

37

Questions in Anaang: A Syntactic Analysis

By

EDENOWO T. ENANG

*Department of English/Lit. Studies,
Obio Akpa Campus,
Akwa Ibom State University,
Akwa Ibom State.*

ANIEKAN L. NYARKS

*Department of English/Lit. Studies,
Obio Akpa Campus,
Akwa Ibom State University,
Akwa Ibom State.*

And

SUSANNA T. UDOKA, (Ph.D)

*Department of English/Lit. Studies,
Obio Akpa Campus,
Akwa Ibom State University,
Akwa Ibom State.*

Abstract

*This paper is the first research attempt which addresses **Questions in Anaang: A Syntactic Analysis**. It analyses the structural relations within the various question types in the two languages on a syntactic rank scale. Data on the work were collected through the use of questionnaire administered on one hundred (100) respondents selected by stratified random sampling technique from the eight local government areas of Akwa Ibom State which constitute the area of the study. Oral interviews with selected speakers of the Anaang were conducted as a means of data collection. Analysis of the desired variables of the data collected embraced Government and Binding Theoretical Framework. Therefore, the structural relations within the various question types have been sorted out and carefully accounted for. The paper reveals that*

the classification of the question types is not watertight in Anaang as membership of one division is open to other members of another topological division. The paper further reveals that the base-generated auxiliaries in Anaang questions are moveable because of their agglutinative nature to the verbs. Finally, it has been revealed that the “Type I” tense morpheme (maa, me, yaa and paa) is used in Anaang for asking positive yes/no but would change to “Type II” (ke/ki and di) in negative Yes/No question whereas in Wh- questions the “Type II” tense allomorphs are used. Finally, based on the hypothesis that there are syntactic structures in the Anaang language called questions, a clearer, insightful and more objective analysis of these structures can be achieved with the use of the GB theory. The use of the GB theory also to analyse some other aspects of the Anaang language, will help in the teaching and learning the Anaang language.

Grammar, according to Chomsky (1957) consists of interacting levels of analysis which include phonology, morphology, semantics and syntax. This work is undertaken mainly at the level of syntax, although references have been made to other levels where necessary. This is an attempt to reflect language as a system of integration.

Syntax has been defined by various scholars to fit into their specific research and grammatical theories. The researchers of this work, however, intend to consider syntax as defined by Essien (1990) which according to him:

...examines the component parts or constituents of sentences of a language and the interrelatedness these constituents as well as consisting of various phenomena pertaining to the form and organization of sentences in a language: the words of the language, the order in which they occur or must occur and their interdependencies that produce well formed and meaningful sentences constitute the matter of syntax.

This study focuses on the syntactic analysis of interrogative structures in Anaang Language using some aspects of the Government and Binding theory (GB). The GB theory of analysis was developed by Chomsky in (Chomsky, 1981) and consists of interacting sub-component of the rule system and the system of principles.

The phrasal analysis in this study utilized the X (X-bar) theory, which is one of the modules of the Government and Binding theory developed by Chomsky in the 1970s and was later popularized by Jackendoff (1977). The X (X-bar) theory is a phrase structure theory which has provided insights into the common properties of different types of phrases and also recognizes intermediate categories in phrasal analysis. According to Ndimele (1991), “the X¹ (X-bar) theory determines the configuration of the D-structure” in Government and Binding theory.

On Interrogative Structures

Sentences or statements that intend to find out ‘when is the action taking place’, ‘what is the action’, ‘which is the action’, ‘why is the action’, ‘where the action takes place’, ‘who is the actor or sufferer’, ‘whose is the action’, ‘to whom is the action directed’ and or ‘the extent to which the action takes place’ are grammatically and functional analysed as ‘questions’ in a language. In a more technical sense of the word, questions are sentences or statements that are interrogative in nature (Radford, 1981; Essien, 1990, Haegeman 1994).

Interrogative sentences in natural languages generally ask for clarification or specific information about facts, place, reason, time, person or degree and so forth. This authority; Radford (1981) has classified questions in natural languages into three pairs namely: **Yes-No and Wh-questions, Echo and Non-echo questions and Direct and Indirect questions.**

Heageman (1994) on his part also classified questions along the same line as Radford. However, this topological classification or division is not watertight because membership of one typological division is open to members of another typological division. Accordingly, one can now have a Yes-No Echo question, a Wh-echo question, a Wh-non echo question, a Direct Yes-No question, a Direct Wh-question, an Indirect Wh-echo question and an Indirect Wh-echo question.

It must however, be borne in mind that there is bound to be variation in the word order of the two languages as we consider the following instances:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1a. <i>Akworiko ala ukood fien.</i> | 1b. The Preacher will call you. |
| 2a. <i>Akworiko ala ukood fien?</i> | 2b. The Preacher will call you? |
| (Variation on word order) \longrightarrow | 2c. Will the Preacher call you? |
| 3a. <i>Akworiko ali kood iniegwo?</i> | 3b. The Preacher call who? |
| 4a. <i>Iniegwo ke Akworiko alikood?</i> | 4b. Who will the Preacher call? |
| 5a. <i>Mmekere me Akworiko alikood Ubong</i> | 5b. I wonder whether the
Preacher will call Ubong. |
| 6a. <i>Mmekere m'iniegwo ke Akworiko alikood.</i> | 6b. I wonder who the
Preacher will call. |
| 7a. <i>Afo akewo k'Ubong akeka ukeke?</i> | 7b. You said Ubong went where? |
| (Variation in word order). \longrightarrow | 7c. Where did you say Ubong
went to? |

A syntactic analysis of these sentences reveal that (1) is a declarative sentence stating a fact. (2) is a direct Yes-No question, (3) is a direct Echo question, (4) is a Wh-question, (5) is an indirect Yes-No question, (6) is an indirect Wh-question, (7) is an indirect Wh-Echo question.

Yes-No (Polar) Question

Yes-No question is so named in that it allows “*yes*” or “*no*” in English, whereas in Annang, the reply for this question type would either be “*eh*” or “*ijoo*” or their equivalents in other languages as appropriate replies as in the examples below:

8a. *Uka alali akud ikoawasi ?* = **Will your mother come on Sunday?**

8b. *Eh! Or Ijoo!* = **Yes or No**

It is not mandatory for the respondent in 8b to offer “*eh or ijoo*” = “yes or no” to such questions. The respondent may as well say “*Akemide* = May be” “*Nnionghoke* = I don’t know” “*Nkereke* = I don’t think so” and so forth. But at least, the respondent has Yes or No as the shortest and most convenient option.

Yes-No questions can be in the form of echo question, direct yes-no questions or indirect Yes-No questions. Let us consider (9) below:

9a. *Udo amabop ufok itiad.* **Udo has built a zinc house.**

9b. *Afo amabop ufok itiad?* **↗ You have built a zinc house?**

9c. *Atim amakop sitie?* **↗ Had Atim heard the news?**

9d. *Anye amanwiip me ami [mekop sitie].* **She asked me if I heard the news.**

(9a) is a declarative statement while (9b) is a Yes-No echo question echoing the speech of the speaker in (9a) above. Here, the identifying element of the Yes-no echo question is the rising intonation pattern and not a Wh-word. (9c) is a direct Yes-No question, while (9d) is an indirect Yes-No question. The question element in (9d) is the bracketed portion of the sentence (i.e. the subordinate clause).

Wh-questions

Wh-questions involve the use of interrogative words. According to Radford (1981), these interrogative words normally begin with **WH** in English language and include words like *who, why, what, when, where, which, whose and how*. In such questions, the speaker is requesting information about the identity of some entity in the sentence. A wh-question asks for information about the identity of a particular person and an appropriate reply will therefore be a word or a phrase or sentence containing the requisite information. In the same way, a why-question asks for the supply of information for the specification of a reason, a where-question asks for the specification

of a place and so forth. Let us see consider the dialogue between *Uduak* and *Edidiong* in (10) below:

10a. Uduak: *Ingihe ake be ekpada ami mkpong?* **Who picked my bag yesterday?**

10b. Edidiong: *Aniema.* **Aniema.**

10c. Uduak: *Ntak afo kejaka anye abene?* **Why did you allow her to pick it?**

10d. Edidiong: *Ami nkibaha ku'fok idaha akebene.* **I was not at home when she picked it.**

10e. Uduak: *Afo keka uke?* Uduak: **Where did you go?**

10f. Edidiong: *Ufok Awasi.* Edidiong: **The church.**

Echo-questions

Echo-questions has to do with a situation where speaker A makes a statement while speaker B re-echoes the speech of speaker A. Therefore, according to (Haegeman, 1994), "echo-question is usually used in a reaction to a statement (sentence) by a speaker who wishes the interlocutor to repeat (part of) or the whole of what he said". Again, lets us look at the following dialogue:

11a. Etubom: *Ami mmaka Abuja mkpong.* **I went to Abuja yesterday.**

11b. Imo: *Afo ammaka Abuja mkpong?* **You went to Abuja yesterday?**

In the case above, Etubom has made a statement which is re-echoed by Imo using a yes-no echo question. He might instead have used a Wh-question marker as in examples (12) below:

12a. Etubom: *Ami mmaka Abuja mkpong.* **I went to Abuja yesterday.**

12b, Imo: *Akom ikika uke?* **You said you went where?**

In both examples (11) and (12), the speaker; (Imo) is echoing a statement made by the first speaker; (Etubom). But it also possible in Anaang, to use an echo question to echo a question asked by another speaker as in the examples below:

13a. Imo: *Afo ammaka Abuja?* **Did you go to Abuja?**

13b. Etubom: *Ami mmaka Abuja?* **Did I go to Abuja?**

In examples (13), yes-no non echo question by Imo (now speaker A) is echoed by Etubom (now speaker B) using a yes-no echo question. In the alternative, speaker A (Imo) in this case, might have used a Wh-echo question an in (14) below:

14a. Imo: *Afo 'keka Abuja?* **Did you go to Abuja?**

14b. Etubom: *Mme ma'ka Abuja?* **Did I go to Abuja?**

(Examples 12 – 14 are culled from Radford 1981: 147; while changes or emphasis are mine).

Non-Echo Question

Non-echo question in Anaang do not echo the speech of others, but are capable of being used to start off or initiate a conversation on some topics. So, if a friend, for instance, comes into my room, I can initiate a friendly conversation using a non-echo question as in (15a):

15a. *Afa akebaba mmo?* **Where have you been?** But not with an echo-echo question such as (13b) **You have been where?**, since echo questions, by their nature in Anaang, can only be used to re-echo a previous statement, utterance and or questions. What seems to really distinguish echo questions from non-echo questions in Anaang is the mostly post posed nature of the question elements (WH-words or intonation) in echo questions as against non-echo questions. Membership in non-echo class of questions is so open that all other types of questions that do not have their question elements of post posed position may be said to be non-echo questions. Thus, we have yes-no non-echo question with an instance as shown in (16b) and indirect non-echo question with example in (16c).

16a. *Ala 'ka Uyo mfin ?* **Are you going to Uyo today?**

16b. *Afo ammakut akaneden?* **You saw the old man?**

16c. *Anye ammawiib ake ami nketang iko kiet.* **He asked me who I had talked to.**

Direct and Indirect Questions

Concerning direct and indirect questions, both scholars; Haegeman (1994) and Radford (1981) agreed that direct questions are statements or questions in which the interrogative structure is an independent clause. In Anaang, for instance, indirect questions, by contrast, are questions in which the interrogative structure is a dependent clause (embedded as a subordinate) clause which is the complement of a verb such as “ask”, “wonder” etc in the English language and “*wiib*” (*ask*) and “*liongho*” (*know*) in the Anaang language. The researchers of this therefore, agree with Haegeman and Radford in this aspect. Again, let us consider the examples below:

17a. *Aketang iko ne inyieh?* **Who did you talk to?**

17b. *Anye'kembo nnyien aketang iko ne inyieh?* **He asked me [whom I had talked to]**

Sentence (17a) is a direct WH-question while (17b) is an indirect Wh-question.

Compare the bracketed indirect question (17b) with the bracketed portion of (18) in the example below:

18. *Anye 'kenwiib awo “ aketang iko ne inyiegwo?”* **He asked me [“who did you talk to?”]**

The statement in 18 above is a direct question quoted exactly as the speaker puts it. That is why it ended with a quotation mark (“”), whereas quotation marks are not allowed in direct questions.

Move ə and Questions

As mentioned earlier on, the transformation rules in natural languages have been reduced to just one; move ə. Move -ə has three components: Head-to-head movement, Wh-movement and NP-movement. In syntax of questions, the Head-to-head movement and Wh-movement are attested to by many languages including Anaang. In fact, the English language attests to Head-to-head movement and Wh-movement while Anaang language attests to Wh-movement while Head-to-head movement is blocked (as it is to be seen presently) because subject-auxiliary movement is blocked in Anaang language by reason of agglutination. To illustrate Head-to-head movement in questions, let us take a look at the example in (19) below as culled from Haegeman (1994:118) and modified by the researchers:

19a. *Usen alajak utom ade inim ke'madia nidia ugweme ima.*

Usen will abandon the work after lunch.

19b. *Usen alajak utom ade inim ke'madia nidia ugweme ima?*

Will Usen abandon the work after lunch?

19c. *Usen alijak utom inim adahake? When will Usen abandon the work?*

19a is a declarative sentence. 19b is a direct yes-no question where there is no inversion of subject and auxiliary. 19c is an indirect wh-question which calls for response by explanation in words of sentences with some level of syntactic analysis.

Syntactic Analysis of Anaang Questions

Essien (1990) in Andy (2005) distinguished two major types of interrogative sentences in Ibibio language, a sister language which is mutually intelligible to the Anaang language speakers, namely; Yes-No Questions and the WH-Questions. Enang (2009) also identified three pairs of question type in Annang language to include Yes-No and Wh-questions, Echo and Non-Echo Questions, Direct and Indirect Questions. A juxtaposition of these pairs has resulted in the recreation of the same (two) pairs identified earlier on by Essien (1990) as membership of the three pairs, however, is not mutually exclusive, there are some overlaps. Nevertheless, this work, following Essien (1990), holds on to a situation where we have nine types as follows: Direct Yes-No Questions, Indirect Yes-No Questions, Direct Echo Questions, Indirect Echo Question, Direct Non-Echo Questions, Indirect Non-Echo Questions, Direct Wh-Questions, Indirect Wh-Questions and Indirect Wh-Echo Questions.

Yes-No Question in Anaang

Yes-no Questions in Anaang require 'eh!' or 'ijoo' for an answer or response as in the following examples:

20a. *Uka ama'to ili* ? **Has your mother come back ?**

20b. *Eh!*, (*ama'to ili.*) Or *Ijoo*, (*ikitoho ili*).

Yes, she has come back. Or **No!, she hasn't come back.**

21a. *Afo amma'dia nkpo?* **Did you eat?**

21b. *Ijoo* (*Nkidiaha*) Or *Eh!* (*MMA'dia*)

No. (I didn't eat) Or **Yes! (I ate)**

In each case, 20b and 21b, there is a bracketed response after the 'Eh!' or 'Ijoo', which means the same thing as Yes or No respectively and vice versa in another type of interrogation as we shall see later.

However, Yes-No Question in declarative statements in Anaang may have the same form in terms of structure, but there is no ambiguity between them since there is always a rising intonation pattern attached to them when the speaker is asking a Yes-No Question in Anaang as in the examples below:

22a. *Ami nde ajen ufok ngwed.* **I am a student.** (a statement).

22b. *Ami nde ajen ufok ngwed?* **Am I a student?** (a question).

Anaang has resorted to phonology (intonation) in making the distinction between Yes-No question and declarative statements because of the transformational (syntactic) difficulty it has. In the English language, for instance, the auxiliary verb 'will' can be moved by the transformation of Aux-subject rule, to the initial position to start the Yes-No question. But in Anaang, however, the Aux-subject inversion rule does not apply. The auxiliary element is embedded in the tense marker and is strongly agglutinated to the verb root so that the transformation cannot move it to the initial position to start a Yes-No question. Let us look at the following instances:

23a. *Uko alali mfin.* **Uko will come today.** (Statement)

23b. *Uko alali mfin?* **Will Uko come today?** (Yes-No Question)

23c. *Ala Uko mfin ali?* **Will come today Uko?** (Ungrammatical)

Wh-Question in Anaang

Wh-question in Anaang are so because of the markedly absence of a better name. they require question words comparable to the ones in the English language. these markers are *inyieh?*, **Who**, *nsehe?* **What**, *ankehe?* **Which**, *mmoo?* **Where**, *liehe?* **How**, *akinyieh* or *aminyieh?*, **whose**. In such questions, the speaker is requesting for more information about the identity of some entity in the sentence. An ‘*inyieh*’ who-question for example, asks for information about the identity of a particular person. In the same way, ‘*uke or ankehe or mmoo*’ where question requires information about an identity of a place and appropriate answer would therefore be words or phrases or sentences containing the requisite information. Consider these examples:

24a. *Usen awi'dia sehe? Or Nsehe ku'Usen awi'dia?* **What will Usen eat?**

24b. *Usen ala adia edia.* **Usen will eat yam.**

24c. *Inyieh akeka urua mkpong?* **Who went to market yesterday?**

Echo and Non-Echo Questions in Anaang

Echo questions in Anaang has to do with a situation whereby the second person in a discourse repeats re-echoes part of what the first person said. Echo questions can be used to express surprise, doubt, happiness and so forth. In most cases where Echo questions are asked, the questioner demands their co-interlocutor to repeat the facts made for the sake of confirmation. This alone will remove or confirm the happiness of the questioner as in (25):

25a. *Uso alakood Kelvin.* **Your father will invite Kelvin.**

25b. *Uso ali ikood inyieh?* **Your father will invite who? Or Who will your invite?**

25c. *Ami mmakud akpoho ade.* **I have seen the money.**

25d. *Akom ikikuud seehe?* **↗You have seen what? ↗**

In 25a., a statement of fact is made while 25b. is an Echo question, a Wh-question asking a question that requires a response which has be to be expressed in a sentence form, 25c is an Echo Question expressing surprise at the fact stated thereby re-echoing the statement into a question in 25d which is wrapped in a surprise of what is stated in 25c. This repetition removes doubt and assures the questioner that he actually has seen that thing (which was lost).

Non-Echo questions in Anaang, on the other hand, do not echo the speech of others. They constitute ordinary wh-questions or direct questions which can be used to

initiate a conversation. This means that in a Non-Echo question, the questioner does not need a discourse a discourse situation or first participant to make a statement before he can ask his question.

Direct and Indirect Question in Anaang

Direct questions in Anaang are independent clauses asking questions while indirect questions are dependent clauses asking questions as in the examples below:

26a. *Afo aketang iko ne inyieh?* **Who did you talk to? Or To whom did you talk?**

26b. *Anye 'ke nwib [mme nketang iko n'inyieh].* **He asked me [to whom I'd talked].**

No 26a is a direct Wh-question whereas 26b has two clauses; the main “*anye 'kenwib*” ‘**He asked me**’ and the dependent clause [the bracketed portion] “*mme nketang iko ne inyieh?*” ‘**whom I had talked to**’, which is an example of an indirect question.

A syntactic analysis of sentence (26) shows that 26a is a direct wh-question, 26b has two clauses; the main clause *Anye 'kenwib* “**He asked me**” and the dependent clause [*mme nketang iko ne inyieh*] “**whom I had talked to**”, which is an indirect question.

Conclusion

The major objective of this work is to use the linguistic theory of the GB (Principles and Parameter theory) in conjunction with X-Bar theory in the analysis of the syntactic constituents of interrogative structures in Anaang Language.

The development of the theory of GB has been traced through the various scholarly view points. These include the Standard Theory (ST), the Extended Standard Theory (EST), the Revised Extended Standard Theory (REST) and the Government Binding Theory (GB). The GB consists of the sub-system of rules plus the modular sub-system of principles which interact with each other. Moreso, the transformation move \bar{a} has been seen as the only movement rule in GB which can move any element in a structure to anywhere in the structure. Independent principles, however, regulate such movement.

Also, various scholarly viewpoints on issues in interrogative structures have been discussed. Questions in natural languages have been described as sentences or statements asking for clarification of specific information about facts, places, reasons, time, person and or ownership.

Questions have been classified into three pairs namely; the Yes-no and Wh-questions, Echo and Non-echo questions and the Direct and Indirect questions. The

transformational pattern of these various types of questions has been described and it has been discovered that the Head-to-head movement rule or Aux NP inversion rule applies mostly to Wh-questions.

In Anaang language, questions have also been classified but in two pairs. However, there is a parametric variation in the application of Head-to-head movement rule. This means that the rule does not apply in Anaang Yes-No question, so that the S-structure of Yes-No questions is the same with their corresponding D-Structure and sometimes a rising intonation when a Yes/No question is asked.

Again, in Anaang Wh-questions, the words include *nseeh*: 'what?', *uke* or *mmoo*: 'where?', *inyieh*: 'who?', *akinyieh*: 'whose?', *ifang*: 'how many?', *lieh*: 'how?' and *ankeh* or *ankekeh* 'which?'

Finally, based on the hypothesis that there are syntactic structures in the Anaang language called questions, a clearer, insightful and more objective analysis of these structures can be achieved with the use of the GB theory. The researchers therefore, submit that since there is not much research work done on the Anaang language with the GB theory, scholars are encouraged, especially those of Anaang origin, to use the GB theory to analyse some other aspects of the Anaang language. This, we hope, will help in the teaching and learning the Anaang language.

References

- Andy, C. (2005) *Syntactic Analysis of Questions in Ibibio*. M.A. Dissertation of the University of Uyo, Uyo.
- Chomsky, N. (1957), *Syntactic Structures*, The Hague: Mouton and Co.
- Chomsky, N. (1986), *Knowledge of Language, Its Nature, Origin and Use*, New York: Praeger.
- Culicover, P. W. (1976), *Syntax*, New York: Academic Press
- Enang, E. (2009), *Aspects of the Syntax of Educated Nigerian English*. M.A. Dissertation, University of Uyo, Uyo.
- Enang, E. & Urujzian, V. (2013), *Anaang Learner of English and the Syntax Related Problems: A Contrastive Study*, In *The Intuition: 5* (1.)

- Essien, O. E. (1990), *A Grammar of the Ibibio Language*, Ibadan: University Press Limited
- Ferguson, C. (1971). *Language Structure and Language Use*. Stranford. Strandford University Press.
- aegeman, L. H. (1994), *Introduction to Government and Binding Theory*, Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers.
- Ndimele, O. M. (1991), Questions in GB Syntax: Ph.D. Thesis, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
- Radford, A. (1981), *Transformational Syntax: A Student's Guide to Chomsky's Extended Standard Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tomori, S. H. (1977), *The Morphology and Syntax of Present Day English: An Introduction*, London: Heineman.
- Udondata, J. (2006), *A Grammar of Anaañ Language*. Ikot Ekpene: Joe GraphicPublications.
- Welmers, W. E. (1973). *African Language Structures*. Los Angeles, University of California Press.