

An Analysis of Interrogative Constructions in Dangme

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse the various means of marking interrogatives in Dangme that is polar, alternative, affirmative and negative content question. Dangme belongs to the Kwa group of languages from the Niger-Congo family of languages. It is spoken in parts of the Greater Accra and Eastern Regions of Ghana. Not enough work has been done on interrogative structures which are considered to be a vital feature of African languages in Dangme. This paper examines the various kinds of interrogative structures in Dangme. I identified that phonological and morpho-syntactic strategies are employed in the formation of interrogative sentences in Dangme. I argue that syntactic particles such as 'ane, lo', 'ke.....ke', 'te..... ne', 'menɔ', 'meni', 'jije' among others, occur at clause initial and clause final positions. I argue further that when the interrogative word or phrase is placed at clause initially, there may be an introduction of a focus marker, *ne* or *le* which appears immediately after the question word or phrase. The paper considers content questions also referred to as negative WH-Constructions in the literature. This paper also examines negative interrogative sentences. The negative content question constructions involve the use of markers; 'pi..... lo', 'tse', etc. to convey negation in certain constructions. I argue that the grammatical feature in negative question constructions makes me suggest that it could be considered as interrogative content questions. The government and binding Theory is employed to analyse data on content questions. The data used for this paper were drawn from primary sources i.e. from native speakers of Dangme. As native speaker of the language, I also provided some of the data for this study. These were however, cross-checked with other native speakers of Dangme.

Keywords: interrogative, polar, alternative, content questions and focus

Introduction

This paper discusses the formation of interrogative structures in Dangme, a Niger-Congo language spoken in parts of the Greater Accra and Eastern Regions of Ghana. Dangme has seven dialects namely, Ada, Nugo/Ningo, Gbugblaa, Se, Osudoku, Many and Yilo Krobo dialects. Patches of speakers are also found in Volta Region and Togo land. These include the people of Agotime Kpotoe We Nguam, Notsie and Gatsi.

Interrogative sentences are used to elicit information that may or may not be known to the questioner to either seek for information or for clarification of what has already been uttered König and Siemund (2007:291) assert that interrogative sentences are conventionally associated with the speech act of requesting information. According to Dixon (2012), an utterance may be interrogative in structure but may function pragmatically as a command with or without non-verbal cues such as smile.

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He indicates that, such constructions are not true questions because they do not elicit any answers rather; they direct the addressee to perform actions. Questions may be classified using a number of criteria. According to Collins (2006:184), the most widely known criteria is that based on different types of possible answers; between what are commonly called *Yes* or *No* questions, alternative question and WH-questions. The types of interrogative structures described in this paper include; polar interrogatives also known as *Yes* or *No* questions, alternative interrogatives and content based questions.

In Dangme, WH-questions also known as content questions (Payne, 1997:229; Shopen, 1986:179) are formed by the movement of the question words or phrases from their original positions to the specifier or clause initial position in order to check the WH-feature in the complement (Carnie, 2006:286). Different languages use various strategies in question formation (Dzameshie, 2001; Saah, 1998 and Baker, 1989). According to Dzameshie (2001), Ewe may use the question word *ka* 'what/which' after an NP to question an NP. In Dagbani, interrogative particles *bee* and *ɣɔɔ* are employed to express interrogatives (Issah, 2015:45). In English for instance, the question word is moved from the clause final position to clause initial position. For example:

1a. *What* did the teacher teach them?

1b. The teacher taught them *what*?

2a. Bee o chaŋ-Ø shikuru? (Dagbani)
 INT 3SG.Nom go-PERF School
 'Has he/she gone to school?'

2b. O chaŋ-Ø shikuru bee?
 3SG.NOM go-PERF School INT.

‘Has he/she gone to school?’ (Issah, 2015: 48).

In languages such as Chinese and Malay, the question word is in-situ (Sabel, 1998) as illustrated with the Chinese example in (3) below.

3. Ta shou shenme?
He say what
‘What did he say?’

On the other hand, languages like German allows a partial WH-question word or phrase movement in addition to the complete movement of the WH-question words. Sabel (2000:410) observes that partial WH-question word or phrase is moved to an embedded specifier position of the WH clause. Consider the German example in (4a) and the Akan examples in (4b-c) below:

- 4a. [CP₁ was meinst du [CP₂ weni [IP Peter Hans ti vorgest ellt dat]]]
WH think you.NOM who.ACC Peter NOM Hans.DAT introduced hat has]]]
‘Who do you think Peter introduced to Hans?’ Sabel (2000:410)
- 4b. Hwan na oɓaa ha? (Akan)
who FM 3SG.come here
‘Who come here?’
- 4c. Den na wofaai? (Akan)
what FM 2SG.take?
‘What did you take?’

In Dangme, some question words or phrases may be pre-posed, left in-situ or there may be partial movement. The data used for this study were drawn from native speakers of Dangme. The data used do not however, represent the seven dialects of Dangme which are Ada, Nugo/Ningo, Gbugblaa/Prampram, Shai/Se, Osudoku, Yilo and Manya Krobo, but from the Ada dialect which represent the dialect of the author. There are however, not identifiable differences in interrogative constructions in these dialects of Dangme.

The analysis of interrogative constructions is an area which has not received enough attention in Dangme. This paper seeks to give a descriptive analysis of interrogative constructions in Dangme. The aim of this paper is to analyse polar, alternative and content based questions (affirmative and negative) in Dangme. The paper considers the role of phonological features like intonation in questions formation. In addition, the paper considers the occurrence of focus makers in content questions formation in Dangme.

Beyond the introduction, the paper is structured as follows; section one discusses polar questions; concentration is on strategies that are used in their formation, their structure and semantic interpretation. Section two discusses alternative questions. The third section examines the structure and the nature of content questions. It took into consideration the functions of focus markers in content questions. It further discusses pied-piping and preposition stranding in content questions in Dangme. The fourth section summarizes and comes out with the findings of the study.

1. The Formation of Polar Questions in Dangme

A polar question is a question which its expected answer is either *Yes* or *No*. In English for instance, polar questions are formed in both negative and positive forms. For examples:

- 5a. Have I given you your book?
5b. Haven't I given you your book?

In Somali, however, a *Yes* or *No* question is achieved by marking the construction with the interrogative particle *ma* (Antinucci, 1980:4). Consider the Somali example below:

6. Ma Axmed baa yimid
Q Axmed P come.PAST
‘Did Axmed come?’

According to König and Siemund (2007:291), ‘polar interrogatives are typically used to enquire about the true or falsity of a proposition they express’. They also point out however that, it is possible for answers to polar interrogatives to assume any answer which is within the scale of ‘true’ and ‘false’ as in words such as ‘perhaps’, ‘possibly’ and ‘quite likely’.

König and Siemund (2007) identified six strategies used in the formation of polar questions in various languages. These strategies are:

- The use of interrogative particles
- The use of special intonation patterns
- A change in relative word order
- The addition of special tags
- The use of disjunctive – negative structures
- The use of particular verbal inflection.

In this paper, I demonstrate that Dangme uses two main strategies in the formation of polar questions:

i.e, the use of interrogative markers such as words and phrases, and falling intonation. I identify the use of particle in the formation of polar questions as the syntactic strategy and the use of falling intonation as the phonological strategy.

Polar questions are formed in Dangme by marking the sentence with interrogative particles. These particles can be single words or phrases. The particles include *ane*, *ane...lo* and the use of demonstrative pronouns such as *lo ɔ*, *jame a*, *ene ɔ*, *leje ɔ*, *hie ɔ* with the *lo* particle at clause final position. Secondly, the use of pronouns at sentence initial position that reoccur with the *lo* particle at clause final position and also nominalised adjectives such as *legelegetse ɔ*, *tsutsutse ɔ*, *agbotse*, *agbo ɔ*, *ehe ɔ*, *emomo ɔ* can also be used.

I argue that *ane*, *de*, *pe*, *tse*, *ene*, *kikeme a*, *jame a*, *ja*, *pi*, *pi ja*, occur at clause initial positions and *lo*, *lee*, *fi nya*, *maji* occur at sentence final positions only. I suggest that *lo* may be optional when it occurs immediately after an adverb of time at clause final position. I illustrate in example (7a-d) that *ane lo* is among the particles used in the formation of polar questions in Dangme. Consider the examples (7a-9f) below: In the examples, I illustrate the use of the question particles *ane lo* and *ane lo*.

- 7a. Maa ho jua mi ɔ ya ?
 mother go.PERF market inside PRT to
 ‘Has mother gone to the market?’
- 7b. Ane maa ho jua mi ɔ ya?
 INT mother go.PERF market inside PRT to
 ‘Has mother gone to the market?’
- 7c. Maa ho jua mi ya lo?
 Mother go.PERF market inside to INT.
 ‘Has mother gone to the market?’
- 7d. Ane maa ho jua mi ya lo?
 INT mother go.PERF market inside to INT
 ‘Has mother gone to the market?’
- 7e. *Lo maa ho jua mi ya?
 INT mother go.PERF market inside go
- 7f. *Maa ho jua mi ya ane?
 mother go.PERF market inside go INT.
- 8a. Nyumu ɔ ba ke me sika
 man DEF come.AOR give.AOR 3PL.OBJ money
 ‘The man has come to give them money’.
- 8b. Ane nyumu ɔ ba ke me sika a?
 INT man DEF come.PERF give 3PL.OBJ money DEF
 ‘Has the man come to give them the money?’
- 8c. Nyumu ɔ ba ke me sika a lo?
 man DEF come.PERF give 3PL.OBJ money DEF INT
 ‘Has the man come to give them the money?’
- 8d. Ane nyumu ɔ ba ke me sika a lo?
 INT man DEF come.PERF give 3PL.OBJ. money DEF INT
 ‘Has the man come to give them the money?’
- 8e. *Nyumu ɔ ba ke me sika ane?
 man DEF come.PERF give 3PL.OBJ money INT
 ‘Has the man come to give them money?’
- 8f. *Lo nyumu ɔ ba ke me sika lo?
 INT man DEF come.PERF give 3PL.OBJ money INT
- 9a. Tsatsu gbe e sukuu nya.
 Tsatsu finish.PERF 3SG.POSS school end.
 ‘Tsatsu has completed his school’.
- 9b. Ane Tsatsu gbe e sukuu ɔ nya jeha ne ɔ?
 INT Tsatsu finish.PERF 3SG.POSS school DEF end year this
 ‘Has Tsatsu completed his schooling this year?’
- 9c. Tsatsu gbe e sukuu ɔ nya jeha ne lo?
 Tsatsu finish.PERF 3SG.POSS school DEF end year this INT
 ‘Has Tsatsu completed his schooling this year?’
- 9d. Ane Tsatsu gbe e sukuu ɔ nya jeha ne ɔ lo?
 INT Tsatsu finish.PERF 3SG.POSS school DEF end year this INT
 ‘Has Tsatsu completed his schooling this year?’
- 9e. *Lo Tsatsu gbe e sukuu ɔ nya jeha ne ɔ?

INT Tsatsu finish 3SG.POSS school DEF end year this
 9f. *Tsatsu gbe e sukuu ɔ nya jeha nɛ ɔ anɛ?
 Tsatsu finish 3SG.POSS school DEF end year this INT.

We observe from construction (7a-9f) that polar questions can be formed in Dangme using the interrogative markers *anɛ*, *lo* or a combination of the two particles, *anɛ* *lo*. The (b), (c) and (d) examples in each set in (7-9) are polar questions meant to establish the truth value or falsity of the statements in (7a), (8a) and (9a). As we can see from the examples above, the *anɛ* question word can only occur clause initially as in the (7b), (7d), (8b), (8d), (9b) and (9d). The *lo* question word or particle only occurs clause finally as illustrated in examples (7c), (7d), (8c), (8d), (9c) and (9d). It is to be noted that the *anɛ* and the *lo* question markers can both occur in a clause to show intensity as exemplified in (7d), (8d) and (9d). It is realized that in clauses where the question particle *anɛ* alone occurs in a construction, the clauses final word, selects a particle as in (7b), (8b) and (9b). Despite the fact that *anɛ* and *lo* can occur in a single clause, the position of *anɛ* as a clause initial question marker and *lo* as a clause final question marker could not be inter-changed. A shift in their positions creates ungrammatical sentences as in (7e), (7f), (8e), (8f), (9e) and (9f). We see the subjects of examples (7a-9f) being personal names. I discuss interrogative constructions with pronouns as noun heads in (10a-12e) below:

- 10a. Nyɛɛ ya pa mi.
 2PL go river inside
 ‘Go and fetch water from the river!’
- 10b. Anɛ nyɛ ya pa mi ɔ?
 INT 2PL go river inside DEF
 ‘Have you gone to fetch water from the river?’
- 10c. Nyɛ ya pa mi lo?
 2PL go river inside INT
 ‘Have you gone to fetch water from the river?’
- 10d. Anɛ nyɛ ya pa mi lo?
 INT 2PL go river inside INT
 ‘Have you gone to fetch water from the river?’
- 10e. *Lo nyɛ ya pa mi anɛ?
 INT 2PL go river inside INT
- 11a. A ba we mi.
 3PL come.AOR home inside
 ‘They came home’
- 11b. Anɛ a ba we mi?
 INT 3PL come.AOR home inside
 ‘Have they come home?’
- 11c. A ba we mi lo?
 3PL come home inside INT
 ‘Have they come home?’
- 11d. Anɛ a ba we mi lo?
 INT 3PL come.AOR home inside INT
 ‘Have they come home?’
- 11e. *Lo a ba we mi anɛ?
 INT 3PL come home inside INT
- 12a. E gbe lɛ.
 3SG beat/kill 3SG.OBJ
 ‘He/she/it beat/killed him/her/it.’
- 12b. Anɛ e gbe lɛ ?
 INT 3SG beat/kill him/her/it
 ‘Has he/she/it beat/kill him/her/it?’
- 12c. E gbe lɛ lo?
 3SG beat/kill 3SG.OBJ INT
 ‘Has he/she/it kill him/her/it?’
- 12d. Anɛ e gbe lɛ lo?
 INT 3SG beat/kill 3SG.OBJ INT
 ‘Has he/she/it beat/kill him/her/it?’
- 12e. *Lo e gbe lɛ anɛ?
 INT 3SG beat/kill him/her/it INT

It is realized in examples (10a-12e) that there is no syntactic change in the constructions as compared with those in (7a-9f) where the interrogative constructions have personal names as subjects. We notice that the

distribution of *lo* and *ane* question particle in (10e), (11e) and (12e) has rendered those constructions ungrammatical.

I discuss interrogative constructions with demonstrative pronouns as subjects of the clauses in (13a-16d).

- 13a. Ha mi bo.
 give me cloth
 'Give me a cloth.'
- 13b. Enε ɔ lo?
 DEM.NOM INT
 'Is it this one?'
- 13c. Anε enε ɔ lo?
 INT DEM.NOM INT
 'Is it this one?'
- 14a. To ɔ fɔ bi.
 goat/sheep DEF bear child
 'The goat/sheep has delivered.'
- 14b. Lɔ ɔ lo?
 DEM.NOM INT
 'Is it that one?'
- 14c. Anε lo ɔ lo?
 INT DEM.NOM INT
 'Is it that one?'
- 15a. Tεε ke e ma hiε ɔ.
 Tεε say 3SG come here PRT
 'Tεε says he is coming here.'
- 15b. Tεε ke e ma hiε ɔ lo?
 Tεε say 3SG come here PRT INT
 'Did Tεε say he will come here?'
- 15c. Anε Tεε ke e ma hiε ɔ?
 INT Tεε say 3SG come here PRT
 'Has Tεε said he will come here?'
- 15d. Anε Tεε ke e maa ba hiε ɔ lo?
 INT Tεε say 3SG FUT come here PRT INT
 'Has Tεε really said he would be coming here?'
- 16a. Kojo ho leje ɔ ya.
 Kojo go.PERF DEM to
 'Kojo has gone there.'
- 16b. Kojo ho leje ɔ ya lo?
 Kojo go.HAB DEM to INT
 'Has Kojo gone there?'
- 16c. Anε Kojo ho leje ɔ ya ?
 INT Kojo go DEM to
 'Has Kojo gone there?'
- 16d. Anε Kojo ho leje ɔ ya lo?
 INT Kojo go.PERF DEM to INT
 'Has Kojo gone there?'
- 17a. Jame a bi ɔ maa ba.
 DEM child DEF FUT come
 'That child will come.'
- 17b. Anε jame a bi ɔ maa ba ?
 INT DEM child DEF FUT come
 'Will that child come?'
- 17c. Jame a bi ɔ maa ba lo?
 DEM child DEF FUT come INT
 'Will that child come?'
- 17d. *loL jame a bi ɔ maa ba anε?
 INT DEM child DEF FUT come INT

Demonstrative pronouns take the place of noun phrases. Demonstrative pronouns represent thing or things that are near or far in distance or time. The demonstrative pronouns in Dangme include *lo ɔ*, *ene ɔ*, *hiε ɔ*, and *leje ɔ*. These expressions are used to indicate which entities are being referred to and also to distinguish

those entities from others.

We see from examples (13b-13d) that, *ene* ɔ, ‘this one’ and *lo* ɔ ‘that one’ have been used in place of the nouns *bo* ‘cloth’ in (13a) and *to* ‘goat/sheep’ in (14a). Similarly, *hie* ɔ ‘here’ and *leje* ɔ ‘there’ were also, used in examples (15a-16d) in places of place names that are far and near respectively. The demonstrative adjective *jame* *a* ‘that’ in (17a-17d) precedes the noun phrase, *bi* ɔ, ‘the child/offspring.’

We observe from examples (13a-17d) that the presence of the demonstrative pronouns and the demonstrative adjective have however, not changed the distribution of the question/interrogative markers *ane* and *lo* in the constructions. I examine interrogative constructions with nominalised adjectives as subject NPs in (18a- 19d) below:

- 18a. Legelegetse ɔ je hie.
 lanky one DEF leave.PERF yesterday
 ‘The lanky one left yesterday.’
- 18b. Legelegetse ɔ je hie lo?
 lanky one DEF leave.PERF yesterday INT
 ‘Has the lanky one left yesterday?’
- 18c. Ane Legelegetse ɔ je?
 INT lanky one DEF leave.PERF
 ‘Has the lanky one left yesterday?’
- 19a. Yumutse ɔ he nge feu.
 black one DEF part is beautiful
 ‘The black one is beautiful?’
- 19b. Yumutse ɔ he nge feu lo?
 black one DEF part is beautiful INT
 ‘Is the black one beautiful?’
- 19c. Ane yumutse ɔ he nge feu?
 INT black one DEF part is beautiful
 ‘Is the black one beautiful?’
- 19d. Ane yumutse ɔ he nge feu lo?
 INT black one DEF part is beautiful INT
 ‘Is the black one beautiful.’

We can see that, the use of nominalised adjectives in subject position of the interrogative clauses in (18a and 19d) do not change the distribution of the question markers *ane* and *lo* in those sentences. *Ane* can occur at only clause initial position and *lo* maintains the clause final positions as illustrated in examples (7a-19d). In addition to the positive polar questions, I demonstrate that Dangme has a way of expressing negative polar questions that can be expressed with *pi* in Dangme. Consider examples (20a-21d).

- 20a. A ke waa wo sidi akpe kake.
 3PL say 1PL pay cedi thousand one
 ‘They said we should pay an amount of one thousand cedis.’
- 20b. Pi ja’ i lo?
 NEG that one PRT INT
 ‘Is that not it?’
- 20c. Ane pi ja’ i lo?
 INT NEG that PRT INT
 ‘Is that not it?’
- 20d. Ane pi ja a?
 INT NEG that PRT
 ‘Is that not it?’
- 21a. Womi tsutsu ko le i na
 book red INDEF FM ISG see.AOR
 ‘It is a certain red book that I saw!’
- 21b. Pi lo ɔ lo?
 NEG that one INT
 ‘Is that not it?’
- 21c. Ane pi lo ɔ lo?
 INT NEG that one INT
 ‘Is that not that one?’
- 21d. Ane pi lo ɔ?
 INT NEG that one
 ‘Is that not that one?’

We see in (20a) and (21a) that the negative sentences in the (b) and (c) sentences are based on prerequisite ideas from the declarative sentences in (20a) and (21a). The speaker of sentence (21a) who was thinking aloud; comes out with the sentence in (20b) ‘*pi ja’i lo?*’ The constructions in (20c-d) and (21c-d) follow the distribution of the question particles discussed in examples (7d) and (7e). In (21b) the use of the demonstrative pronoun *lo ɔ* refers to a noun phrase in the preceding sentence. In (21a), *womi tsutsu* ‘the red book’ is represented by *lo ɔ* in (21b-21d).

In Dangme as in many other languages, declarative sentences can be changed into polar questions through the process of raising the final pitch (see Rialland 2009, Cahill, 2012). That is, it is possible to use intonation to differentiate between a declarative and an interrogative sentence. According to Issah (2015: 51) the use of intonation in signaling polar questions has been demonstrated to be common to most natural languages. He stated however, that, the nature of the intonation varies among languages, and that many languages employ rising intonation at the end of a declarative sentence to turn it into a polar question. There are a number of languages that rely on intonation to signal interrogativization. The Chrau of Vietnam, Hausa and Thai all use rising and falling pitch in the formation of polar interrogative (Dryer 2005b; Thomas 1966; Miller and Tench 1982; Luksaneeyanawin, 1998). Falling intonation seems to be a phonological feature of most African languages in the formation of polar and content questions also known in the literature as WH-question types. Clement and Rialland (2008) and Rialland (2007, 2009) researches on African languages revealed that almost half of a total of seventy African languages indicate polar questions with the use of falling intonation.

In Dangme, polar questions are formed phonologically by lowering the pitch as in other African languages. In addition to the falling intonation, the clause final word which should have taken a relative particle, is usually spelt with one vowel but pronounced as a long vowel as in Akan, Dagbani and other Ghanaian languages (see Dolphyne, 1988:61). The perceived lengthening according to Issah (2015:52), may be a by-product of the fall in intonation as exemplified in the (b) sentences of (22a -29b) in Dangme.

- 22a. Dooyo yeɔ madaa.
 Dooyo eat.HAB plantain
 ‘Dooyo eats plantain.’
- 22b. Dooyo yeɔ madaa?
 Dooyo eat.HAB plantain
 ‘Does Dooyo eat plantain?’
- 23a. Tsaako hii nyeee ja daa.
 Tsaako AOR walk.PROG that ADV
 ‘Tsaako was walking in that manner?’
- 23b. Tsaako hii nyeee ja daa?
 Tsaako AOR walk.PROG like everyday
 ‘Did Tsaako walk in that manner?’
- 24a. Dede maa kase blodo sami.
 Dede FUT learn bread bake.GER
 ‘Dede will learn how to bake bread!’
- 24b. Dede maa kase blodo sami?
 Dede FUT learn bread bake.GER
 ‘Will Dede learn how to bake bread?’
- 25a. Jangma hia agbeli ɔ.
 Jangma uproot.PERF cassava DEF
 ‘Jangma has uprooted cassava.’
- 25b. Jangma hia agbeli ɔ?
 Jangma uproot cassava DEF
 ‘Has Jangma uprooted cassava?’
- 26a. Yayo tsi we omɔ tuo.
 mother prepare. AOR NEG rice balls
 ‘Mother did not prepare rice balls.’
- 26b. Yayo tsi we omɔ tuo?
 mother prepare.AOR NEG rice balls
 ‘Did mother prepare rice balls?’
- 27a. Tsɔɔlɔ ɔ ba sukuu motu ngmle kpaago.
 teacher DEF come.AOR school morning time seven
 ‘The teacher come to school at seven am.’
- 27b. Tsɔɔlɔ ɔ ba sukuu motu ngmle kpaago ɔ?
 teacher DEF come. AOR school morning time seven DEF
 ‘The teacher came to school at seven am?’

- 28a. Tsaatse gbe na.
 father kill.AOR cow
 ‘Father killed a cow.’
- 28b. Tsaatse gbe na?
 father kill.AOR cow
 ‘Father killed a cow?’
- 29a. Adenɛbe ju to hiɛ.
 Adenɛbe steal.AOR goat yesterday
 ‘Adenɛbe stole a goat/sheep yesterday.’
- 29b. Adenɛbe lɛ e ju to hiɛ ɔ?
 Adenɛbe FM 3SG steal goat/sheep yesterday DEF
 ‘Was it Adenɛbe who stole the goat/sheep yesterday?’

Sentences (22a), (23a), (24a), (25a), (26a), (27a), (28a) and (29a) are declarative sentences while (22b), (23b), (24b), (25b), (26b), (27b), (28b), and (29b) are polar interrogative counterparts with falling intonation in the (b) counterparts of sentences (22-29). As we can see from the analysis in (22-29), the sentences marked (a) are declaratives which have their polar interrogative versions in the (b) sentences of examples (22-29).

I have observed that in Dangme, polar interrogative sentences formation can be achieved by the addition of interrogative markers *ane* and *lo* at clause initial and clause final positions. These question markers can be used separately in a polar interrogative sentence or combined in a question sentence. Secondly, a polar interrogative sentence can be achieved by using a phonological strategy of falling intonation and an addition of a particle after the clause final word. It is however, realized that the clause initial polar question indicator, cannot occur at clause final position, neither does the clause final *polar* question marker *lo*, occurs at clause initial position in Dangme.

2. Alternative Question in Dangme

This section of the paper examines the nature and semantics of alternative question in Dangme. An alternative question according to Issah (2015: 55), presents two or more possible answers and presupposes that only one of the presented alternatives is true. He notes further that when one speaker asks an alternative question, he/she is simply in search of an answer as to whether say q or p holds. The interrogative particles *ane*, *lo* and an alternative speech marker *aloo* are used to mark alternative interrogative sentences in Dangme. I argue that, as in the syntactic structure of polar interrogative sentences, the interrogative markers *ane* occurs at clause initial position and *lo* at clause final positions only. It is to be noted however, that, each of the question markers could be used to mark interrogativeness as well as the combination of the two as discussed earlier. A similar distribution pattern of question markers/particles occur in alternative question formation in Dangme. The alternative clause marker or linker *aloo* or *loo* occurs in between two co-ordinate clauses. It is to be noted that the alternative clause linker *aloo* or *loo* can occur alone in the clause to signal alternative answers to a question. Consider the examples below:

- 30a. Ata ya he tade aloo tokota?
 Ata go buy dress or sandals
 ‘Did Ata buy a dress or a pair of sandals?’
- 30b. Ane Ata ya he tade aloo tokota?
 INT Ata go buy dress or sandals
 ‘Did Ata go to buy a dress or a pair of sandals?’
- 30c. Ata ya he tade aloo tokota lo?
 Ata go buy dress or sandals INT?
 ‘Did Ata go to buy a dress or a pair of sandals?’
- 30d. Ane Ata ya he tade aloo tokota lo?
 INT Ata go buy dress or sandals INT
 ‘Did Ata go to buy a dress or a pair of sandals?’
- 31a. Jokuewi ɔme ye ni ɔ aloo a yi?
 child.PL DEF.PL eat.PERF thing DEF or 3PL eat.NEG
 ‘Have the children eaten the food or have not eaten it?’
- 31b. Helɔ ɔ maa ya wo mwɔne ɔ aloo e be ya?
 fisherman DEF FUT go sea today or 3SG NEG go
 ‘Will the fisherman be going on fishing expedition today or will not?’
- 31c. E nge ni juae aloo e nge sukuu yae?
 3SG is thing sell.PROG or 3SG is school go.PROG
 ‘Is he/she trading or attending school?’
- 31d. Sangmɔte ngmaa womi aloo e fieɔ daa ligbi?

- Sangmɔte write.HAB book or 3SG play.HAB every day?
 ‘Does *Sangmɔte* writes books or plays about every day?’
- 31e. Aɟotɛɛ lɛ e ngmé lɛ blɔ nɛ e ya
 Aɟotɛɛ FM 3SG allow.NEG 3SG.OBJ. way that 3SG go
 aloo lɛ nitse nɛ e yɛ?
 or he himself does 3SG go.NEG
 ‘Has Aɟotɛɛ prevented him/her from going or he/she decided not to go?’
- 31f. Anɛ Aɟotɛɛ_j lɛ e_j engmɛ lɛ blɔ nɛ e ya
 INT Aɟotɛɛ_j FM 3SG_j allow.NEG 3SG.OBJ way that 3SG go
 aloo lɛ nitse nɛ e yɛ lo?
 or he himself FM 3SG go.NEG INT
 ‘Was it Aɟotɛɛ who prevented him/her from going or him/herself did not go?’

In (30a), the speaker wants to know the item that Ata bought. The use of *aloo* gives the subject an alternative to choose from more than an item. In (30a), the speaker wanted to know whether Ata had bought ‘a dress’ or ‘a pair of sandals’. The distribution of the question makers in (30b-31f) are the same as those discussed in previous examples in this paper.

3. Content Questions in Dangme

3.1 The Interrogative Words /Phrases in Dangme

Dangme uses words and phrases as content question markers. The question words and phrases alike can stand on their own in a discourse (Boadi, 2005:25). The interrogative words and phrases would be represented in this paper (hereafter) as INT and INTPs respectively.

There are two kinds of question markers; the nominal and the adjunct types. The question words and phrases referred to as nominal, are called so because they occupy argument positions in sentences. Biloa (2011) refers to this nominal type as *arguments* and the adjunct as *referential adjuncts*. The various types are shown in table (1):

Table 1.

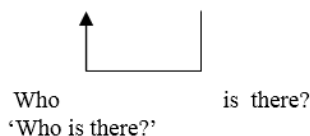
ARGUMENTS		REFERENTIAL ADJUNCTS	
DANGME	GLOSS	DANGME	GLOSS
ménɔ?	who?	jíjé?	where?
méní?	what?	méní bè?	what time?
méní + VP?	what +VP?	méní bè?	when?
méní + NP?	what + NP?	méní hɛ jè?	why?
		ényémé?	how much?
		kɛ...kɛɛ?	how.....?
		té...néɛ?	which one?

Yusuf (1998:99) states that adjunct markers can be placed under adjunct movement and I show in this paper that adjunct movement in Dangme shows evidence of preposition stranding or pied-piping.

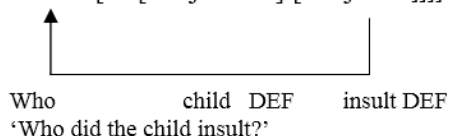
3.2 Movement of Interrogative Words and Phrases

Movement transformation moves constituents from one place to another. Question word and phrase movement is a type of movement that involves focusing of elements. Sabel (2000:430) states that movement of interrogative words and phrases is inherently a focus. This is so because the interrogative words and phrases may be new information or what is not pre-supposed as known. The question words/phrases can be in-situ at D-structure in three structural positions in a construction. These are the subject and object positions for nominal INT and INTPs and at the adjunct positions for the referential adjuncts as already stated. As earlier shown in (1), the argument INT and INTPs move from their original positions to the SPEC of the CP as in example (32a-c):

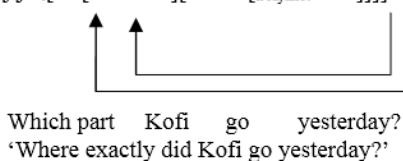
32a. . [CP $m\acute{e}n\grave{o}_i$ [IP [NP_i] [VP ng\`e l\`e j\`e \`o?]]]]



32b. [CP $m\acute{e}n\grave{o}_i$ [IP [NP j\`o k\`u\`e \`o] [VP j\`e \`o ?]]]]



32c. [CP j\`i j\`e [IP [NP K\`o f\`i] [VP h\`o [_{iAdjunct} h\`i \`e?]]]]



The moved elements in (32a-c) $m\acute{e}n\grave{o}_i$ ‘who’ and $j\`i j\`e$ ‘where’ in Dangme are the focused ones respectively. In the formation of content questions in Dangme, the question markers are moved to the canonical subject position. When interrogative word and phrases moved, they leave traces that are properly licensed as indicated above in (32a-c) with the referential index, (t_i). However, some interrogative words depending on the sentence structure do not move to Specifier position in order to get [+WH] feature. An example of such a question word is $m\acute{e}n\grave{o}_i$ (who?) in Dangme that occur in $j\`i$ constructions.

The $j\`i$ construction is considered to be a minor clause in the language because $j\`i$ is a defective verb. $J\`i$ acts like a copula because it occurs between two NPs, one of which is the interrogative word in this instance, but the two NPs do not act as a subject and a complement because they belong to the same class. Thus, one NP can be swapped for the other without altering the meaning of the construction as shown in (33):

33a. M\`o j\`i m\`e n\`o?
 you COP INT
 you are who?
 ‘Who are you?’

33b. M\`e n\`o j\`i m\`o?
 INT COP you
 who are you
 ‘Who are you?’

34a. M\`e n\`i j\`i e n\`e \`o?
 INT COP this
 what is this
 ‘What is this?’

34b. E n\`e \`o j\`i m\`e n\`i?
 this COP INT
 this is what
 ‘What is this?’

As we can observe in (33a) and (34a) the question words, $m\acute{e}n\grave{o}$ ‘who’ and $m\acute{e}n\grave{i}$ ‘what’ occurred at sentence final positions in (33b) and (34b). These interrogative markers moved to the sentence initial positions without any distortion in meaning. Similarly, a shift in the canonical position of an interrogative word to the sentence final position, occurs with some referential adjunct question words and phrases such as $m\acute{e}n\grave{i}$ *be* and $e n\`y\`e m\`e$. Consider example (35a-36b) below:

35a. M\`e n\`i b\`e o b\`a?
 INT time 2SG come
 ‘When did you come?’

35b. \`O b\`a m\`e n\`i b\`e?
 INT time 2SG come
 ‘When did you come?’

- 36a. Enyéme e ha mo?
 INT 3SG give you
 ‘How much did he/she give you?’
- 36b. E ha mo enyéme?
 3SG give you INT
 ‘How much did he/she give you?’

3.3 Focus Marking

Focus according to Dik (1997:326) is the information which is relatively important in a communication both to the speaker and the addressee in a communicative setting. However, the said information according to Dakubu (2005:2), need not be entirely new Boadi (1974) and Rizzi (1997) postulate that focus can also be characterized as a purely formal syntactic feature which gets assigned to constituents at an appropriate level of syntactic representation. Boadi (1974) further explains that focus is a syntactic process of re-arranging syntactic constituents in the clause in order to draw different kinds of attention to them including foregrounding. Horvath (1986:118) also states that as a universal principle, focus is a syntactic feature that is assigned to non-echo question phrase and this assertion buttresses the point that for real, content questions in Dangme, initiate focusing of question word and phrases.

3.3.1 The Focus Marker in Dangme

The obligatory focus marker (FM) in Dangme as mentioned earlier is *Ne* or *lè*. *ne* or *lè* are synonyms used interchangeably on dialectal grounds. These focus elements play dual roles in the grammar of Dangme. In the first place, *le* is employed to mark focus arguments in Dangme. For example:

- 37 (a) Adétà lè yè òtimì ò.
 Adétà FM eat.PERF kenkey DEF
 ‘It was Adétà who ate the kenkey’.

In (37a) above, the subject, *Adétà* has been focused marked to indicate that it is the only new information the speaker wants to make known. *Le* can also be used as a third person singular object pronoun in Dangme. For example:

- 37b. Ògbòó tsítsèè lè.
 Ògbòó push.PERF 3SG.OBJ
 ‘Ògbòó pushed him/her/it’.

Primarily, *ne* functions as a clause linker marker and secondly as a focus element in Dangme. Consider for example (37c-e):

- 37c. Kate je ne Aku ba.
 Kate leave.AOR CONJ Aku come.AOR.
 ‘Kate left and Aku came’.
- 37d. Kate ha a gbe wo.
 Kate CAUSE 3PL beat 1PL.OBJ
 ‘Kate made them to beat us’.
- 37e. Kate ne ha a gbe wo.
 Kate FM CAUSE 3PL beat 1PL.OBJ
 ‘It was Kate who made them beat us’.

3.3.2 Focusing Strategies

In Dangme, the focused elements are moved to the Spec of the CP and a focus marker is inserted after the focused constituent, (subject argument, object argument-direct and indirect), and the adjunct in which focus is being marked in a sentence. When the argument (object NP) is focused, it allows an optional resumptive pronoun in its stead and a definite article with a tone lower than the first *le* (the resumptive pronoun) ends the question (see also Saah, 2000:3). This is exemplified in Dangme:

- 38a. Kòjò gbè ménò?
 Kòjò beat who.SG? (neutral/echo question)
 ‘Who did Kòjò beat?’
- 38b. Kòjò gbè ménò -mè?
 Kòjò beat who-PL (neutral/echo question)
 ‘Who and who did Kòjò beat?’
- 38c. Ménò-mè nè Kòjò gbè ò?
 Who-PL FM Kòjò beat DEF (focused question)
 ‘WHO and WHO did Kòjò beat?’
- 38d. Ménò-mè nè Kòjò gbè mè ò?
 who-PL FM Kòjò beat 3PL DEF (focused question)
 ‘WHO and WHO did Kòjò beat?’

*N*_ò, in Dangme, means a person and *m*_è is a plural affix. In (38d), we observe that the interrogative word *ménò* ‘who’, takes on a plural morpheme, {-m_è}. The plural nature of the interrogative word has reflected in the resumptive pronoun *m*_è ‘they’ in (38d).

3.3.3 Partial focusing in Dangme

Dangme has the interrogative words/phrases in-situ at D-structure level and these are moved to the left periphery of constructions at S-structure levels. However, there are two question phrases in Dangme that do not follow this order. These question phrases are *ké...kéè* ‘how...?/what’ and *té...néè* ‘which one?’. Most of the times, these appear as discontinuous interrogative phrases of which singular and plural NPs can be inserted. Consider the examples (39a-f):

- 39a. Kè jókùé-wí ò-mè ngé kéè?
 INT child-PL DEF-PL are INT
 ‘How are the children?’
- 39b. Kè wòmí ò ngé kéè?
 INT book DEF is INT
 ‘How does the book looks like?’
- 39c. Kè ma pee lé kéè?
 INT FUT do 3SG INT
 ‘How should I go about it?’
- 39d. Kè nyè ngé kéè?
 INT 2PL are INT
 ‘How are you?’
- 39e. *Kè nyè ngé?
 INT 2PL are
 39f. Kè ma pèé kéè?
 INT FUT do INT
 ‘What should I do?’

When the question word is used to mean *how*, the discontinuous phrase is used and any attempt to leave out the question particle *kéè* would render the construction ungrammatical as demonstrated in example (39e) in Dangme. In the context of (39f) however, it is observed that the interrogative phrase, *ké...kéè*, which translates as ‘what’ in English, is a transition that I cannot explain in this paper,

- 39g. Té tò ò no' némé né bà kpé bà à néè?
 INT goat DEF person ones.PL that come.PERF come chew leaf DEF INT
 ‘Which of the goats came to chew the leaf?’

- 39h. Té ó bì ò né gbé sukúu nyà à néè?
 INT 2SG.POSS child DEF that finish.PERF school end PRT INT
 ‘Which of your children has completed school?’

[
 I have realized that the combination of *té...néè* in (39g), has brought about a change in the meanings of the content question words.

I can draw a conclusion from example (39a-f) that when *kè* is used in a construction in Dangme, *kéè* is obligatorily. I can argue that when *kè* or *te* combines with other elements other than *kéè* or *néè* in referential adjunct constructions as in (39a-h), the whole question phrase becomes an embedded one and the complement of the matrix clause is focused.

3.3.4 Focused Questions

Generally, a content question attaches a greater importance to what one wants to know than to the rest of the question. Similarly, an answer to a content question would be a focused constituent since it would provide information that would substitute for the interrogative word. That is, when a question is focused the answer provided indicates that prominence has been given to the focused element. This is what differentiates the focused questions in subject position from the neutral ones as illustrated in the examples below:

- 40a. Ménò gbè jókùé ò? (Dangme neutral question)
 who beat child DEF
 ‘Who beat the child?’
- 40b. Ménò le gbè jókùé ò? (Focus-marked question)
 who FM beat/kill child DEF
 ‘Who was it that beat/kill the child?’
- 40c. Dede le gbè jókùé ò? (Response)
 Dede FM beat/kill.AOR child DEF
 ‘Dede was the one who beat/killed the child?’

When the question is focused, it demands that the answer be focused as well and so the focused element in the answer is moved to the left periphery in the language like the focused question word/phrase. The answers to the focused questions above are therefore as follows:

- 41a. Jijè Kòfi hò? (Neutral adjunct)
 INT Kòfi go.AOR
 ‘Where did Kòfi go?’
- 41b. Jijè nε Kòfi hò? (Focused adjunct)
 INT FM Kòfi go.AOR
 ‘Where is it that Kòfi has gone?’
- 42a. Ménòmε Kòfi kpá ngmláá wò?
 INT.PL Kòfi blow shout.AOR at
 ‘Which people did Kòfi shout at?’
- 42b. Ménòmε nε Kòfi kpá ngmláá wò?
 INT.PL FM Kòfi blow shout.AOR at
 ‘Which people did Kòfi shout at?’
- 43a. Méni Kòfi yè?
 INT Kòfi eat.AOR
 ‘What did Kòfi eat?’
- 43d. Méni nε Kòfi yè?
 INT FM Kòfi eat.AOR
 ‘WHAT did Kòfi eat?’

It can be observed that when a questioned word is focused, prominence is given to the elements questioned in the construction as in (41a-43b) in which the subject is questioned.

3.3.5. Pied-Piping and Preposition Stranding in Content Question Focusing

Some question words combine with prepositions to form prepositional phrases. Dangme has a preposition but the language mostly makes use of postpositions despite the fact that it has its canonical order as SVO. The preposition for Dangme is *nge* ‘at’. The question words that enter into construction with these preposition, *jijè* ‘where’ in focus constructions, leave preposition stranded when the question word is moved. Any attempt to move the phrase as a whole, will render the sentence ungrammatical. This is demonstrated in sentences (44a-c) below:

- 44a. Ò nà Kuami ngé jijè?
 2SG see.AOR Kuami at INT
 ‘Where did you see Kuami?’
- 44b. Jijè ò nà Kuami ngé? (preposition stranding in Dangme)
 INT 2SG see.AOR Kuami at
 ‘Where did you see Kuami?’
- 44c. Ngé jijè ò nà Kuami?
 At INT 2SG see Kuami
 ‘At where did you see Kuami?’

4. Summary

I have attempted to describe interrogative constructions in Dangme. The paper focused on the formation and meaning of interrogative in Dangme. In this paper, three types of questions have been examined: polar, alternative and content questions. It was revealed that two strategies are employed in the formation of these types of questions in Dangme: phonological and morpho-syntactic strategies. I also realized that polar questions are formed through phonological and syntactic means. In the phonological strategy, falling intonation is employed to express interrogation. The paper investigates further that the use of question particles such as *ane* and *lo* which occur only clause initially and clause finally respectively, are used in polar questions formation. It is to be noted that the use of falling intonation and the question particles and phrases are mutually exclusive. In alternative question formation, however, the question word *aloo* is used to join two or more question forms in Dangme.

I argued that content questions are marked by argument question words and referential adjunct words and phrases. These words and phrases include: *ménò* ‘who’ *méni* ‘what’, *jijé* ‘where’, *méni bè*, ‘when’, *méni hè jè*, ‘why’, *ényémé* ‘how much’, *kè...kèè* ‘how/what...’ and *té...néè*, ‘which...’ In the analysis of the argument interrogative markers, it was noted that the question word and phrases can be in-situ at D-structure in the three structural positions (the subject, object and adjunct positions). I demonstrate that the interrogative particle, word or phrase of arguments, moves from their original position to the specifier position of the CP.

In content question constructions, all question words/phrases remain in-situ at the D-structure level but by total or partial movements, are focused in order to become genuine content questions in Dangme. Focusing of interrogative words and phrases in Dangme involve the use of overt markers such as *le* or *ne*. All focus-marked

questions move to the SPEC of the complementizer position to get a [+WH] feature. The interrogative elements in the questions, will determine the elements that can be focused in the construction. Question words in verbless clauses cannot be focused. In pied-piped and prepositional stranding, the preposition, *ngɛ* 'at', is left stranded when the interrogative word is moved.

Abbreviations Used

ACC	Accusative Case
AOR	Aorist
COP	Copula
CP	Complementizer Phrase
DAT	Dative
DEF	Definite Article
DEM	Demonstratives
FM	Focus Marker
FUT	Future
GER	Gerund
HAB	Habitual Aspect
IP	Inflectional Phrase
INT	Interrogative Particle
INTW	Interrogative Word
INTP	Interrogative Phrases
NEG	Negative
NOM	Nominative Case
NOM	Nominalization
NP	Noun Phrase
P	Personal Name
PRT	Particle
PL	Plural Marker
PERF	Perfective
POSS	Possessive
PST/PAST	Past Tense
PROG	Progressive
SG	Singular Marker
SPEC	Specifier
SVO	Subject, Verb, Object
VP	Verb Phrase
WH	WH-Question
2SG	Second Person Singular Pronoun
3SG	Third Person Singular Pronoun
2PL	Second Person Plural Pronoun
3PL	Third Person Plural Pronoun
3PL.OBJ	Third Person Plural Object Pronoun
3SG.POSS	Third Person Singular Possessive Pronoun

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