The analysis of content question words in Embosi and Teke

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Abstract

This paper demonstrates that the typological classification does not affect all the linguistic descriptive apparatus of languages belonging to the same language family. It appears that the content question word 'what' has two distinct positions in Embosi and Teke. In the former, it is a post verbal word, whereas in the latter it is a pre-verbal word; hence challenging Split CP Hypothesis that is unable to explain its occurrence in the languages under discussion.

Introduction

The present study aims to describe the syntactic distribution of the content questions driving data from Congolese languages. This analysis checks the scientific hypotheses that are put forward concerning the interrogatives words (Torrego 2001, Zavitnevic-Beaulac 2007, Wiese 2000, Blevins 2008, Miyagawa 2001, Rizzi 1997, 2001 among many others). In the minimalism framework, it can be read that the interpretation of grammatical units at PF is constrained by the principle of feature checking. Accordingly, this paper addresses and answers the following questions:

- What are the distributions of WH at LF in the two Congolese languages,
- Do WH positions at PF reflect their underlying position at LF?
- As elaborated by Torrego (2001), can we consider all WH words [+INTERROG],
- Can we side with Veenstra (1998) and Kayne (1994) that grammatical units should have universal properties, and finally
- What are the idiosyncratic and core features of WH in Congolese languages?

   In the light of the above questions, this paper is going to derive data from two particular Congolese languages (Teke[1] and Embosi) through questionnaires[2] and observations of native speakers of these languages. It is very important to highlight that this paper is restricted to the analysis of the interrogative word '**what**'. The first section will preview the linguistic analysis of interrogative words after which a scrutiny on Congolese languages will be provided. Finally, the description of content words will be the last issue this paper will build upon.

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1   I am particularly grateful to Dominique Niossobantou and Gilbert Moungouo for their availability to check information concerning Teke language, their mother tongue.

2   There was a questionnaire that was given to students (Langues Vivantes Etrangères, Linguistique et Langes Africaines departments, Université Marien Ngouabi), and some other literate Congolese to translate a set of interrogative sentences. This questionnaire is in French and is available at the end of this paper.
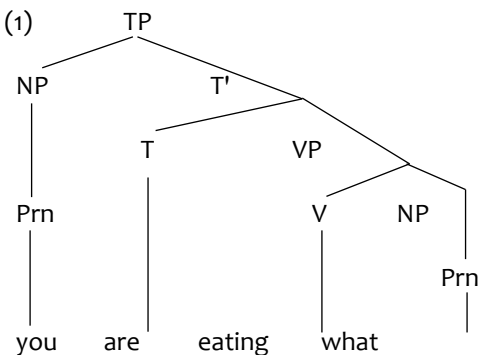

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Theoretical preview

This section sketches out the different accounts of the syntactic analysis of wh-words. This exercise will be carried out in keeping due attention to the chomskyan generative framework. In fact, we are going to make use of these generative grounds with another line of data based on Bantu languages so as to point out the efficiency and universality of linguistic truths. As Monika S. Schmid sounds it:

> One of the benefits of studies which to some degree replicate earlier investigations is the possibility of comparing findings across samples and thereby putting the validity of earlier results to the test.(2010, p.4)
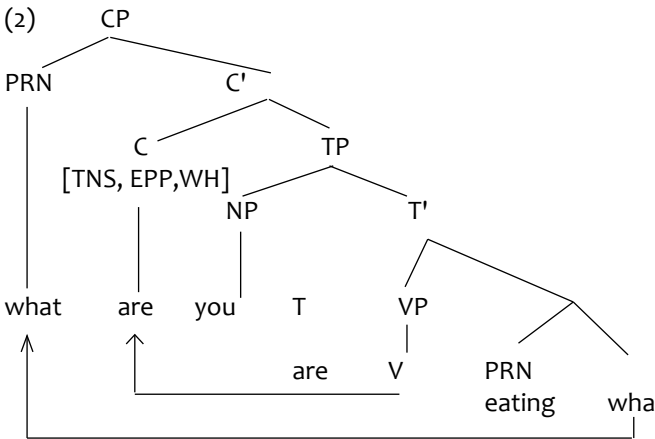
The analysis of wh-words could be approached in a number of ways that include stating the underlying position of these words together with claiming the inherent features of these words. In this respect, it is generally admitted that wh-words are initially post-verbal arguments (Moravcsik 2006, Chomsky 1998, 1999, 2001, Radford 2004, among many others). The post verbal position is the base position where interrogative words receive their grammatical function. Moravcsik claims (2006, p.218) *"In their underlying representation, question words occur in their post verbal complement position."* In fact, the post verbal position represents the LF position; as an LF position, lexemes occurring at this level should pass through a number of computational interfaces so that their inherent features be completely full and deleted. Considering the wh-words, from their base position, their intrinsic feature [+WH] cannot be matched at this position, it will seek for the probe so that this feature be checked. In addition to that feature, EPP and Attract Closest Principle will require the wh-words to be preposed at the Spec-CP position[3] where the [+WH] will be deleted. Consider how the sentence 'what are you eating?' is derived. The verb 'eat' merges with its complement what to form VP 'eating what' which in its turn merges with the tense T to form T-bar 'are eating what', the latter merges with the pronoun 'you' to form 'you are
eating what'. This derivation process results in the following tree.

(1)

```
         TP
       /    \
     NP       T'
     |      /    \
    Prn    T       VP
     |     |      /   \
     |     |     V      NP
     |     |     |       |
     |     |     |      Prn
     |     |     |       |
    you   are  eating  what
```

At this stage, the TP will merge with C which has an EPP and WH feature to form C'. Then due to the Minimal Link Condition which reads as *"K attracts α only if there is no β, β closer to K than α, such that K attracts β'*(Chomsky, 1995, p.311.) the K which is constrained

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3   We do not talk about Rizzi's Split CP at this stage coming to it later on. Rizzi's hypothesis challenges and refutes this Spec-position for all wh-words even though he agrees on their post-verbal position.

by the c-command principle will seek in its domain the word that carries its features and once it locates its 'carrier' it will trigger the latter to vacate that position and moves where K is located. Radford puts forward a principle he termed 'Convergence Principle' which stands for the principle that when "*A head which attracts a constituent containing a feature [F] attracts movement of the smallest accessible constituent containing [F] which lead to a convergent (i.e. well-formed) derivation.*"(2004, p.216). Thus, 'what' will move from its post verbal position to the Spec-CP position to match its features and then the following tree is made.

(2)

```
              CP
         ┌─────┴──────┐
        PRN           C'
              ┌────────┴────────┐
              C                 TP
         [TNS, EPP,WH]    ┌──────┴──────┐
                         NP             T'
                                   ┌────┴─────┐
      what    are    you    T      VP
                                   │     ┌────┴────┐
                          are     V    PRN
                                        eating    wha
```

As the above arguments demonstrate, the wh-words derive from the post verbal position. In the ensuing lines, we are going to concentrate on the intrinsic features of wh-words. In other words, we want to know if the wh-words can be typed 'interrogative'. The answer to this question raises a number of discrepancies among syntacticians. Some (Radford 2004, Pesetsky and Torrego 2001, among many others) assume that wh-words are interrogative while others refute that claim. The interrogativity of wh-words could be read from Newson et al:

> We might assume that all these phrases [wh-elements] share a common 'interrogative feature' which determines their interpretation as question elements. Typically this feature is represented as [+wh] (2006, p.250).

They keep on arguing that (2006, p.251) "*By this path then the [+wh] on the wh-element ends up on the whole CP and a CP with wh-specifier will be interpreted as interrogative.*" Yet, this interrogative is far from reaching universality to the extent that there is a line of evidence that strongly challenges the wh interrogative features (Huddleston 1993, Wiese 2000, Elliott 1974 among many others). It is then admitted that wh-words are multi-featured words. Putting things quite differently, it is hazardous to state only the interrogation for wh-words which are underspecified to some degree. Accordingly, their interpretation at PF is determined by their configurational distribution. Consider the following examples:

(3)   a- How did you travel to Tchikapika?
       b- How lovely your travel was!
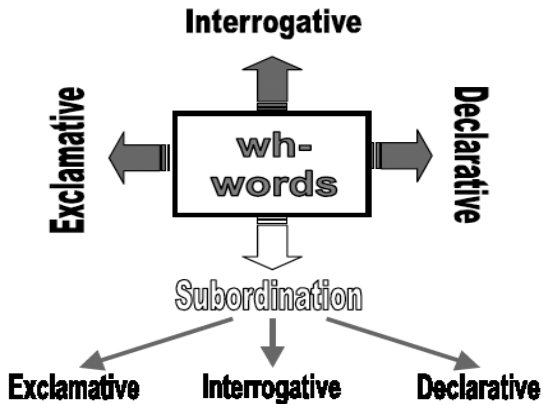   c- I know how you suffered for your journey fees.

When considering these examples, one could conclude that the different occurrences of these wh-words in (3) confirm the under specification and multi-feature characteristics of wh-elements. The above examples illustrate that in addition to interrogation, wh-words share other features that Wiese summarises in the following figure.

the presence of WH-phrases is not an idiosyncratic feature of interrogatives:
WH-words are not confined to interrogative clauses, but form a constitutive part of a wide range of sentence types. They occur systematically in exclamative and declarative contexts, and introduce sentential complements and attributes. Hence, the lexical entry for WH-words cannot restrict them to interrogative interpretations. Rather, in order to account for the whole range of WH-contexts, we have to assume a less specific representation for WH-words that can cover their contribution to exclamatives and declaratives also.(2000, p.2)
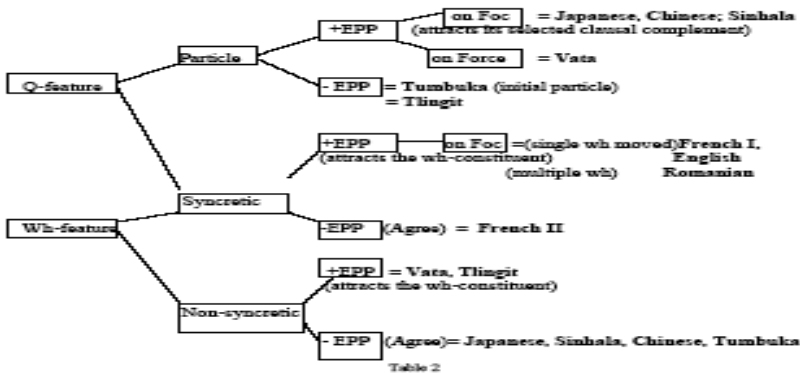
Wise exemplifies the different features of wh-words in chart that is reproduced below.

Figure 1[4]

As instance by the figure above, the wh-words show different features, hence the requirement to know truly its real features in keeping with the fact that features are binary [+F] or [-F]. In this regard, we could assume that the status of the wh-operator may be accounted similarly cross linguistically. That is due to the fact that all languages do not have the same lexeme morphology. Actually, wh-elements are morphologically and phonologically strong in some languages while others instance cases of weakly phonological and morphological words. In the former case, the wh-words have multi readings as interrogative, relative, or exclamative. In the latter case, the wh-words have different forms hence they have specific features. In order to avoid long discussion, we refer to Miyagawa's (2001) work which shows that wh-words have two features namely Q-feature and Wh-feature. In fact, these features are Language specific as Soare[5] illustrates from the following chart. (4)

Table 2

The different features are not specified before the spell out. An argument for support is found in Zavitnevich-Beaulac (2007, p.83) in the following terms:

> … the conclusion is that wh-proforms contained in a lexicon do not incorporate a question feature and hence have no inherit quantificational force of their own. The semantics of a wh-element is undetermined until it is selected for computation. If a derivation is intended to be a question, question operator bearing Q feature is selected from the lexicon at the same time. It is in the computational component that Q can be combined either with a wh-element (in wh-movement languages) or with a C head (wh-in-situ languages).

Zavitnevich-Beaulac's assumption perfectly holds for languages like French and English for example, but in other languages, this claim could be challenged and refuted as instanced in the following examples from Embosi, a Bantu language.

(5) a- bánà   bá-dzá   ndè?
     Children   they-eat-present   what
     'What do children eat?'

     b- í-yéβ-à   bèà   bì-dz-á   bánà
        I-know-present   food   that-eat-present   children

5   Gabriela, Soare, 2007, A cross-linguistic typology of question formation and the antisymmetry hypothesis in *Generative Grammar in Geneva* 5, p.113.

'I know the food that children eat'

c- bí   bèà   tì   ìbwέ!
This   food   indeed   good
'How good the food is!'

In Embosi, the interrogative and the relative words are phonologically and morphologically distinct. In this connection, the different forms of the wh-words are fundamental for the distinction of the two proforms. In short, our assumption challenges what Wiese (2000, p.5) writes,

The wh-words are not specified for interrogativity [...]. It is this underspecification that makes them flexible enough to contribute to interrogative, exclamative and declarative semantics alike.

In fact, this reasoning could not be held for languages like Embosi where interrogative operators are intrinsically [+Q] whereas relatives are [-Q].

Content word analysis

This section is going to provide a syntactic analysis of the interrogative word 'what' driving data from Embosi and Teke.

"Interrogative words are characteristic of all languages, That is, all languages have interrogative substitutes for nouns and a number of adverb-like words or phrases expressive of locative, temporal, enumerative, manner, purpose and other functions.' (Ultan, 1978, p.228-229)

Yet, languages increasingly differ concerning the syntactic distribution of the interrogative operator. Congolese languages and particularly Embosi and Teke do not make exception. It appears that the two languages do not show similarities. In fact, the interrogative operator occurs post verbally (Embosi) or pre-verbally (Teke). If the post verbal position does not raise debate as it confirms to a great number of literature about wh-words, their pre-verbal does. When considering movement under a cyclic ground, Liliane Haegeman assumes that the constituent may occupy an intermediate level she termed an 'escape hatch'[6]. This position could be compared a stopover or a break during a journey demonstrating that an element does not reach its target position yet. In addition, this lower step toward the topmost position presumes that a word derives from somewhere and it moves elsewhere. Assuming this to be right, one could imagine the wellformedness of (6c) as follows:

(6)   a- Tàrà   **émà**   kà-dzá ? (Teke)
        Father   **what**   he-eat
      'what does father eat?'

    *b- Tàrà kà-dzá   **émà** ? (Teke)
      Father   he-eat   **what**
    'what does father eat?'

However, the example (6b) is unattested in Teke language. This non realisation of the post verbal raises a number of theoretical questions. How comes that Teke language block the realisation of 'what' postverbally? Could it be possible to guess about there was a time in the past when Teke speakers realised the post verbal position of **émà** 'what'? Under

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6   L., Haegeman, 1991. *Introduction to Government and Binding Theory*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, p.367.

the Minimalism Program words appear in accordance with lexical properties or features. Mettina Veenstra (1998, p.11) writes: "*A constituent always travels from its position of lexical insertion low in the tree, to its Logical Form (LF) position higher up* ". This interpretative condition of word 'travelling' is not met in Teke. Consequently, we could imagine that the interrogative words do not receive their theta-roles because they do not appear in their functional position. As word order is generally assumed as a parameter of variation amongst languages, we could conclude that Teke is a language that distorts wh-word post verbal position. But Juliet Blevins[7] when describing Yurok language asserts that the post verbal position is not also attested but preference is shown for wh-word initial position. Consider:

(7) a- Kus   ho   tepoh ?
       Q   past   be-it
     'Where was he hit ?'

     b- Kus   'we-son?
        Q   3-to be VN
      'How did it happen?'

     c- Kus   noohl   ki   kemeye'm ?
        Q   then   FUT go-home Coll
      'When will he go home?'

Juliet Blevins (2008, ibid.) concludes that:
The phrasal-initial position of Kus could be interpreted as an instantiation of the sentence-initial adverb slot (1). However, as shown by the sentences […] sentential adverbs can occur phrase-finally in Yurok as well. If the distribution of kus was simply following that of other sentential adverbs, we would expect kus and kus-phrases sentence-finally, but these are unattested, and judged as ungrammatical.
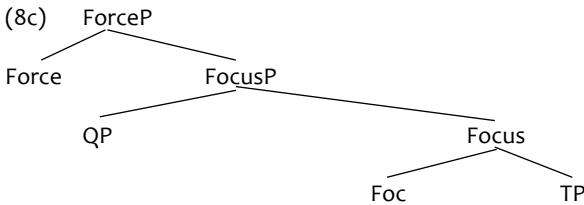
What is important at this level is the question concerning the derivational process of wh-word basing upon the minimalism rudiments. Recall that in the Minimalism Program, the P-marker is bottom up. In case of sentence, the core element is the verb. That is to say, the first merger operation will imply the verb with its complements to form the verb bare which in turn merges with its external argument to form the verb phrase. Then the VP will merge with a T to make T bar which in turn will trigger the movement of the element occurring at the Spec-VP position onto Spec-TP where it is assigned its nominative case. It is also useful claiming that merger obeys endocentric principle which states that the phrase is typed according to its main word. Then in keeping with the Minimalism Program, the complement of the head is right branching. Finally, the LF representation of word is a reflection of its feature based position. As Teke illustrates it, the complement of the verb could appear in the left position. This left position of the interrogative word raises a number of ambiguities with the natural external argument of the verb because it will cumbersome to know which of the external argument and the wh-expression is going to be assigned a nominative case by the verb. In addition, since T does not contain the interrogative feature [+Q] and because that feature is attributed to C, we are going to consider Rizzi's Split CP Hypothesis (1997, 2001b, 2003).

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7   Juliette, Blevins, 2008. Hes and Kus Questions in Yurok: A case for lexeme-specific word order. *Skase Journal of Theoretical Linguistics*, vol-5, n°1, p.9

Reasoning along Rizzi's lines, it appears that the complementiser 'C' has a number of features that could render a clause declarative, interrogative, exclamative and imperative. This suggests that all these categories of C elements do not move to the same landing site although they vacate from the same root position; post verbally. In this respect, Luigi Rizzi put forward different functional projections he terms Force Phrase, Focus Phrase, Topic Phrase and Finite Phrase. In the ensuing lines, we are going to elaborate on Rizzi's Split CP hypothesis basing data from English before shifting to account for Teke pre verbal position of the interrogative words. Consider:

(8)   a- The president is convinced that **no other unionists** would discuss
        b- The superintendent of Police said that **under no circumstances** should any
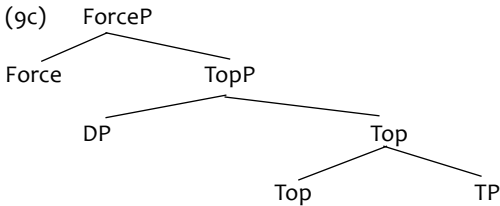   officers listened to the arrested robbers.

In the examples above, the QPs in bold derive from its post prepositional position as oblique complement and move onto the Spec-Focus position. This movement is made possible because the Focus head carries an [EPP] feature together with an uninterpretable focus feature triggering the object movement from the PP domain to Spec-FocP position. Moreover, the Foc also carries a [TNS] feature as [T] attracts the auxiliary 'would' from TP domain to Foc position. The arrows are used below to illustrate this displacement.

(8c)   ForceP

Force   FocusP

          QP   Focus

                         Foc   TP

that no other unionists   would   he would discuss with no other unionists

(9)   a- Isongo is a cute girl, but has sex with any boy.
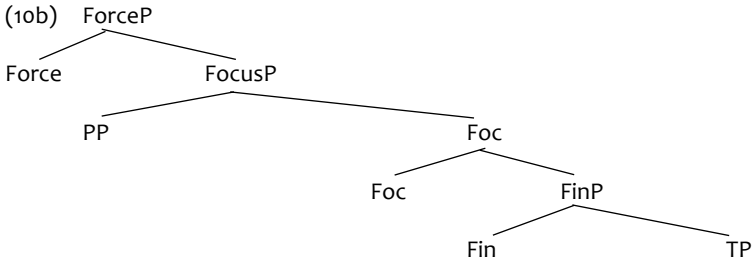   b- *That kind of girl*, my son cannot marry.

In the example (9b) the italicised clause refers back to the former statement made by the speaker in (9a), hence it is the complement of the verb 'marry'. In fact, the position where the italicised clause appears presumes that it has undergone a somehow movement from post verbal complement position onto a topic of sentence position. Like FocusP, its head bears an [EPP] feature and Top has not the affixal [TNS] feature.

(9c)   ForceP

Force   TopP

      DP   Top

                   Top   TP

ø   that kind of woman   my son cannot marry that kind of woman

10   a- *under no circumstances* for any student to run away

The Finite Phrase is about the typology of sentence in terms of finite and non finite clause. The head of finite phrase carries an [EPP] feature. In this regard, the occurrence of the preposition 'for' is worthy for clarifying the type of the clause being non finite since that clause has no overt subject.
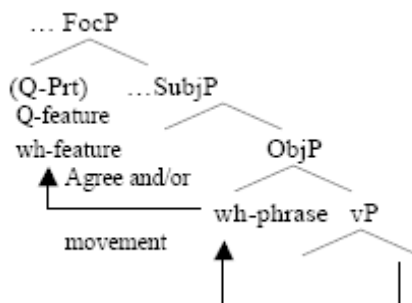
(10b)   ForceP

Force   FocusP

      PP   Foc

                   Foc   FinP

                          Fin   TP

ø under no circumstances ø   for   any student to run away under no circumstances

As things stand, Rizzi's Split CP Hypothesis shows different kinds of movement where the moved constituents reach a position on top of TP. Yet in case of Teke wh-operator, the landing site is lower than a TP, hence, the Rizzi's hypothesis cannot account for Teke wh-operator 'émà' because neither ForceP, nor TopP nor FinP could not explain the pre-verbal position of wh-expression in Teke. In this connection, we resort to Miyagawa (2001)'s work.

Miyagawa (2001) provides also another account of wh-movement. His work was based on Cheng's (1991) Clausal Typifying Hypothesis which reads as a language could instances either a wh-movement or a question particle movement. This assumption also denies the possibility for a language to realise both facts. In this respect, a broad classification of languages can be made in terms of either the separation of wh-operator and question particle or the syncretisation of both features. Then following Miyagawa's reasoning, the two features need not be separated and the wh- feature is not attributable to C but to T. That is to say, firstly, the landing site of the wh-operator is not CP but TP owing to the endocentric principle. Secondly, the T (in that kind of language) in addition to its natural features [EPP, TNS] also carries [+WH] feature because in the Minimalism framework, a word position is synonymous to a matching feature position. Putting thing quite differently, the features stand as criteria for word position. In this respect, the wh-operator movement

could be illustrated as follows basing on Soare[8].

(11)

Considering Miyagawa's assumption, it is conclusive to claim that such an argument cannot hold for Teke wh-operator. This impossibility is due to the fact that the landing site for wh-phrase is not TP but CP. In addition, the root position where that wh-phrase appears is not T but somewhere above VP.

Another attempt to account for the Teke wh-operator 'émà' could be done under the *Predicate Internal Argument Hypothesis* or *the VP Internal Subject Hypothesis*[9] which points out that all the arguments of a predicate must appear in the domain of that predicate. Given that assumption, the DP that plays the subject role appears as the specifier of the VP. Accordingly, the predicate has two distinct arguments termed internal arguments (post verbal complement) and external argument (pre verbal element, subject). As things stand, the insertion of the wh-phrase between the external argument and the verb challenges Kayne's (1994) assumption claiming for the non existence of a syntactic projection whose complement intervenes between the head and its specifier. Consequently, we could not follow *the VP Internal Subject Hypothesis*.

Considering the fact that Teke 'émà' does not concern Split CP Hypothesis nor the VP Internal Subject Hypothesis, it would be helpful to consider Split VP generally referred to as Verb Shell Analysis[10]. That hypothesis is made possible following Chomsky's (1999) claim

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8   Gabriela Soare, A cross-linguistic typology of question formation and the antisymmetry hypothesis in *Generative Grammar in Geneva* 5, p.108.
9   Yoshihisa Kitagawa, "Adjuncts and projection in syntax", PhD,(Cambridge: MIT Mass, 1986).
Margaret Speas, "Adjunction and projection", PhD dissertation, (Cambridge: MIT, Mass, 1986).
H.Contreras, "Small clauses in Spanish and English," In *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 5, 1986, pp.225-44.
K. Zagona, *Verb Phrase Syntax*, (Kluwer: Dordrecht, 1987).
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Hilda Koopman and Dominique Sportiche, "The position of subjects," in *Lingua* 85, 1991, pp. 211-58.
S. Burton and J. Grimshaw, "Coordination and VP-Internal subjects," in *Linguistic Inquiry* 23, 1992, pp. 305-15.
C. McNally, "VP-coordination and the VP-Internal subject hypothesis," in *Linguistic Inquiry* 23, 1992, pp. 336-41.
E. Guilfoye, H.Hung, and L.Travis, "Spec of IP and Spec of VP: two subjects in Austronesian languages," In *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 10, 1992, pp. 375-414.
James C.T Huang, "Reconstruction and the structure of VP: some consequences," in *Linguistic Inquiry* 24, 1993, pp. 103-38.
10   A. Radford, 2004. *Minimalism Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English*. Cambridge: CUP
T. Stroik, 2001, "On the light verb hypothesis" in *Linguistic Inquiry* 32:362-9.
N. Chomsky, 1995. *The Minimalism Program*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
J. Bowers, 1993, "The Syntax of predication" in *Linguistic Inquiry* 25: 591-656.
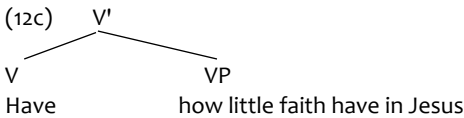J. Bowers, 2002, "Transitivity" in *Linguistic Inquiry* 33:183-224.
V. Carteens, 2001, "Multiple agreement and case deletion: against φ–(in)completeness" in *Syntax* 4: 147-63.
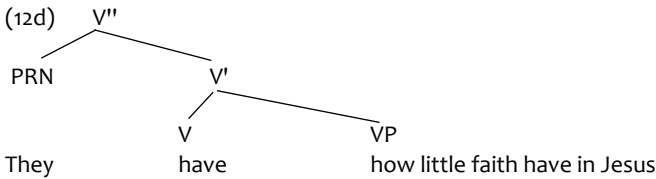
that a head could have multiple specifiers. Let us briefly show how this perfectly works in English before trying to adapt and adopt it to Teke language.

(12)   a-Christians have how little faith in Jesus.
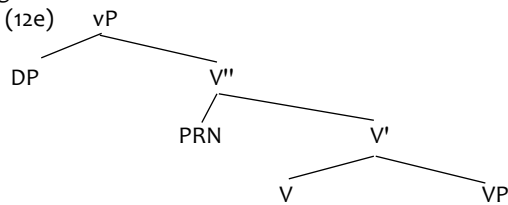   b- How little faith they have in Jesus.

Avoiding further details before the formation of the VP, we can slightly admit that the verb 'have' merges with its complement 'how little faith in Jesus' to form the V-bar as follows:

(12c)   V'

V   VP
Have   how little faith have in Jesus

Then the V-bar, in turn, merges with an external argument to form V-double bar as follows:
(12d)   V''

 PRN   V'

              V   VP
They   have   how little faith have in Jesus

Next, the V-double bar will merge with another DP to form the maximal projection of the light verb vP.
(12e)   vP

 DP   V''

              PRN   V'
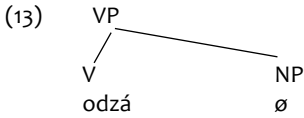
                      V   VP

As things stand, there are two specifiers in front of the head (verb) namely the two arguments of the predicate. Interestingly, the VP Shell Analysis allows two arguments of the verb to be adjacent at the same stage of derivation before the spellout at PF. Accordingly, this situation is quite similar to that of Teke where the wh-operator and the subject are pre verbal. It is worthwhile echoing that Teke and English will differentiate in a number of ways. The P-marker in (12e) represents an LF picture in English whereas it is a PF in Teke. In addition, the Spec-V to Spec-CP movement is obligatory in English whilst it is not in Teke. Finally, the position of the object in front of the verb instances a case of post verbal vacation in English whereas this is not admitted in Teke.

In the light of our discussion and adopting Verb Shell Analysis, let us demonstrate the derivation of the Teke interrogation. The verb 'odzà' merges with a null wh-operator to form VP. The term null operator is used because of the impossibility of the interrogative word 'émà' to occur post verbally; if this could happen, the resulting clause would be

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J.A. Legate, 2002, "Some interface properties of the phase" unpublished paper, MIT.
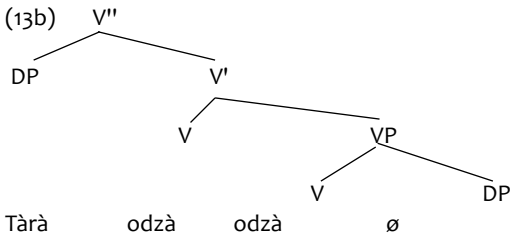
ungrammatical.

(13)
```
        VP
       /  \
      V    NP
    odzá    ø
```

Then, the VP merges with a light verb to form the V-bar. The head v will move to the Spec-V bar position as illustrated below:

(13a)
```
       V'
      /  \
     V    VP
         /  \
        V    DP
  odzá  odzá  ø
```

The V-bar merges with the external subject argument of the verb to form V-double bar as in :

(13b)
```
         V''
        /   \
       DP    V'
            /  \
           V    VP
               /  \
              V    DP
  Tàrà   odzà  odzà   ø
```

The V-double bar merges in its turn with an object DP carrying a [+WH] feature. This is made possible because of the light verb property. Radford (2004:404) admits that the light verb carries [+WH, EPP] features. We could then derive the following tree.

(13c)
```
        vP
       /  \
      QP   V''
          /   \
         DP    V'
              /  \
             V    VP
                 /  \
                V    DP
  èma   tàrà  odzà  odzà  ø
```

The vP, which, in its turn, merges with a tense T to derive T-bar and finally TP. The features of T will trigger the movement of downstep element bearing its feature to move topward onto the Spec-TP position.

(13d)

```
              TP
           /      \
         DP         T
                 /     \
               T         vP
                      /      \
                    QP        V''
                           /       \
                         DP          V'
                                  /     \
                                 V        VP
                                       /      \
                                      V         DP
```

Tàrà   ema   tara   odzà   odzà   ø

Naturally, (13d) represents the perfect PF form of the Teke interrogative structure with the content 'WHAT' word. The upward movement of the QP to the Spec-position of CP is not compulsory. Therefore, it could also be possible to antepose QP to Spec-CP as follows:

(13d)

```
              CP
           /      \
         QP         TP
                 /      \
               DP         T'
                       /      \
                      T         vP
                             /      \
                           QP        V''
                                  /      \
                                 V         V'
                                        /      \
                                       V         VP
                                             /     \
                                            V       DP
```

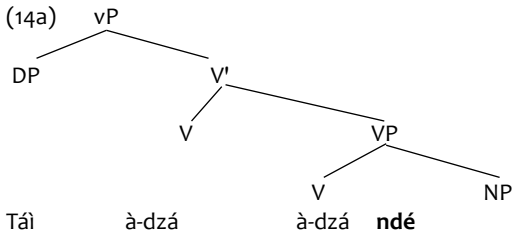ema   tàrà   ema   tara   odzà   odzà   ø

In the lines that follow we are going to analyse the question operator 'WHAT' in another Bantu language namely Embosi. Our objective is mainly to demonstrate whether that content word post verbal position is not attested in Embosi too.
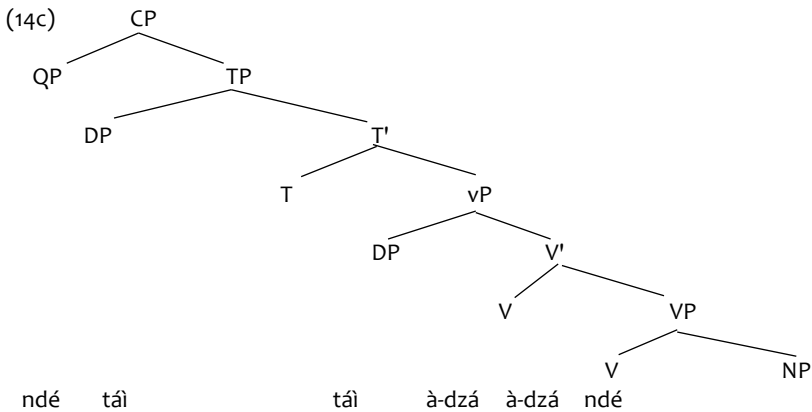
(14)   a- Tấì   à-dzá   **ndé**? (Embosi)
        Father   he-eat   **what**
          'What does dad eat?'

In Embosi, on the contrary, the wh-operator is naturally located at the post verbal complement position as in an English echo question. In addition, Embosi as Teke language does not disassociate Q from F feature related to interrogative words. In fact, in Embosi, the wh-phrase function as in English with the only exception that the wh-word require Do-support in English whilst it does not do so in Embosi. As the landing site of the wh-

expression is the Spec-CP, it sounds useless to make use of Rizzi's Split CP Hypothesis to account for Embosi wh-words. Accordingly, we could outline the derivation of the Embosi wh-expression under the following way. Firstly, the verb merges with its object to form VP. Basing upon the Verb Shell Analysis, the VP will merge with a light verb to form a V-bar which in turn merges with an external argument to form vP. So we derive the following representation:

(14a)

```
              vP
         /          \
       DP            V'
                  /      \
                 V         VP
                        /      \
                       V        NP

Táì    à-dzá      à-dzá  ndé
```

Then the vP merges with a tense T to form T-bar which triggers the movement of the DP under Spec-vP position to raise onto Spec- TP so that features be checked and erase afterwards. This process follows as TP merges with an uninterpretable C to form CP as follows:

(14c)

```
              CP
          /        \
        QP          TP
              /           \
            DP             T'
                       /        \
                      T          vP
                              /       \
                            DP         V'
                                    /      \
                                   V        VP
                                         /      \
                                        V        NP

  ndé   táì         táì    à-dzá  à-dzá  ndé
```

Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that although Teke and Embosi are two Bantu languages, they increasingly differ from some linguistic concern. In this respect, the analysis of the interrogative word 'what' highlights that in Teke, it is impossible to place 'What' in its supposed post verbal complement position, what structure is perfectly realised in Embosi. Accordingly, it will be claimed that some Bantu languages show preference in placing their interrogative words in the pre-verbal position (Teke, for example) whilst other prefer the post verbal position (Embosi, for example). Hence, there could not be an agreement for the canonical LF and PF position for wh-phrase. Therefore, the common features Bantu languages share is the syncretisation of interrogative features and the non syncretisation of all so called Wh-words as interrogatives. In addition, neither Split CP Hypothesis nor Verb Subject Internal Hypothesis could account for interrogative words in the two Bantu languages under discussion.

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Questionnaire

Nom/name…………………………………………… Langue maternelle (mother tongue)

(1)   Papa vit où ?

(1a) Où vit papa ?

(2)   Papa est qui ?

(2a) Qui est papa ?

(3)   Papa mange quoi ?

(3a) Que mange papa ?

(3b) Ton nom c'est qui ?

(3c) Quel est ton nom ?

(4)   Papa arrive quand ?

(4a) Quand arrive papa ?

(5)   Papa est parti comment ?

(5a) Comment est parti papa ?

(6)   Maman a tué papa pourquoi ?

(6a) Pourquoi maman a tué papa ?