



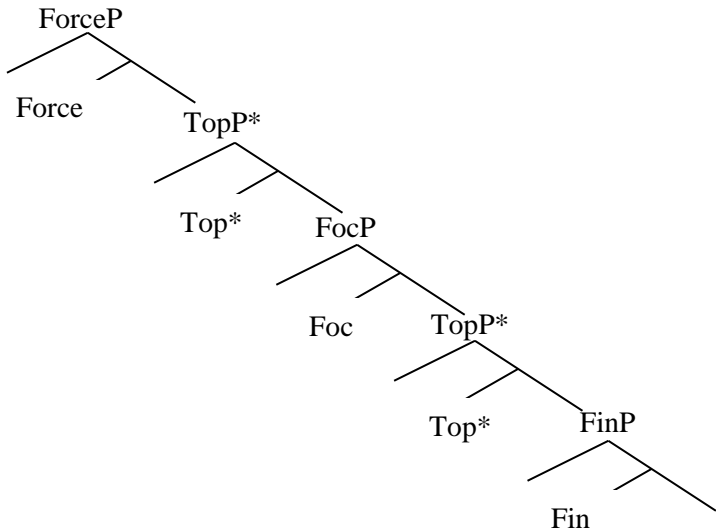
In the schema above, the basic computational process takes pre-selected lexical items (LIs) with their idiosyncratic properties from the numeration and builds them into a structure by a succession of *merge* operations. Merge is external when either or both items are selected directly from the numeration and joined together as a single structure and internal when an element from an already built structure is joined with another element from the domain of the existing structure. At the point of spell-out, the derivation splits into two where the phonetically relevant materials are transferred to PF interface and the grammatical and semantically relevant features transferred to LF interface. In this model, there are two points of *Transfer*, Transfer_{PF} and Transfer_{LF}. Two main things must take place at Transfer_{PF}/spell-out: (i) ordering of terminals for appropriate interpretation following the principle of the linear correspondence axiom (LCA)⁴ (ii) and spelling out of

⁴ The LCA proposed in Kayne (1994) assumes that phrases are ordered similarly across languages in. S>H>C order. Every other kind of arrangement is as a result of movement.

occurrences/copies. The rule for spelling out copies says that only the last created occurrence is spelled-out. For Igbo type languages, tonal modification also takes place at Transfer_{PF}. At Transfer_{LF}, parts of the occurrences are deleted to create interpretable structures (i.e. structures that have meaning). Occurrences enable one to determine the scope of quantifiers and source of moved items for the purpose of reconstruction. The computational procedure continues to apply similar processes to build fully formed structures at the PF and LF interfaces. At these points, the syntactic objects are presented for appropriate interpretation. If the PF is phonetically interpretable and the LF semantically interpretable, the derivation converges, otherwise, it crashes.

In addition to the basic operations of MP, the study also adopted the split complementiser phrase (CP) hypothesis. This idea, championed by Rizzi (1997) and further developed in Rizzi (2001, 2004, and 2013), suggests a CP-system that is more articulated in structure, where each of the elements traditionally associated with the CP-layer (within the GB-framework) becomes the head of a maximal projection. This is to accommodate the complementiser and other items that occur at the left edge of the sentence also called the *left periphery*. With regards to this, Rizzi (1997) assumes that each of the functional elements that manifest in the left-periphery is the head of a functional projection ForceP, TopP, FocP and FinP, the force phrase is the force layer and the finiteness phrase is the lowest form of the force that interrelates with the sentence outside the left periphery. Rizzi (1997: 297) presents this proposal as shown in the schema below:

(15)



In this structure, each of the elements that manifests in the left-periphery projects the Force-system. The asterisks that appear on the right side of the topic indicate the recursive nature of topics in Italian and is called *kleene Star* (see Crystal 2008:42). Rizzi argues that this structure could be used to account for the ordering constraints involving the elements of the C-system. Insight from this proposal has attracted scholarly research into the expanded or articulated left periphery across languages. These studies provide pieces of evidence in support of this Hypothesis (See also Haegeman, 2012.) However, not all languages' CP has the expanded CP as the one proposed by Rizzi in terms of features and their hierarchy. For instance, Olaogun (2016) argues that FocP dominates InterP in Ìkòkòó. Nevertheless, this study demonstrates that the constituent features of the CP domain of *kèdu* interrogative (KI henceforth) can project maximally.

6.0 Data Analysis

This subsection describes the structure of KIs as well as how they are derived based on the split CP assumption. With regards to its structure, the study examines the syntactic distribution of *kèdu* and

the elements that it attracts within the construct. With regards to its derivation, the study describes the derivational procedure of KIs based on the principles and operations of the Minimalist Program.

6.1 The Structure and Derivation of *Kèdu* Interrogatives

As was earlier noted, KIs are employed in Igbo to derive content word questions as an alternative to wh-questions. In this regard, it is often merged with any of the wh-suppletives in order to seek information about an argument or an adjunct in a sentence. Consider the following examples.

(16) a. **Èbee gbà-rà ọkụ ùnyaahụ?**
 where burn-PST fire yesterday
 ‘Where did fire burn yesterday?’

b. **Kèdu ebe <ebee> gba-ra ọkụ ùnyaahụ?**
 Q place where burn-PST fire yesterday
 ‘Where did fire burn yesterday?’

(17) a. **Ọnye bjà-rà?**
 Q come-PST
 ‘Who came?’

b. **Kèdu onye <onye> bja-ra?**
 Q person who come-PST
 ‘Who came?’

(18) a. **Ị jè-rè èbee?**
 2SG go-PST where
 ‘Where did you go to?’

b. **Kèdu ebe ị jè-rè <ebee>?**
 Q place 2SG go-PST where
 ‘Where did you go to?’

- (19) a. **Ì** **nà** **è-me** **gìní?**
 2SG PROG PART-do what
 ‘What are you doing?’
- b. **Kèdu** **ihe** **ì** **nà** **è-me** **<gìní?>**
 Q thing 2SG PROG PART-do what
 ‘What are you doing?’
- (20) a. **Ike** **ò** **nwù-rù?** **mgbe ole?**
 Ike Q die-PST when
 ‘When did Ike die?’
- b. **Kèdu** **mgbè Ike** **nwù-rù** **<mgbe ole>**
 Q time Ike die-PST when
 ‘When did Ike die?’
- (21) **Kèdu /Kèdu -kwanụ-keekwanụ?**
 how/how-EMPH
 ‘How are you?’

Data (16) through (21) are instances of in-situ wh-questions with their KI counterparts. In (16a and 17a), the external arguments were queried with *èbee* ‘where’ and *onye* ‘who’ respectively; while (16b and 17b) are the KI counterparts where the suppletives of the wh-words were attracted to the CP domain. Similarly, in (18a and 19a), the internal arguments were queried with *èbee* ‘where’ and *gìní* ‘what’ respectively; while, (18b & 19b) represent their KI counterparts where the wh suppletives *ebe* ‘place’ and *ihe* ‘thing’ are merged with *kèdu* in the CP domain. In (20a), the wh-phrase, *mgbe ole* ‘when’ queries the adjunct. But in (20b), it’s suppletive, *mgbe*, is merged with *kèdu* to derive the KI counterpart. Lastly (21) is common in informal conversations. In this case, *kèdu* is realised in two forms – one with partial phonetic spell-out and the other with complete phonetic form. Generally, the data show that *Kèdu* constructions are derivable from in-situ wh-constructions. Another

notable observation is that when the external argument or the subject is queried with *kèdu*, as in (16a & 17a), the tone of the verb (*biàrà*) changes from low to high (see 16b and 17b). This may be attributed to the fact that there is no syntactic object intervening between the verb and the wh-suppletive as in (16b & 17b) respectively.

Aside merging with wh-suppletives or the DP complement of Wh-phrases to derive KI, this study also observed that *kèdu* also attracts non wh-relative DPs including pronouns as in the examples below.

(22) a. **Kèdu ego m̄ (nyè-règi <égō>)?**
 Q money 1SG give-PST 2SG money
 ‘Where is the money I gave/lent you?’

b. **Kèdu mmā e jì <mma> è-si nrī?**
 Q knife 3IMP use knife PART-cook food
 ‘Where is the kitchen knife?’

c. **Kèdu ụkwụ m̄ gà e-ji <ụkwụ> je ebe ahụ?**
 Q leg 1SG PROG PART-take leg go place DEM
 ‘Which leg will I use to visit there’ (literal meaning)

d. **Kèdu Ñkèchi?**
 Q N.
 ‘Where is Nkechi?’

e. **Kèdu akwụkwọ ahụ?**
 Q book DEM
 ‘Where is the/that book?’

f. **kèdu gị?**
 Q 2SG
 ‘Where are you?’

These examples show that it is not only wh-suppletives that are attracted to *Kèdu*. Non wh-relative DPs are also potential attractees (see 22a-c) where *ego* ‘money’, *mmà* ‘knife’ and *ụkwụ* ‘leg’ are

displaced from their positions in the vP area to the CP domain. However, it is important to note that only the arguments of *onye* ‘who’, *ebee* ‘where’ and *gini* ‘what’ are attracted to *kèdu*. This may be attributed to the fact that they are basic wh-phrases (see Nwankwegu 2015, Nweya 2018a). Data (22d-f) are shortened forms of KI. These forms of KI are not easily re-constructible without paraphrasing. One plausible explanation is to posit that they are elliptical structures where the only available DP in the construct is displaced to the CP area for the derivation to converge.

With regards to (22a-f), an attempt to merge the arguments of non-basic wh-phrases like *mgbe ole* ‘when’, *etu ole* ‘how’ resulted in ungrammatical expressions. Consider the following examples.

(23) a. **Kèdu m̀gbè Ike nẁù-r̀ù?** (ai) ***Kèdu unyaahụ Ike nẁù-r̀ù?**
 Q time Ike die-PST Q yesterday Ike die-PST
 ‘When did Ike die?’

b. **Kèdu etu ọ̀ dì?** (bi). ***Kèdu mmiri mmiri ọ̀ dì?**
 Q how 3SG BE Q water water 3SG BE
 ‘How is it?’

c. **Kèdu ego-ole a na e-re ya?**
 Q how much IMP PROG PART-sell 3sg
 (ci) ***Kèdu ego ise a na e-re ya?**
 Q money five IMP PROG PART-sell 3sg
 ‘What is the price?’

The ungrammatical expressions in (23ai, bi and ci) involving the arguments of *m̀gbè* ‘when’, *ètù* ‘when’, and *ego ole* ‘how much’ attest to the fact that not all the argument of wh-phrases is triggered to merge with *kèdu*.

Kèdu - PRON sequence seems to be related only to the wh-phrase, *ebee* ‘where’ or its KI counterpart *kèdu ebe* ‘where’. This is evident in the fact that they all express locative meaning as the gloss show.

In addition, it indicates that *kèdu* has [+WH] feature as Nwankwegu (2015) pointed out. Structurally, it is plausible to posit that they are contracted forms which speakers employ for the sake of economy. For instance, compare the two structures in (24) below.

(24) a. **Kèdu m nà fòto à?**
 Q 1SG P picture DEM
 ‘Where did I feature on this photograph?’

b. **Kèdu ebe m nọ nà fòto à?**
 Q place 1SG be P picture DEM
 ‘Where did I feature on this photograph?’

Although the two sentences are similar in meaning, (24b) differs from (24a) because ‘*ebe*’ where’ is covert in (24a) but overt in (24b). In other words, it is more economical to use (24a) than (24b) because the former involves a smaller number of derivational steps.

Furthermore, it is worthy to report that in some constructions, *kèdu* co-occurs with complementiser *ka*. In this case, it does not attract any DP such as *wh*-relatives, pronominal and referential DPs as in (16) through (23). Consider the examples below.

(25) a. **Kèdu kà i mètè?**
 Q C 2sg do-pres
 ‘How do you do?’

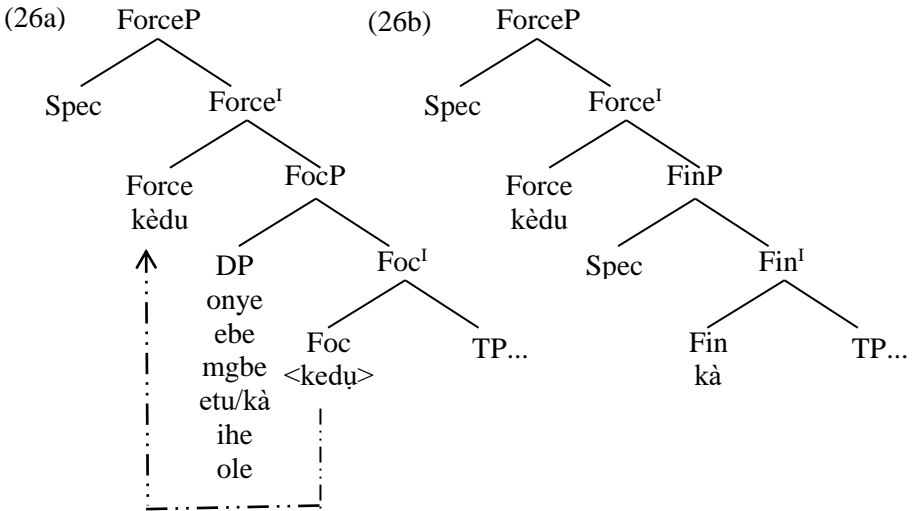
b. **Kèdu kà ọ dì?**
 Q C 3SG BE
 ‘How is it?’

c. **Kèdu kà i sì je?**
 Q C 2SG follow go
 ‘How did it go?’

Semantically, one can deduce that when *kèdu* co-occurs with the *ka*⁵, it expresses the question ‘how’. In (25), *kèdu* is merged externally from the numeration, hence, the assumption that *ka* is a complementiser in this context. Structurally, *kèdu* is the head of ForceP while *ka* is the head of FinP in the CP area.

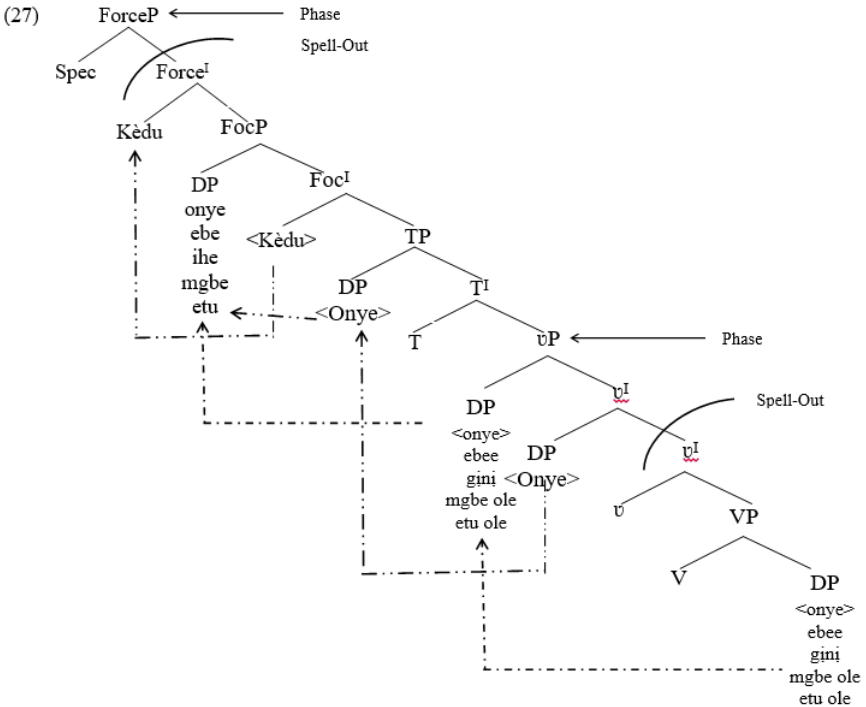
6.2 The Derivation of *Kèdu* Interrogatives

With regards to the derivation of *kèdu* constructions, this study postulates that *kèdu* is a morpheme bearing two features – question [+Force] and focus [+Foc] where the features project maximally in the light of Rizzi’s (1997) split CP analysis. However, when it occurs with a complementiser, the [+Foc] feature is dropped since no constituent is attracted to its spec. This claim is schematised below:



⁵ In Igbo, ‘ka’ performs different functions depending on the context. According to Nweya (2018a & 2019), it could function as a focus marker, as a complementiser, and as an auxiliary verb. As a focus marker, it triggers a focus marked constituent to move from the vP area to the left periphery. In its function as complementiser, no movement is involved. As an auxiliary verb, it expresses an irrealis mood. Its multifunctional nature has been an issue of debate among analysts.

In the structures above, the features - [+Force] and [+Foc] are cartographically interpreted in terms of X-bar in line Kayne’s (1994) Linear Correspondence Axiom which suggests S>H>C order in phrases. In the structure, ForceP differs from FocP in the fact the former lacks EPP while the latter has EPP which requires the attracted DP to occupy its specifier position. Therefore, the focus feature of *kèdu* triggers a DP marked with [+Foc] to internally merge in its spec position and satisfy its EPP requirement while *kèdu* moves from Foc to Force via head-to-head movement in order to value its interrogative feature. This assumption is captured in (26) below.



The schema above captures the assumption that *kèdu* attracts a DP bearing an unvalued focus feature. The F-feature marked *kèdu* probes for a matching goal in its c-command domain. The suppletive of the wh-phrase satisfies this requirement. Hence, they

both value their unvalued features. Thus, the EPP requirement of focus is satisfied. Nwankwegu (2015) rightly observes that the movement of wh-phrase is not a kind of remnant movement since no copy is left behind. The remnant is deleted from the structure to save the derivation from crashing.

For the sake of exemplification, consider (18b) repeated here as (28)

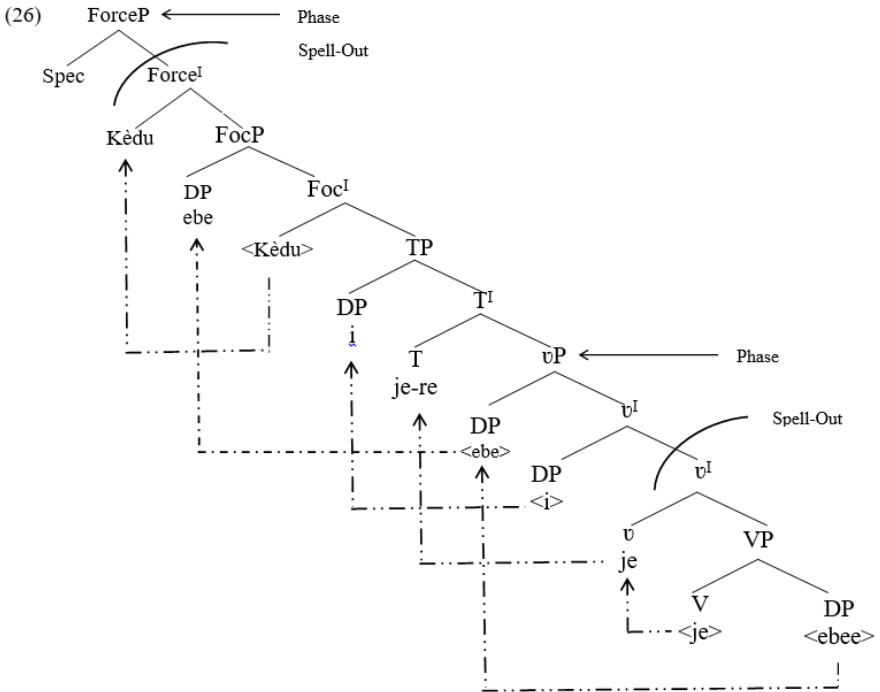
- (28) **Kèdu ebe i jè-rè <ebee>?**
 Q place 2SG go-PST where
 ‘Where did you go to?’

To derive (28) the numeration of lexical items can be presented as

- (29) N: {kèdu₁; ebee₂; v₁; i₁; je₁ -rVpast}

The numeration in (28) represents the pre-computational operation where lexical items are initially selected from the lexicon with indexes indicating the number of times LI will be used in the derivation. Operations select and merge apply successively in the following manner. The verb *je* is merged with *ebee* ‘where’ to form VP satisfying the c-selection requirement of V. *v* is merged with VP to form *v*^I satisfying the c-selection requirement of *v*. The verb features of *v* triggers the lexical V, *je* ‘go’ to adjoin to it. The derived *v*^I is merged with a DP to derive another *v*^I. This is to create an escape hatch for the long-distance movement of the DP component of the wh-phrase. At this stage, the DP *ebe* ‘place’ is internally merged with *v*^I to form *v*P, satisfying the EPP feature of *v*. The complement of the phase is then transferred to the interfaces for interpretation. In furtherance, the tense suffix is merged with the *v*P to form T^I. The verb moves via head movement from *v* to T in order to value its tense feature. Afterwards, T^I probes for a matching goal to value its unvalued phi features. The pronominal subject DP occupying spec *v*P satisfies this requirement so they simultaneously value their unvalued features while the DP moves to spec, TP so that the EPP feature of T is satisfied. The derived structure is merged

with *kà* to form Foc^I . Considering that Focus also requires its EPP and Foc features to be satisfied, it triggers *ebe* ‘place’ to move to its spec. Spec, ForceP is not projected since it lacks EPP. It is assumed the LT of Inter percolates unto the *kèdu*-phrase for clause typing the structure as interrogative. At this point, the entire structure is transferred to the interfaces for interpretation. These derivational steps are schematised in the diagram below.



It is pertinent to note that the focused DP or wh-suppletive may originate from spec, vP especially if the external argument is the queried item in the derivation. For instance, the interrogative clause parsed above shows that the wh-suppletive attracted by Foc^I originated from Spec, vP . Based on this observation, this study posits that the queried item determines the source of the displaced DP as shown in (23).

6.0 Summary and Conclusion

This study examined the morpho-syntactic structure of *Kèdu* interrogative construction, an alternative means of achieving content word question in Igbo with insight from Split CP of the Minimalist Program. It was observed that it is not only *wh*-suppletives that are attracted to *kèdu* in KI constructions, rather, other DPs including pronominal DPs are also attracted to the CP domain if they are marked [+Foc] or queried. Based on evidence from other Benue-Congo languages, this study opines that it is possible that *kèdu* was borrowed from other languages where the protoforms of *kèdu* (*ke* ‘what’; *dε* ‘which’) function as questions. The morpheme bears Force and Focus features and is externally merged at the CP domain. However, each feature projects maximally in the light of the cartographic split CP analysis which assumes one head to one feature and one feature to one head. ForceP lacks EPP while FocP bears EPP which requires its specifier to be filled by the attracted DP. The study complements other studies by revealing other morpho-syntactic properties of *kèdu* which hitherto have not been discussed in existing literature. *Kèdu*-interrogative constructions demonstrate unique morpho-syntactic forms of achieving content word questions in Igbo.

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